REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
ÇUKUROVA UNIVERSITY
THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

THE EFFECTS OF BLOGGING ON ENHANCEMENT OF L2 LEARNERS' WRITING SKILLS AT PREPARATORY CLASS LEVEL

Mithat İŞÇİ

MASTER OF ARTS

ADANA / 2020

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- Kullanılandığım verilerde ve ortaya çıkan sonuçlarda herhangi bir değişiklik yapmadığımı,
- Bu tezde sunduğum çalışmanın özgün olduğunu,

bildirir, aksi bir durumda aleyhime doğabilecek tüm hak kayıplarını kabullendiğimi beyan ederim. …. / …. / 2020

Mithat İŞÇİ

To my children Deniz, Bülent Ferat, and Beritan Rengin; without them life would be incomplete

ÖZET

ÜNİVERSİTE İNGİLİZCE HAZIRLIK SINIFI SEVİYESİNDE KULLANILAN BLOGLARIN ÖGRENCİLERİN YAZMA BECERİLERİNİN GELİŞİMİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ

Mithat İŞÇİ

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Ana Bilim Dalı
Danışman: Prof. Dr. Yonca ÖZKAN
Temmuz 2020, 137 sayfa

Son otuz yılda, bilgisayarların ve internet-bağlantılı araçların dil öğretimine entegrasyonu, öğretmenlerin öğretim uygulamalarını okulların sınırlarının ötesine taşımasını sağlamıştır. İkinci nesil Web 2.0. araçlarından blogların öğrencilerin öğrenimini artırdığı ve dil öğrenimini teşvik ettiği bulunmuştur. Blog yazma, dil öğreniminde nispeten yeni bir olgu olduğundan dolayı, yabancı dil yazma öğretiminde bloglama uygulamaları ile ilgili bir literatür eksikliği vardır. Bu çalışma bloglama enterge edilmiş İngilizce yazma dersinin İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen hazırlık sınıfı öğrencilerinin yazma performansına olan etkilerini bulmaya çalışmıştır. Bir devlet üniversitesinin yabancı dil okulunda İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen otuzdokuz hazırlık sınıfı öğrencisi çalışmaya katıldı. Araştırmada kullanılan nicel veriler ön test, son test, blog yazıları, iki anket ve belge analizi aracılığıyla toplanırken, nicel veriler yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlar yoluyla toplanmıştır. Nicel veriler *SPSS 25* ve *Excel* ile incelenirken, nitel veriler ise tematik analiz yoluyla incelendi. Dokuz haftalık yarı deneysel çalışmanın sonuçları, uygulama grubundaki katılımcıların kontrol grubundan daha iyi performans gösterdiğini ve uygulamanın, katılımcılar arasında dilsel doğruluk, makale yazma becerileri ve işbirliğinin geliştirilmesine yol açtığını ortaya koymuştur. Bloglama sürecinin bir sonucu olarak algılanan öğrenme ve yüksek motivasyon düzeyleri de gözlemlenmiştir. Bununla birlikte, bu çalışma, blogların yabancı dil yazma öğretimine entegre edilmesiyle ilgili olarak, bazıları sahada yenilik olan olumsuzluk ile ilişkili çeşitli temaların ortaya çıkmasına da neden olmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: İngilizce hazırlık programı, yazılı öğretmen geribildirimi, İngilizce dili öğretimi, blog yazma, yabancı dilde yazma, İngilizce kompozisyon

ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF BLOGGING ON ENHANCEMENT OF L2 LEARNERS' WRITING SKILLS AT PREPARATORY CLASS LEVEL

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Master Thesis, Department of English Language Teaching
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Yonca ÖZKAN
July 2020, 137 pages

In the last three decades, the integration of computers, and internet-related tools into language teaching has enabled the teachers to move the instructional practices beyond the boundaries of schools. Of the second generation Web 2.0. tools, blogs have been found to enhance students' foreign language uptake and foster language learning. Since blogging is a relatively new phenomenon introduced to language learning, there is a paucity of literature with regard to blogging practices in foreign language writing instruction. In this respect, this study set out to find the effects of blogging on participants' writing performance in blogging embedded preparatory EFL writing classes. Thirty-nine EFL preparatory class students from a school of foreign languages at a state university formed the participant pool. While the quantitative data utilized in the study were collected through pre-test, post-test, blog posts, two questionnaires, and document analysis, the qualitative data were elicited via semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data were processed via *SPSS 25* and *Excel*, and the qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis. The results of the nine-week quasi-experimental, mixed data set study indicated that participants in the intervention group outperformed the participants in the control group, and the intervention led to improved linguistic accuracy, organizational skills, and cooperation among participants. Increased perceived learning and high levels of motivation were also attained as a result of the blogging process. However, the study also gave rise to several themes associated with negativity, some of which found to be novelties in the field, concerning integrating blogs into L2 writing instruction.

Keywords: English preparatory program, written corrective feedback (WCF), English language learning, blogging, EFL composition, L2 writing

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Resuming the MA program after an interval of seventeen years posed many challenges and could have been a daunting experience for me. However, both my colleagues/friends and some wonderful people I met during the long, exhausting yet rewarding journey, facilitated life substantially for me. I owe them some words of heartfelt appreciation.

First of all, I would like to extend my gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Yonca ÖZKAN, who guided me throughout the entire MA program. It would not have been easy for me to finalize this challenging task without her unwavering belief in me. I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Erdoğan BADA for the invaluable guidance and support he provided to me during the courses and the study. He has been a mentor and a friend, whom I refer to whenever I need consultancy and guidance. I also would like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Meral ŞEKER for her valuable feedback on the thesis.

My sincere thanks go to my classmate and friend, Esat KUZU, who offered his help in times of need. It would have been really hard for me to accomplish this tedious work without his support. I also thank my classmate and friend Birol DUDU for the precious assistance he provided during the MA program.

My warmest thanks go to my colleagues and friends Ali DİKİCİ, Veysel İŞÇİ, Zeynal Abidin TURAN and Feyyaz DEMİRER who carried out the tedious task of grading student papers and helped conduct the surveys and the pre-test and post-test.

Last but not least, I also would like to thank my students whose name I can not mention here. They have been the real heroes of this study as they had to write essays for nine weeks.

This study was funded by Çukurova University Scientific Research Project Fund (Grant No. 12357*). I would like to thank Çukurova University for their financial support.*

Mithat İŞÇİ

Adana / 2020

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ABBREVIATIONS

AS: Asymmetrical

CD: Compact Disc

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference

CF: Coded Feedback

CG: Control Group

CMC: Computer-Mediated Communication

CoHE: Council of Higher Education

CU: Çukurova University

DVD: Digital Versatile Disc

EFL: English as a foreign language

EG: Experimental Group

ELT: English Language Teaching

FLT: Foreign Language Test

HRÜ: Harran University

ICT: Internet and Communication Technologies

I-TOOL: Intelligent tool

L2: Second Language

RQ: Research Question

S: Symmetrical

SFL: School of Foreign Languages

SLW: Second Language Writing

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

SSPC: Student Selection and Placement Center

TCF: Teacher Corrective Feedback

TEF: Teacher Electronic Feedback

VLE: Virtual Learning Environment

WCF: Written Corrective Feedback

WWW: World Wide Web

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This chapter sets out to present the rationale which underlies the aim of this study. To this end, an introductory paragraph, which presents an overall view of the chapter, is given. Afterward, the problem motivated the researcher to conduct the study is explicated. Following the presentation of the aims of the study, research questions are asked. Finally, in the last part, the importance of the study and the key terms are presented.

1.2. Background of the Study

Writing in a foreign language can be a daunting experience for many foreign language learners because of the challenges associated with the nature of writing. Normally, all human beings grow up using listening and speaking in their first and sometimes their second or third languages; however, writing is generally taught after they have learned the speaking and listening skills (Harmer, 2004). Richard (2003) argues that "learning how to write in a second language is one of the most challenging aspects of second language learning" (p, xiii). Quintero (2008), on the other hand, asserts that writing is a very complicated subject matter causing problems for the majority of the learners in the native language and foreign language as well.

When learning a first language, learners are not taught the systematic use of language, since the language is for communication. Rather, systematic use of a language is taught only in the formal schooling process, and as a result, writing is found challenging even in the first language by many learners since it does not seem natural (Raimes, 1983). Another reason that learners find writing difficult is its formalized nature, as it is often used for academic purposes or professional communication. Besides the serious challenges created by the nature of writing, traditional writing instruction pose a number of limitations as well. The fundamental problem with in-class writing instruction is that it takes lots of time (Hyland, 2008). An authentic audience is often lacking in terms of teaching writing since the addressee is usually the teacher (Hedge, 2005). Brown (2002) notes that in most cases, the instructor is the only reader of

learners' written work such as short writing exercises, short answer essays, and any other writing carried out in testing situations; therefore, instructors comprise the only audience for their students' performance.

The absence of an authentic audience, as proposed by many scholars, causes loss of interest and de-motivation in students. Limited class-time and crowded classes make the task completion process of writing hard for both students and teachers. Richard (2003) argues that the ability to write effectively, on the other hand, is something that requires extensive and specialized instruction even for those who speak English as a first language because, as Richards (2003, p. 101) further states, "the process of moving from concepts, thoughts and ideas to written text is complex. A written text represents the product of a series of complicated mental operations."

Developments in the field of the Internet and Communication Technologies (ICT hereafter) and their integration for educational purposes have brought about new opportunities. Technological tools have been an integral part of daily life in the past few decades, and they have also found their way into the world of education. The first-generation internet pages, known as Web 1.0, allowed one-way communication. Since only the stored content was available to the reader, these tools were not useful for encouraging students to involve in the activities and reflect their ideas (Motteram & Sharma, 2009).

Web 2.0 or second-generation internet applications such as wikis, podcasts, and blogs, on the other hand, allow two-way communication: synchronous and asynchronous communication. Web 2.0 tools can promote social environments that facilitate students' interaction with their peers and teacher-student interaction, providing ground for Vygotsky's social constructivist theory of learning. Hardly are there any contemporary educational institutions that have not incorporated ICT tools into instructional practices all over the world. Today many higher educational institutions besides traditional educational practices, offer instructional services through Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) as well.

Of the Web 2.0 tools, specifically, blogs have widely been integrated into language learning and specifically into writing courses. The underlying idea behind integrating blogs into writing is the assumption that peer and group interactions can be facilitated by blogs. Another assumption is that knowledge is constructed socially through sharing knowledge, emphasizing alternative perspectives and interpretations, and critiquing points of view (Leslie & Murphy, 2008). The integration of blogs into

writing classes as either external activities or a part of the course has reportedly led to a number of positive outcomes. Bernstein (2004) asserts that the enhancement in writing skills can be facilitated through writing on the blogs frequently. Student learning can be enhanced by blogging (Churchill, 2009; Ducate & Lomicka, 2008). Blogs support student interaction and collaboration (Godwin-Jones, 2006). Similarly, Campbell (2003) believes that blogging has the potential to promote learners' writing practice. Blogs provide context and purpose for students to write (Zhang, 2009). Finally, Pinkman (2005) basing on his study, claims that blogs can enhance learners' reading comprehension.

Meanwhile, in technology-driven classroom environments, the acts of teaching and learning have also gone through a transformation; consequently, the focus has altered direction from teaching to learning. This paradigm shift is in line with Vygotsky's constructivist learning theory because, in this redefined environment, the role the teacher lead has also undergone a radical transformation: The teacher is looked upon as a mediator, a guide or a facilitator and the student is seen as the knowledge constructor (Freeman, 2000).

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Schools of foreign languages at Turkish universities generally offer 24 to 30 class hours of English instruction a week to students depending on their proficiency level, which is enacted by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE). Preparatory schools mainly aim to gear learners with language skills that enable them to conduct their academic studies at their corresponding departments. In classes dedicated to the instruction of reading and writing skills, which is generally 4-6 class hours a week, teachers usually utilize a coursebook and some compact discs (CDs) or digital versatile discs (DVDs) accompanying the coursebook. An intelligent tool (i-tool), which is a software version of the student book, enables the display of course book content on a surface, usually a classroom wall or a whiteboard via a computer and a projector. By adding audio-visual components into teaching practice, the teacher aims to create interest in writing.

Academic writing skills are looked upon as a crucial element in today's highly competitive world. However, despite the intense training program during the preparatory year, students' writing skills are generally far from satisfactory. A great

number of EFL learners at Turkish universities experience serious problems regarding academic writing abilities (Kara, 2013; Kırmızı & Aydin, 2019; Şarapli, 2013). Also, in a comprehensive study investigating the state of English instruction in higher education in Turkey, West, Guven, and Parry (2015) found out that although classes were adequately equipped with technological tools, they were not used effectively for educational purposes. They also revealed that teachers failed to initiate student-to-student interactions in language classes. Furthermore, an array of limitations and drawbacks including, teacher-centered teaching orientation, writing anxiety (Kırmızı & Kırmızı, 2015), limited time, absence of authentic readers and social interaction, crowded classroom settings, and affective factors have all contributed to a loss of interest in the traditional in-class pen-and-paper approach. With the advancement of Web 2.0 related technologies, several new tools have been incorporated into instruction practices. In this respect, blogs and ICT electronic writing (e-writing) platforms, seem to be promising tools that can alleviate some of the shortcomings pertaining to traditional writing method. Hence, the researcher will utilize blogging as an electronic writing (e-writing) tool to observe the students' writing performances and their perceptions.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

In parallel with the development of Computer-Mediated-Communication (CMC hereafter) tools in the last three decades and their application and integration into education in general and foreign language teaching in particular, their potential benefits and limitations in teaching English have been investigated by various researchers. The review of the related literature unveils that integrating blogging into writing yields a number of enhancements on the part of the students. However, the number of studies into the subject matter is limited and far from a decisive point.

Considering the statements above, this study primarily aims to investigate the effects of blogging on students' academic performance in writing classes. A secondary aim is to find out learners' perceptions of integrating blogging into writing courses. In addition to these, the study also aims to discover the challenges the teacher as a researcher encountered during the implementation of the blogging process.

To this end, this study tries to seek answers to the four research questions formulated below.

1.5. Research Questions

1. What are the effects of blogging on participants' writing performance in the blog-embedded preparatory EFL writing classes?
2. Is there any difference between the writing performance of participants of blog-embedded and traditional writing classes?
3. What are the EFL learners' perceptions of the blogging experience prior to, during, and post-exposure to this Web 2.0 environment in preparatory EFL writing classes?
4. What are the potential challenges teachers as researchers encounter during the running of blogging-enhanced preparatory EFL writing classes?

1.6. Importance of the Study

Traditional classroom settings pose several challenges and limitations to learning a new language effectively. Meanwhile, as for L2 writing, there appear to be some additional limitations and obstacles to overcome. Limited time frame dedicated to the teaching of writing, crowded and uncomfortable classrooms, traditional pen and paper approach, and absence of authentic and timely feedback are some of the negative factors to mention. This study aims to remediate the challenges and limitations associated with the traditional teaching of writing. In this respect, students are the first party to benefit from the study, as they are expected to be geared with required writing skills that enable their integration into the ever-competitive twenty-first-century world. Also, they get accustomed to using ICT tools effectively. Furthermore, they find a real audience to read their writings, and the feedback provided may contribute to their advancement. Blogging may facilitate learning to collaborate and cooperate with their peers, which is assumed as an excellent asset for success. The collaborative atmosphere created by blogging can increases both awareness and motivation, thereby may lead to more effective writing and a heightened success level.

The second party to benefit from the study is teachers. To begin with, they do feel constrained with the classroom time in their teaching. Furthermore, through active engagement with technology and integrating it into their teaching practice, they can keep themselves updated, and in this way, they may enable their students to utilize computers and internet related tools effectively. Although to a lesser extent, school administrators could also benefit from the study as they may have a collective success from their

students, which is likely to contribute to the prominence of the institutions. Finally, this study contributes to the English Language Teaching (ELT) field in the Turkish context as research studies conducted thus far on the effects of blogging are very limited. Accordingly, this study brings into light new aspects of blogging on the teaching of writing and guide ELT teachers in their endeavors to find better alternatives to traditional L2 writing instruction.

1.7. Key Terms

Blended Learning: White and Geer (2010) state that blended learning is an educational approach utilizing a fusion of both online and face-to-face learning practices.

Computer Literacy: An understanding of computer characteristics, applications, and capabilities, and the competency to apply this knowledge in an accomplished and productive utilization of computers is defined as computer literacy (Martin & Dunsworth, 2007).

Computer-Mediated-Communication: Any form of communication event that takes place through networked computers can be referred to as Computer-Mediated Communication (Elliott, 2009).

Digital literacy: Digital literacy stands for the incorporation of technical, procedural, and cognitive abilities to find, assess, and compose information by using computers or mobile devices on various digital platforms.

Field notes: Field notes signify the qualitative notes kept by researchers or scientists while conducting a study or observing a phenomenon. Field notes may be recorded during or after the study and are referred to as evidence that helps to understand the phenomenon.

Mindtool: A *mindtool* is a computer application that encourages cognitive processing and involves learners in critical, high order thinking with respect to content. (Jonassen, 2000).

Rhythm of Blogging: The rhythm of blogging refers to the way people blog, and it comprises of reading, writing, commenting in (receiving a comment), and commenting out (providing a comment).

Scaffolding: Scaffolding is the guidance and support provided by the teacher during knowledge acquisition. “Scaffolding refers to providing contextual supports for

meaning through the use of simplified language, teacher modeling, visuals and graphics, cooperative learning and hands-on learning" (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003, p. 345).

Web 2.0 Tools: Web 2.0 also known as *Participative and Social Web*, in contrast to Web 1.0 websites allowing limited access passively on the part of the users, refers to interoperable websites featuring content produced by users and marked by a culture of participation. Blogs, wikis, social media platforms such as *Facebook, Twitter*, video sharing sites *YouTube*, *Dailymotion*, image sharing sites *Instagram*, *Flickr*, and instant messaging applications such as *WhatsApp*, *Messenger*, *Telegram* are typical Web 2.0 generation tool examples.

Weblog: A weblog, also known as a blog, is a web site consisting of a series of entries that have been organized in a backward style in time, the last item appearing the first, and regularly updated with the new influx of information on various subjects. The information presented on the blog can be the authentic work of the owner or borrowed from other Web sites or other sources, or other users may present contribution.

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): The term ZPD is described by Vygotsky (1978 p. 86) as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers".

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter commences with information regarding the history of technology use in education, in brief, the assimilation of technology into L2 instruction, and the theoretical framework that hypothesizes the use of technology in language teaching. In the ensuing sections, utilization of blogs in the second language and foreign-language, integration of blogs into L2 writing instruction, and finally blogging related studies conducted both abroad and in Turkey are presented.

2.2. A Brief History of Technology Use in Education

In the last three decades, there have been spectacular developments in the field of electronics, communication, computers, computer-related applications, and especially the Internet and internet-related tools and applications. These developments have had a tremendous impact on every aspect of life including education. According to McGreal and Elliott (2008), education is known to be a very fast-growing social and economic sector all around the world and the assimilation of cutting edge technologies into the sector has been an integral component triggering that growth. Similarly, O' Neil and Perez (2006) assert that technology has become 'pervasive' in all fields of our lives, "and greatest impact is arguably in education" (p. 327). Much as the use of technology has been a key component of educational practices in modern times, the actual use of technology in education can be traced back to earlier times. Saettler (1990) states that the first mention of the use of technology in education has probably been delivered over the radio by the radio instruction pioneer W.W. Charters in 1948. Over the years, a series of technological inventions and innovations in the field of electronics and computers have made the first generation of technological tools employed in education mostly obsolete. Only 30 years ago, the technology in education stood for radio and television; however, educational technology in today's world refers to computer-mediated communication, virtual reality environments (VLEs), or online teaching (O' Neil & Perez, 2006). Also, the World Wide Web (WWW) has been used excessively as an educational technology tool since 1995 (Bates & Poole, 2003). Web pages, discussion

boards, e-mails, chat rooms, voice-based forums, learning management systems, and webcams are among the first-generation web tools. Online learning platforms, blogs, social networks, podcasts, discussion forums, and wikis are classified as the second-generation Web or Web 2.0 tools.

When Web 2.0 technologies first became popular in the late 1990s, they were immediately incorporated into educational programs (Enonbun, 2010). With the introduction of the second generation of Web tools to instructional settings, educational practices took a new turn. The Internet has been characterized as the biggest communication revolution after the origination of the printed book (Dekhinet & Topping, 2010). As for the definition of educational technology, a convenient one has been made by Bates and Poole (2003, pp. 5-6) who state that "Educational technology encompasses any means of communicating with learners other than through direct, face to face, or personal contact".

Not long ago, educational technology would probably comprise the following elements: the actual tools and equipment which supported teaching such as software, programs, and networks, as well as, audio cassettes, projectors, television monitors, and computers. However, today in addition to these elements, there are new generation smartphones, which are no less sophisticated and functional than computers, notepads, laptop computers, extensive and very fast wireless internet network, instant messaging platforms such as *WhatsApp*, *Telegram*, social media platforms such as *Twitter and Facebook, which* can be and are actively being utilized and exploited for educational purposes.

2.3. Integrating technology into Language Learning

There has been extensive use of technology and technological tools in foreign language and second language learning. Such uses of technology probably began with cassette players and then, with the advent of video players, visual elements were also employed in language teaching. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools have been included in the second and foreign teaching and learning settings with the application of these tools in education since the 1970s (Chapelle, 2001; Ghasemi & Hashemi, 2011; Lupi & Dettori, 2010). Chapelle (2001, p. 7) states that "computers became widely available to language teachers in the early 1980s". However, the availability of a massive amount of data transfer over long distances instantly, efficient

internet access in educational institutions, and extensive utilization of the World Wide Web have brought about revolutionary changes in language learning. In parallel with technological innovations, synchronous and asynchronous communication through computers has contributed to foreign language teaching substantially. Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) is the term coined to describe the genre of communication which is made possible through the Internet with the help of computers**.** Simpson (as cited in Dekhinet & Topping, 2010, p. 22) explicates that CMC is "an umbrella term which refers to human communication via computers". Elliott (2009) asserts that any form of communication event that takes place via networked computers can be referred to as Computer-Mediated Communication. CMC tools can be synchronous (text, audio, and video conferencing), or asynchronous (e-mail, bulletin boards, or internet forums) (Elliott, 2009; Hourigan & Murray, 2010; Long & Doughty, 2009).

2.4. Constructivist Epistemology

Over the last three decades, constructivism has become the most prominent theoretical framework that has molded the educational practices. A glance at the related literature will yield various results concerning the definition of constructivism. "Constructivism is not a theory about teaching…it is a theory about knowledge and learning… the theory defines knowledge as temporary, developmental, socially and culturally mediated, and thus, nonobjective." (Brooks & Brooks, 1993, p. vii). Essentially, it is a theory that takes observation and scientific study as a reference to explain how learning occurs. Constructivism is a philosophical concept that tries to explain how the knowledge is constructed; in other words, how we understand the world and the things in it and how we put them into our thinking process (Kanuka & Anderson, 1999). Therefore, von Glasersfeld (1995) asserts that it is not only a standalone learning theory; on the contrary, it is also a means through which one can observe the world from a wider angle where the presence of various interpretations help cast light upon the intricate and abstract phenomena. According to MacKinnon and Scarff-Seatter (1997), constructivism is "neither a person nor a method, but a theory of knowledge" (p. 54). Presumably, the most compelling articulation of the nature of constructivism is voiced by Fosnot (1996), who argues "constructivism is a theory about learning, not a description of teaching. No 'cookbook teaching style' or pat set of instructional

techniques can be abstracted from the theory and proposed as a constructivist approach to teaching." (p. 29)

What distinguishes constructivism as an educational approach from earlier pedagogical practices lies in the priority its proponents attribute to the nature of learning. As it is obvious from the definitions, constructivism places the emphasis on learning, not teaching. In behaviorist pedagogy, on the other hand, an approach centered on the teacher, in which the educator is mostly tasked to set the conditions for learners to produce an explicit answer, is dominant. The behaviorist methodology posits that the way different stimuli are organized or presented in the external settings forms the core of learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 2012). Behaviorism stems from three principal hypotheses: (a) the center of learning is observable behavior, (b) behavior is determined by the environment, and (c) the key component of the learning process is reinforcement (Skinner, 1974). Behaviorism centers on the complete comprehension of the essential steps prior to proceeding to the following stages; in this way, the learning practice is planned to fortify the performance needed by the student to fulfill the teacher's expectation (Grippin & Peters, 1984). Torre, Daley, Sebastian, and Elnicki (2006) contend that behaviorist learning practice is especially valuable for the advancement of capabilities and for displaying specialized or psychomotor abilities and is most invaluable when an adjustment in behavior is the ideal result of educational instruction.

While there seem to be some advantages of the behaviorist approach such as the use of rewards in education, the pitfalls associated with it outweigh the advantages. Imitation, rewarding, and reinforcement are the fundamental techniques characterizing the behaviorist theory regarding language learning. However, research carried out on the acquisition of languages has revealed practically no signs of innovation in the imitated structures produced by children; furthermore, the number of imitated structures children perform varies notably (Bloom, Hood, & Lightbown, 1974). Furthermore, many critics point out that behaviorism is a one-dimensional way to deal with perceiving human behavior and that free will and internal influences like thoughts, feelings, and moods are disregarded by behavioral theories. It also seems to disregard other types of learning, notably learning that takes place without employing reinforcement and punishment.

Behaviorism failed to produce affirmative outcomes in the complex classroom settings, and the teachers felt betrayed as the system blamed them for the failure of the students (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002). The ongoing enthusiasm for constructivism in

educational practices follows a practically strict devotion to the behaviorist teaching method by directors and instructive therapists in the United States. (Duit & Treagust, 1998; Jenkins, 2000). As a result, teachers have welcomed constructivist learning theory with exceptional enthusiasm in a time, characterized by quick touches of reformation to improve education in schools (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985). The constructivist theory posits that learners construct knowledge in their minds when they integrate learning activities and their experiences; therefore, already existing knowledge plays a crucial function in assimilating the new knowledge**.** Constructivist epistemology stresses that the teacher functions as a facilitator or a catalyst while the learner has a dynamic role in the acquisition and concept creating process.

Two different streams of constructivism-cognitive and social- share similar views as to the nature of knowledge:

- Learners construct knowledge through reflection.
- Learners can process knowledge through their cognitive structures and processes.
- Learners construct knowledge through dynamic and participative learning.
- Knowledge is not fixed or inactive; on the contrary, it is continually developing.

Unlike behaviorists like B. F. Skinner, who believed that learning occurred through repetition and imitation, Piaget, the most influential theorist of cognitive constructivism, believed that the interaction of the individual with the environment leads to cognitive development. According to Piaget (1977), knowledge contains two aspects: the figurative aspect and the operative aspect. Of these two aspects, the former denotes how knowledge is perceived by our senses, while the latter connotes qualitative change constructed via mental activity. Piaget believed the operative aspect of knowledge to be more important with regard to learning and language. To further elaborate on his theory of knowledge, Piaget puts forth a schema theory, which states that new knowledge passes through three stages: assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration (Powell & Kalina, 2009). According to Piaget's theory, when new knowledge is added or assimilated through mental operations, equilibration occurs; this information is accommodated into the existing schemata in the accommodation phase. Lastly,

following assimilation and accommodation, equilibration occurs. However, when new knowledge does not fit, disequilibrium occurs (Simatwa, 2010).

Social constructivists, much as having similar opinions regarding knowledge, believed the same environmental and biological factors have different effects on different individuals. In this respect, they diverged from cognitive constructivists. Vygotsky (1980) emphasized the value attributed to the social environment, pointing out the role it plays in human cognitive development. He maintained that social interaction was the key component in learning. He also pointed out that social interaction was an element of high importance in cognitive development, putting forth theories of learning like *inner speech* also known as *internal monologue* and the *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD).

Both Piaget and Vygotsky believed children were the active organizers of their own knowledge. However, Vygotsky contended that Piaget had disregarded the substantial effect the cultural coding systems exerted on the development of children while focusing on children as solitary thinkers (Kapur, 2018).

2.4.1. Constructivism in Language learning

Unquestionably, constructivism, an epistemology that has had a tremendous effect on learning practices over the last three decades, has had its implications in the second and foreign language learning as well. Consequently, language classes have been organized around the premises of the constructive theory. Krashen (1982), whose monitor theory has a substantial prominence among language teaching professionals, is probably the most influential constructivist dealing with language learning. Monitor theory consists of five fundamental hypotheses: the input hypothesis, the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the affective filter, the monitor hypothesis, and the natural order hypothesis (Lightbown & Spada, 1990).

1. The input hypothesis: Language can be acquired via comprehensible input; in other words, through understanding others; therefore, both comprehension and acquisition occur when the input is slightly beyond the level of the learner. Such a process is called gradual or incremental learning.

2. The Acquisition Learning hypothesis emphasizes the distinction separating learning from acquisition. While conscious effort creates learning, acquisition takes place through meaningful interaction.
3. The affective filter hypothesis: Negative emotions like embarrassment or fear may constrain a learner's ability to acquire language. At such times the affective filter is said to be "up."
4. The monitor hypothesis posits that what a learner produces is constantly monitored by the learner's learned system. To put it differently, much as only the acquired system possesses the ability to produce impromptu speech, what is being spoken is checked by the learned system.
5. The natural order hypothesis expresses that language acquisition process follows a natural order, and this order might not necessarily reflect the sequence of language rules taught in educational institutions.

The theoretical framework of constructivist pedagogy is structured around the assumption that learning takes place through a learner's pre-existing knowledge which is called a schema. Since all learning has to go through already constructed knowledge, constructivists contend that optimum learning is achieved by actively engaging the learners in the learning process, disqualifying being a passive recipient of knowledge, and when the teacher avoids direct instruction and involves students in the knowledge construction process through questioning, discovering, discussing appreciating and verbalizing the new knowledge (Richards, Gallo, & Renandya, 2001). Experimentation, researching, exploration, communication, collaboration, interaction with the environment, active engagement in the learning process, individual cognitive construction of mental structures, real-life experiences, and problem-solving are basic tenets of constructivist learning and progressive education. However, traditional classroom settings fail to meet the demands of the constructivist epistemology. In this respect, integrating technology, the use of computers and especially internet related applications such as wikis, discussion forums, podcasts, blogs, mobile applications such as *WhatsApp*, *Facebook*, *Instagram*, and *Twitter* into classroom practices or employing them as complementary practices may create venues through which the principles of constructivist learning can be put into practice. According to Bärenfänger (2005), blending technology and constructivism provide a social learning environment that may be an effective alternative particularly for language teaching since mastering a foreign

or second language is often regarded both a long and sometimes a monotonous process by learners. In such a context, the primary function of social interaction is to create an environment for both learning the language, learning about language, and learning through language. Teaching professionals may want to favor the interests of students concerning the choice of technological tools they want to incorporate into their classroom practices. A typical example displaying the employment of technology concerning social activism is to tell students to fill out a WebQuest. According to Halat (2008), a WebQuest is a learning and teaching model based on computers, and learners can actively get involved in an activity or use the internet as a resource. WebQuests are referred to as an exclusive approach that can enhance learners' information technology, computer, and digital literacy competencies. Since they are inquiry-oriented, engaging, and student-centered activities, they promote high-level thinking and problem-solving skills (Russell, 2008).

Technology should be employed as a means not only to facilitate collaborative work among classmates but also as a tool to create alternative conduits through which learners present their works.

2.4.2. Scaffolding

Scaffolding is a fundamental hypothesis closely related to the sociocultural hypothesis conceptualized by Vygotsky, as well as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), another influential hypothesis developed by him. In essence, the ZPD is described by Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers", and it establishes a solid basis for scaffolding. However, the term scaffolding was originally introduced around 1976 by Bruner, a great admirer of the works of Vygotsky. Vygotsky believed that learning is achieved best in a social context where meaning is constructed via interaction with more experienced individuals. "Scaffolding refers to providing contextual supports for meaning through the use of simplified language, teacher modeling, visuals and graphics, cooperative learning and hands-on learning" (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003, p. 345). Verenikina (1998) stated that scaffolding is the guidance and support provided by the teacher during knowledge acquisition; hence, this might entail a new role for the classroom teacher in

a constructivist learning environment, as the instructor is called upon to guide rather than to control the learning process.

Bradley (2004) identifies three different scaffolding categories thought to be specifically effective for foreign language students: a) Employing a simple language using the present tense while communicating, refraining from using idiomatic expressions and simplifying the language are some of the effective scaffolding policies that can be implemented by teachers, b) requesting completion rather than generation; therefore, the teacher can ask the learners to select answers from multiple choices or ask them to complete a partially done tasks, c) utilizing visual aids; by using various visual aids such as charts, tables, and graphic organizers, the teacher can provide information and can ask the students to provide responses with the help of visual aids

Modeling, bridging, contextualizing, schema building, re-presenting text, and developing metacognition are some of the frequently employed scaffolding techniques by foreign language teachers (Walqui, 2006). Various studies have demonstrated the positive effects of scaffolding. In a study regarding the effects of scaffolding on participants' reading comprehension performance, Pishghadam and Ghardiri (2011) tried to find out the influence of Symmetrical (S) and Asymmetrical (AS) scaffolding on reading comprehension performance of adult EFL learners. The results of the study, which was conducted on 52 English language institute students in Mashhad, Iran, revealed that the group receiving instruction through the AS scaffolding strategy performed better than the group received S treatment. Furthermore, the follow-up interviews revealed an elevated level of motivation in students who cooperated with more competent students. In another study aimed to improve students' speaking abilities, Zarandi (2014) found out that through scaffolding, students' speaking skills improved better in comparison with those who received traditional teaching.

Constructivist theory of learning and particularly social constructivism emphasizes the social and collaborative aspect of learning and attributes great importance to co-creation of knowledge in a social context and scaffolding. In this respect, educational technology tools such as wikis, forums, and blogs can serve as platforms where social interaction, cooperation, knowledge construction, and meaningful learning take place. According to Kern (1996), in technology-enhanced learning environments, knowledge is constructed through interaction, interpretation, and collaboration by the learners, and the role the teacher undertakes is no longer instructing but attending to communication and scaffolding the learners. Similarly,

computer-based technologies and programs which can be employed as *Mindtools* can foster and facilitate critical thinking. Jonassen (2000) describes *Mindtools* as computer applications that encourage cognitive processing and involve learners in critical, higher-order thinking about content. Likewise, Tam (2000) believes that technology-enhanced learning environments support constructivism. Consequently, Web 2.0 tools can alleviate frustrations associated with traditional classroom settings and can easily be implemented as effective

2.5. Blended Learning

The term *Blended Learning* or also called *Hybrid learning* is a fairly recent development made possible with the introduction of computers and internet-related technologies and tools into educational settings. White and Geer (2010) have examined various definitions put forth concerning blended learning and they accept that the simplest definition is that it combines online and face-to-face learning. In this respect, blended learning seems to offer the educational affordances created by both traditional and online learning experiences. Ideally, they are expected to complement one another by utilizing the most effective and valuable aspects of each approach. Similarly, Dziuban, Hartman, and Moskal (2004) suggest that blended learning should be presumed as an instructional method incorporating active learning opportunities offered by enhanced technology with the effective social opportunities of traditional classroom settings. Thorne (2003) believes that by assimilating innovative technologies according to the students' needs, blended learning becomes a learning model addressing the challenges of learning and development. Constructivist theory of learning posits that not all individuals learn the same way or at the same speed. In this respect, blended learning, by combining the most effective aspects of both traditional and online learning opportunities, seems to reach all the learner types in the spectrum; auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and reading and writing learners alike. A 2010 dated meta-analysis released by the U.S. Department of Education reveals that learners utilizing both traditional and online educational practices were more successful than learners receiving education in one camp or the other.

2.6. CMC Tools in Language Learning

There are various reasons as to why CMC tools have been very popular in education and foreign language teaching particularly. A fundamental reason for the sparkling of CMC tools in education within a short period of time is that these tools allow trainers and trainees to cooperate and communicate whenever they need (Elliott, 2009; Johnson, 2006; Teng & Taveras, 2004). Long and Doughty (2009) claim that "CMC is probably one of the Internet tools most employed in language classrooms for the capacity that it has to connect geographically dispersed audiences, especially students, with other speakers of the language they are learning" (p. 361). On the other hand, Harrison and Toyoda (2002) state that challenges associated with synchronous CMC may hinder language learning when they are embedded into language learning as the process will drastically reduce the participation of the beginner and intermediate level students to the lesson due to their low proficiency levels. However, Bromley (2011) states: "… today, perhaps more than ever before, technology and the digital world are transforming writing practices in classrooms of future will need to reflect the roles computers, and the Internet increasingly plays in writing that occurs out of school and at work" (p. 57).

2.7. Blogging

Language teaching professionals have adopted many applications, such as discussion boards, forums, e-mails, wikis, chat rooms, and blogs over the years (Hashemi & Najafi, 2011). However, of the first and second-generation Web tools, weblogs, or simply known as blogs, have extensively been integrated into foreign language teaching. Oxford Dictionary Online describes the word blog as "A frequently updated web site consisting of personal observations, excerpts from other sources, etc., typically run by a single person, and usually with hyperlinks to other sites; an online journal or diary" (Zhang, 2009, p. 65). Blogs are also named as online personal journals or logs which are brought up to date rapidly and have existed in the cyberspace community since 1998 (Hashemi & Najafi, 2011). Blogs are described as one of the latest applications included in blended learning (Amir, Ismail, & Hussin, 2011). The statement made by Du and Wagner (2007) with regard to the nature and importance of blogs is very concise and clear: blogs have radically altered how people utilize and have interaction on the Internet since it promotes the users to be the contributors and creators

of information rather than being mere consumers of information**.** Ferdig and Trammell (2004) draw attention to four educationally beneficial aspects of blogging for learners, referring to the social constructivist educational theories developed by Vygotsky. First, through blogging students master the subject matter by scouring, filtering, and posting. Second, their interest in learning increases and this leads to ownership of their learning. Third, it creates legitimate opportunities for the students to be part of a community of practice. And lastly, different perspectives can be voiced through blogging.

Towards the end of the 90s, the first blogs came out in the United States of America. Afterward, blogs rapidly became popular around the globe. Their applications spread out in 1999 (Georgescu, 2010). Thus, Zhang (2009) states that since this kind of software tool has a high speed to reach the community and the ease of publishing that blogs offer, the number of blog accounts is getting increased day by day. Blogging is popular because of a number of features which include bloggers' ability to talk about an area in which they have an interest, to connect people sharing common worldviews, to exchange their experiences and know-how, and to financially profit from blogging (Sobel as cited in Kattsir, 2012).

In traditionally administered classroom settings, it is only the teacher who reads students' writings and the center of the interest is generally the form, not the content. By writing in weblogs, however, students may have the opportunity to write for genuine readers including students in other classes and peers besides the teacher (Bruns & Jacobs, 2006). Similarly, Jonassen (2000) states that the emergence of blogs and their utilization in educational contexts have encouraged learners to write, as the audience is more authentic; hence, this motivates learners to spend more time working to improve their writing skills.

Studies have revealed various uses and benefits attributable to the integration of blogging into teaching. Blogs provide areas for publishing (Ferdig & Trammell, 2004). They bear the ability to reflect (Munday, 2010; Ray, Hocutt, & Patterson, 2005). Also, they provide improved interaction among students (Felix, 2008; Liang & Bonk, 2009; Kuzu, 2007; Shin & Son 2007; Yang & Chang (2012). Additionally, they increase motivation (Frye, Trathen, & Koppenhaver, 2010). Blogs create a platform for backing collaborative learning (Wang & Fang, 2005). Also, they encourage a sense of community (Halic, Lee, Paulus, & Spence, 2010; Zhang, 2010). Blogs lead to improved writing performances in L2 (Ciftci, 2009; Drexler, Dawson, & Ferdig, 2007; Fageeh, 2011; Jones, 2006; Roth, 2007; Kelley, 2008; Simsek, 2010; Sun, 2010). Blogs also help

develop grammatical accuracy and vocabulary enhancement (Fellner & Apple, 2006; Rahmany, Sadeghi, & Faramarzi 2013). Also, blogging helps learners gain fluency in L2 writing (Bernstein 2004; Fellner & Apple 2006). Blogging improves content and organization in writing (Anderson 2010; Arslan, & Şahin-Kızıl 2010; Cequena, & Salle, 2013; Simsek, 2009). Various studies have also reported a connection between blogging and perceived learning among students (Deng & Yuen, 2011; Illeris, 2007; Rosen, Carrier, & Cheever, 2013). A study conducted by Kilic and Gökdas (2014) revealed students having a high sense of community reported higher levels of perceived learning, supporting Halic, Lee, Paulus, and Spence (2010) and Top, (2012). Oravec (2002) contends that blogging could enhance learners' self-confidence by enabling analytical and critical thinking skills.

Clayson (2009) and Sitzmann, Ely, Brown, and Bauer, (2010), on the other side, make a clear-cut distinction between actual learning and perceived learning, pointing out that they are separate and distinct constructs. Evidence indicates that individuals' self-assessed knowledge and actual performance or cognitive learning may not be correlated. A study conducted by Kruger and Dunning (1999) found out that less capable individuals exaggerate their perceived learning more than highly capable individuals. In a similar line, Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) point out that learners' affective and motivational states influence the judgments learners make about themselves.

This reportedly very effective tool in terms of the learner attainments it leads to may bear some flaws because of its compulsory nature of assignments as students need precise assistance and validation in their writing on their blogs (Hourigan & Murray, 2010). In a similar line, Philip and Nicholls (2009) emphasize another negative side of blogs: they can pose extra workload for teachers including reading, cross-referencing, and marking student entries in blogs.

Three types of blogs are predominantly utilized in educational contexts: Tutor blog, student blog, and class blog. Community blogs are used in educational contexts as well.

2.7.1. Tutor Blog

The teacher of a class operates the Tutor Blog. In the tutor blog, the content may be confined to homework announcements, course information, syllabus, and assignments. This type of blog is designed for the learner reading exercises, examination

of English language websites, asynchronous and synchronous information exchanges, and ‘resources of links for self-study’ (Noytim, 2010). Tutor blog is operated by the teacher for the learners (Campbell, 2003).

A tutor blog comprises three objectives. First, the tutor is expected to post the information regarding course syllabus, assignments, evaluation, and deadlines. These documents are posted so that both parents and learners can access the information with ease. Following the blog, students can get the instructions and carry out their assignments. Second, it may be portrayed as an entryway that assists students with researching the accessible, valuable resources on the Web in a directed fashion. It is the tutor’s task to carry out the research on the Web pertaining to valuable information for the learners and then post the useful materials, exercises, or text; afterward, these materials are hyperlinked to the blog post of the tutor (De Almeide Soares, 2008). The hyperlinked materials are exceptionally pragmatic for both learners and tutors as they can reach these materials at any time, even after the lesson is over (Campbell, 2003; De Almeide Soares, 2008). In this respect, the tutor blog can be described as an individual library in which students find hyperlinks to reference books, extracurricular, and free-time activities that feed the groups’ special needs and interests (De Almeide Soares, 2008). Also, Yang (2009) argues that on the blog the tutors may also ask questions to learners; furthermore, they can add videos, audio files, photos, or texts in order to guide their students and learners can model their teacher’s blogs.

2.7.2. Class Blog

Zhang and Olfman (2010) explain that class blogs are utilized not only to document and share learners’ experiences but also to provide feedback and assessment. The teacher usually undertakes the responsibility to run the blog. The teacher authors a post on the blog and students give responses to the post. Georgescu (2010) states that the peak of the work achieved with the collaboration of the students in a class display itself in the class blog. She also expresses that class blogs are the outcomes of the cooperative work of all the learners in a classroom setting. Campbell (2003) states that class blogs may be applied in communication-based classrooms as a kind of free type of bulletin or discussion board for students to publish texts in relation to the theme of the course. Georgescu also points out that learners can easily exchange information with students learning the same language all over the world. Also, blogs function as venues

through which students can spend more time interacting with peers, thereby providing opportunities for them to understand their peers and get to know one another much better.

2.7.3. Learner Blog

According to Campbell (2003), the learner blog could be perceived as an online platform in which an individual can update in a continuous manner with words, thoughts, and ideas belonging to him or her. Reading and writing skills can be displayed best in this kind of blog as learners write about their subjects of interest and to give comments on the other learners' blogs.

Efimova and Fiedler (2004) bolster student blogs as accommodating a student-friendly joint learning environment where students benefit from cooperation, scaffolding, and feedback greatly. Learner blog can be utilized as an online diary or portfolio page accessible by all classmates, enabling them to follow each other's blogs and post comments on their works. In this way, blogging contributes to the improvement of students' written communication which is mediated by peer and teacher comments in a socially interactive environment.

With learner blogs, each learner in a class may create his or her own blog page under the supervision of the teacher. Learners can use their blogs as a diary or portfolio page which is online and always accessible, allowing all students in the class to follow one another's blogs and post comments on the writings of their peers. Thus, blogging improves their written and oral communication through the help of the posts and comments on their writing by their peers and the class instructor. Efimova and Fiedler (2004) also contend that blogs provide a means of expression for inner speech and reflective thinking; this material then becomes available for review and development, thus encouraging and amplifying the acquisition of the skills needed for self-observation and intentional change. Therefore, within the principles of social constructivism, writing, which can be regarded as the product of inner speech, has an opportunity to develop through collaboration and idea-sharing. In this respect, according to de Moor and Efimova (2004), in the process of blogging, learners have two different conversations; one with their inner ideas and one with the others in their community.

2.7.4. Community Blog

Community blogs and class blogs are similar in many ways. The only difference is that in a community blog, both the teacher and the students have the authority to post writings and comments on others' posts.

2.7.5. Integrating blogs into writing

The teaching of writing requires a predominant use of a coursebook. Narration, which reduces learners to passive recipients of knowledge, forms the basis of traditional teaching practice. Also, in traditional classroom settings, there are no authentic readers for students' writings except for the teacher; this may lead to a negative effect on learners' motivation, and in many cases, either there is no available technology, or it is not put to effective use to make L2 writing instruction sufficient to develop learners' skills. Furthermore, the time allocated for writing classes is very limited. In many cases the number of students in classrooms is excessive, and the teacher may not spare time for the individual needs of the students. To make things worse, there is no room for scaffolding, peer collaboration, or peer assessment opportunities. To remediate challenges created by the very nature of writing classes, teaching professionals have sought solutions to the problem. Introducing students to the opportunities offered by technological developments seems to be promising. Hyland (2008) claims that "in a world increasingly dominated by electronic Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), it is unsurprising that writing teachers are often faced with demands to integrate these technologies into their classes" (p. 144). As a result, in educational institutions all over the world, teachers have taken the initiative to assimilate ICT tools into their teaching practices, notably, in foreign language teaching.

Blogging's inherently social and interactive nature seems to cast a sizable amount of impact on the function of learning gained through blogging. Xie, Ke, and Sharma (2010), who connect the interaction and learning created in blogs, implicitly draw the connection which exists between the social nature of blogs and the way they are used to construct knowledge.

2.7.6. Student Attitudes toward Blogging

Of the many Web 2.0 tools, blogs have garnered considerable use by numerous educational institutions (Hourigan & Murray 2010). Studies have pointed out several

valuable aspects of blogs. Two different studies conducted by Williams and Jacobs (2004) and Tekinarslan (2008) revealed that blogs foster personal reflections and sharing of the hyperlinks to contemporary information and resources by the student displayed a sense of collaboration. Blogging helps interactions between the writer and the audience (Ray, Hocutt, & Patterson, 2005). Additionally, blogs lead to a feeling on the part of students that there is more teacher involvement in their learning (Churchill, 2009). In the same study, he also found out that factors such as student observation of teachers' blogging activities, discovering different perspectives, comments their friends received upon their blogging activities, and the progress made by their peers encouraged students to blog. Munday (2010), on the other hand, presented that blogs help learners undertake the responsibility to reflect on and document their own learning. Cameron (2012), while describing the pedagogical importance attributed to the nature of blogs, argues that interactive learning experiences, which are digressive and conducive to high-level thinking and knowledge development are fostered by blogging. Finally, the social aspects of blogging such as sharing ideas on the blog (Ray, Hocutt, & Patterson, 2005), reading others' posts on the blogs and receiving comments (Churchill, 2009), and reading others' comments on the blog (Ellison & Wu, 2008) have been found useful and may encourage perceived learning.

Despite many reported pedagogical benefits of blogs, many researchers claim that these advantages may not necessarily be inherent, and like any other medium employed for educational purposes, may inspire heterogeneous feelings and attitudes. Cultural background, linguistic limitations, and previous learning experiences are some of the factors that can influence learners' capability to attain an ideal outcome from collaborative assessment duties (Wang, Harding, & Mai, 2012). Also, blogs pose problems for those who have fewer dispositions towards technology, and in virtual social environments are at times seen as non-personal tools that trigger discussions (Hossain & Quinn 2012). Ajeneye (2005) found that students frequently assume reflective writing on blogs as an exasperating and time-consuming activity that interrupts the learning process. Also, studies have revealed that learners displaying low writing proficiency can develop writing anxiety, a common occurrence in L2 writing (Genç & Yaylı, 2019; Moon & Lim, 2013)

Meredith (2010) points out that reflective writing and critical thinking assignments created challenges for international business students as they were unfamiliar with such activities, considering the educational experiences they had in their

countries. The findings in that study are supported by a perspective presented by Goh, Quek, and Lee (2010), who argue blogging related studies mostly have their origins in the West and they disregard cultural differences.

2.8. Writing

The advent and evolution of writing and writing systems date back to several millennia B.C. Nevertheless, writing has had an unmatched impact on the evolution and the development of civilizations across the globe, given the long history of human existence on the planet. Coulmas (2003) calls writing as the only most far-reaching technology ever created by humans. In a similar line, it has been named as the technology of mind by anthropologist Jack Goody. Writing is the next most important development of human beings after the language itself (Goody, 1973). According to Coulmas, writing is a technology whose evolution has taken over thousands of years and can be studied from a multitude of angles in a number of scientific disciplines such as history, philology, education, anthropology, psychology, computer programming, and linguistics. Characterized by the intense use of computers, mobile devices, digital writing and communication, and internet-related technologies in today's ever-competitive world good writing skills seem to have gained an even more prominent role than before.

Writing is a vastly complex phenomenon requiring the involvement of multiple steps to achieve. Various aspects of writing distinguish it from the other three language skills, which along with writing are known as macro-skills. Listening and speaking are the first two skills learned in natural environments. The third skill to be attained is reading. Writing is the last of the four to be mastered because it requires the involvement of motor skills. According to Abidin, Pour Mohammadi, and Hamid (2011), writing involves not only the use of hands but also the cooperation of the brain and eyes so that learners can express their ideas freely by thinking and imagining. Writing is one of the most difficult skills for learners to master, particularly in English as a foreign language (EFL) context (Myles, 2002).

The following points stated by Beare (2019) clearly depict the challenges associated with the teaching of writing skills.

- While learning how to write requires a conscious effort on the part of the learner, language acquisition takes place unconsciously. A typical example of why it is hard for individuals to write is because employing written language entails learning a mapping skill.
- A mechanism such as structural, phonemic, or representative must filter the written language. Writing requires not only recognizing the meaning of the words verbally but also transcribing the sounds.
- The process of transcribing sounds requires the learning of other rules and structures, thereby cognizing a previously unconscious process.

In foreign language teaching, meanwhile, L2 writing skills has been an indispensable part of the curriculum since the main objective in learning a foreign language is enabling learners to communicate effectively, both in written and spoken language. Therefore, equal importance is placed on the improvement of writing skills. In this respect, various approaches such as freewriting, process writing, product writing, grammar-syntax organization, and communicative writing, have been utilized to maximize learners' writing skills over time.

Elbow and Belanoff (2000) define freewriting as the activity of writing down any thoughts or ideas that come to mind at any time without stopping. The primary focus of the freewriting approach, whether guided or unguided, is quantity and fluency rather than quality or accuracy. It is grounded in the assumption that when ideas exist, the organization will follow. Freewriting was a popular method in the 1960s and 70s in L1 writing. However, it fell into disuse with the introduction of newer approaches.

Product writing, also known as the *Current-Traditional Rhetoric*, is a style of teaching writing, the focal point of which is the students' final product; that is, the writing product they are required to create (Zakime, 2018). In this approach, grammatical accuracy is the utmost goal; hence, learners are not provided ample opportunities to discover various uses of the target language. This may lead to compromised motivation in learners (Harwood, 2005). Also, some critics such as Pasand and Haghi (2013) believe that the originality of writing is constrained by this approach and it leads to the prevention of learners' creativity. Similarly, Prodromou (1995) contends that it devalues both the linguistic and personal potential of the learners.

In the grammar-syntax-organization approach, the focal point is not only grammar and syntax but also the organization. The proponents of this approach claim

that writing is not formed of standalone skills to be acquired in an orderly manner; on the contrary, the skills involved in the process complement each other.

The process-based approach is a model that has been extensively utilized in teaching writing. In this approach, both learners and the teacher contribute to the process of composing a text together. Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) contend that this approach is specified by elemental procedures such as prewriting, teacher feedback, peer comment, and revision. It provides the chance for the learners to reflect on what they are about to plan, write, produce drafts, revise, edit, and exchange feedback on their work before producing the ultimate form of the text (Zakime, 2018). Tribble (1996) calls this dynamic process as a recursive model nurtured and shaped by the feedback provided by peers or the teacher. The model consists of the following steps: prewriting, composing/drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

2.8.1. Responding to Writing

Richards (2003) states in the preface of Second Language Writing written by Hyland (2003) that writing is amongst the most crucial abilities that second language learners need to develop. He notes that mastering how to write in L2 is one of the most challenging aspects of L2 learning. In a similar manner, MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) and Kurk, Atay, and Latif (2007) contend that the majority of language learners, regardless of their learning levels, assume writing one of the most challenging language skills to achieve. This may be due to learning how to write effectively requires extensive and specialized training, and it may be a long and painstaking process on the part of learners. In the process of writing, lacking enough semantic, lexical, and syntactic background learners often make a significant number of errors. Attending to students' errors and giving feedback is assumed to be the teacher's responsibility in most cases. A great majority of writing teachers believe that responding to the students' writing via corrective feedback strategies is an important aspect of any writing lesson and students expect to be corrected and esteem highly the WCF offered to them by their teachers (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). However, not all scholars seem to favor corrective feedback.

Krashen (1984), Semke (1984), and Truscott (1996) contend that teachers should end the practice of correcting errors because, ultimately, it becomes ineffective. Truscott believed that oral correction, in specific, leads to embarrassment, anger, inhibition, and feeling of inferiority; therefore, it should be abandoned. Kepner (1991) claimed that

development in students' L2 writing is not positively affected by teacher feedback. However, a large majority of studies support the positive impact of corrective feedback on language learners. Very often L2 writers' ultimate aim is improving their grammatical accuracy; naturally, they anticipate the errors to be corrected and appreciate written corrective feedback from their teachers (Sheen, 2007).

2.8.2. Peer Feedback

Peer feedback has gained a considerable amount of interest in foreign language writing all over the world (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Peer feedback is described by Liu and Hansen (2002, p. 1) as follows:

> The use of learners as sources of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a 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.

Feedback comprises a substantial aspect of social interaction. Due to the social and collaborative nature of peer feedback, its use in the second language is supported both by social constructivist learning theory and theories from various other disciplines such as second language acquisition, applied linguistics, education, and cognitive and psycholinguistic fields. The positive effects of peer feedback in second language writing have been emphasized by an increasing volume of research. According to Hu (2005), since peer feedback leads to a series of positive contributions in students such as exploring and negotiating the meaning, discovering sound channels of conveying meaning, practicing a broad spectrum of writing skills and demanding a more active role in the learning process, it acts a very important tool that facilitates the process of writing. Peer collaboration and interaction can be initiated and fostered by peer feedback, thereby creating an environment that is both socio-interactive and facilitative where learners can offer and receive support and scaffolding (Cotterall & Cohen, 2003). Furthermore, according to Villamil and Guerrero (1998), peer feedback offers a conducive educational context suitable to readers and writers where they can work according to their respective ZPD.

Face to face contexts inhibit some students from giving feedback due to the psychological pressure they exert on them; hence, computer-mediated peer feedback in

asynchronous learning settings, provides opportunities to students to offer feedback (Ho & Savignon 2007).

Although many positive effects regarding the use of peer feedback in second language learning have been reported, Cheng (2009) contends that it does not necessarily result in increased learner motivation, engagement, or autonomy. Also, many studies have shown that learners have mixed attitudes toward online peer feedback (Choi, 2007; Ho & Savignon 2007; Rourke, Mendelssohn, Coleman, & Allen 2008). Furthermore, Hyland and Hyland (2006) argue that foreign language learners usually esteem teacher feedback more highly than the feedback received from peers. A number of factors including the character of the task, the mode, and the relationship between the reviewers and writers may impact the effectiveness of peer feedback as an instructional tool (Ciftci & Kocoglu, 2012; Lin, 2005). Also, teacher training plays a key role in ensuring the efficacy of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) peer feedback when internet technologies are incorporated into teaching writing (Liou & Peng, 2009).

2.8.3. Teacher Feedback

Teachers have always been regarded as the main driving force in the second language learning, especially for the writing courses (Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Blackstone, Spiri, & Naganuma, 2007). The teacher is tasked with checking, correcting commenting on, and assessing students' papers (Blackstone et al., 2007). Therefore, teacher feedback is generally the ultimate tool that provides learners with information regarding linguistic correctness, accuracy, and appropriateness (Chandler, 2003; Mottet, 2008). Accordingly, learners esteem very highly the feedback provided to their works by their teachers. In this respect, the focus of the majority of studies on peer feedback dwells on what type of teacher feedback strategies should be employed in addressing learner errors.

Ellis (1997) mentions about two major types of feedback strategies employed by teachers: positive and corrective feedback. Positive feedback refers to the constructive and encouraging responses given by the teacher when students elicit correct answers. On the other hand, corrective feedback indicates that the learner has made an error in the target language, and the feedback provided in response aims to remediate the deviation. According to Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006), teachers' responses are categorized into three different strategic treatments: (a) the teacher supplies the student

with the correct form (Direct CF); (b) the teacher expresses the existence of an error but refrains from correcting (Indirect CF); (c) The teacher provides some kind of metalinguistic clue concerning the nature of the error (Metalinguistic CF).

The term electronic feedback or e-feedback is employed in studies on second language writing (SLW) and computer-assisted language learning and refers to computer-facilitated feedback which is either produced by the teacher or student peers using a computer and posted electronically to students (Ene, 2014). Some researchers prefer the term teacher electronic feedback (TEF) or written corrective feedback (WCF) as well in their studies. The results from various studies indicate that human-generated teacher electronic feedback (TEF) leads to positive perceptions in students (Elola & Oskoz, 2016; Liu & Sadler, 2003; Lu & Bol, 2007)

Studies reveal that corrective feedback strategies generally result in increased learner uptake, improve accuracy, foster language learning, and are found to be effective in reducing students' grammatical errors. Carless (2006) contends that students receiving corrective feedback during the writing process have a crisper belief of how well they perform and what they need to do to improve. Moreover, major learning theories such as cognitive constructivism, social constructivism, and behaviorism also recognize feedback as an important component in learning and instruction. Hence, written corrective feedback is a standard policy employed by most L2 teachers to aid students in revising their writing (Mackiewitz & Riley, 2003). However, the debate about whether teachers should provide explicit corrective feedback or implicit (coded) corrective feedback is unclear and inconclusive. For example, in a study aimed at comparing the effect of indirect and direct written corrective feedback on 60 intermediate EFL learners, Lalande (1982) found out that direct feedback was less effective than indirect feedback**.** In a similar line, Fratnzen (1995) and Ferris (2003) argue that the benefits of the feedback given indirectly outweigh those of direct feedback in students' long-term writing mastery. Meanwhile, a study conducted by Lee (2009) on secondary level teachers of English revealed that they chiefly utilized comprehensive feedback rather than employing selective indirect feedback in writing courses. Similarly, Vyatkina's (2010) study shows that direct feedback leads to better revisions; however, more implicit (coded) feedback may lead to confusion in students and cause incorrect beliefs, confirming earlier findings by Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1996).

Whether teachers should adopt selective (focused) error feedback policies or comprehensive (unfocused) error feedback in their error treatment is another source of

debate. Ferris (1995) and Hendrickson (1978) are in favor of selective error feedback because they believe, in that way, students can easily focus on more demanding issues in writing instead of grappling with every error marked on the paper on digital platforms such as blog posts. Additionally, the teacher's marking of all the writing may cause de-motivation (Ferris, 2002; Reid, 1998)

Lalande (1982), a researcher in favor of comprehensive error feedback, claims that students require thorough feedback because selective error feedback may mislead them. Students may assume the unmarked parts in their writing error-free. Lee (2004) reports that in most cases not only teachers but also students opt for comprehensive error correction feedback. Ferris (2003) contends that for treatable errors (grammar and spelling) indirect WCF can be employed because learners can self-correct the errors, whereas for untreatable errors like word of choice and sentence structure direct feedback can be useful.

A growing number of studies suggest that TCF, in whatever form it may be presented, leads to improvement in linguistic accuracy. Nevertheless, there seems to be no consensus as to how long it takes students to show signs of better performance. In this respect, Ashwell (2000) contends that teachers assume providing corrective feedback to students' writing will help them produce better results in their subsequent writing tasks. However, research on error correction in L2 writing classes indicates that corrective error feedback from teachers leads to improved linguistic accuracy over time (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Yet, Goldstein (2016) notes that a series of influencing factors affecting not only teachers but also students which may range from personality, proficiency, motivation, and individual attitude to institutional and program-related constraints may adversely affect the success of feedback provided.

Student aptitude, motivation, and attitude are some of the variables that can play crucial roles in language learning (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Of these, negative student attitudes towards feedback can have a negative effect on the efficiency of teacher feedback to a great extent. AlBakri's (2016) study revealed the majority of the students were not committed to their study, nor did they take the teacher corrective feedback seriously. The study also indicated that most of the students lacked autonomy and motivation. This is in parallel with the results of the study conducted by Guénette (2007), who claims that regardless of the type of feedback the teacher provides, students will not improve their writing skills unless they are determined to do so. Similarly, Lee

(2004) found out that some students had doubts with regard to the effectiveness of the error feedback, so they did not treat error feedback seriously.

2.9. Related Studies

Various studies have been administered with a view to gaining insight into the effects of blogging on learners' writing skills. The studies primarily focus on three aspects of blogging: the effect of blogging on students' achievements in academic writing skills, students' perceptions of blogs and attitudes toward the administration of blogs in teaching practice, and studies focusing on peer collaboration and feedback. However, the results of the studies also reveal a number of secondary positive gains associated with the main attainments.

2.9.1. Blogging Related Studies Conducted Abroad

In a study conducted on EFL learners' beliefs and perceptions of blogging in writing class, Wu (2005) found out inconsistencies between learners' beliefs and activities about posting articles on the blog. In a similar study on students' perceptions of the use of blogs, Miftachudin (2017) found out that although students accepted the advantages of blogs in foreign language learning, they were reluctant to author and maintain blogs. In the same study lack of self-confidence was found to be a major contributor to reluctance in writing in blogs.

In an attempt to highlight the accuracy of blogging experience, Wang (2009) scrutinized the role blog assisted electronic feedback played in the volume of the feedback which was received by learners in a blogging experience. The research showed that training students is essential in providing feedback to their friends' posts on the blog and encourage students to understand the cooperative aspects of the blogging practice.

A study carried out by Sun (2010) suggests that blogging in writing tasks could substantially impact learners' writing performances. In the same study, Sun states that blogging may increase the autonomy of the students and create positive attitudes towards foreign language writing. Trajtemberg and Yiakoumetti (2011) studied how blogging elevated students' interaction. They focused on the distinction between teacher and learner-initiated interactions, concluding the supremacy of student-led interactions in improving students' self-expression and self-evaluation.

Sun and Chang (2012) looked into "how blogs and their interactive and collaborative features help academically-advanced graduate students process academic writing knowledge and make sense of their writer identity" (p. 43). The study concluded that blogging activity encouraged active and reflective participation of students in knowledge sharing, knowledge generation, and the development of numerous strategies to cope with difficulties encountered in the learning process. Many studies focus on the importance of feedback provided in the blogs on student motivation. Hyland (2008) expresses that "providing feedback is often seen as one of the ESL writing teacher's most important tasks, offering the kind of individualized attention that is otherwise rarely possible under normal classroom conditions" (p. 177).

In Spain, Fleta and Sabater (2010) researched the impact of blogging on students' writing performances and their motivation. The participants of the study created e-blog accounts, and they worked in groups to interact with each other easily. The participants posted their assignments and left comments on each other's' posts. By receiving and leaving comments, they constituted a virtual classroom atmosphere. Fleta and Sabater state: "writing for a purpose has encouraged them to produce language more fluently and be more concerned about correctness, which leads instructors to consider blogs as a potential tool for the development of linguistic skills" (p. 623). Khampusaen (2012) investigated the impact of a blogging activity on the writing skills of university students. In this study, learners were supported with peer and teacher feedback; in this respect, the researcher reported that giving and receiving feedback improved learners' motivation; moreover, learners' attitudes were also positively affected by the blog use application. As a result, it was claimed that learners' writing skills, as well as their skills in technology use, were improved.

Lin (2013) conducted a study to see the effect of blogging on the participants' writing performance at a university in Taiwan. Fifty students whose proficiency were B1 and B2 levels in the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR) participated in the study. The study concluded that while participants in both groups improved their L2 writing skills during the intervention, a meaningfully significant difference was not found between the Control Group (CG) and the experimental group (EG) in terms of improvement in writing skills. The study also revealed that the motivation level of the participants in the CG to be higher than that of the CG.

Kamali (n.d.) conducted a blogging study as an enhancement to L2 writing skills at Guilan University in Iran. The study, which lasted one semester, also aimed to

investigate the students' attitudes and perspectives pertaining to blogging through questionnaires. The results of the study revealed that the majority of students were not of the opinion that blogging had an effective role in the development of their writing skills. Furthermore, they believed blogging to be a time-consuming activity. The study found no meaningfully noteworthy divergence between the writing performances of the control group and the experimental group. Also, the study revealed a series of negative themes such as lack of interest due to demotivation, presence of distractors, writing anxiety, inappropriate feedback, and plagiarism, believed to be associated with the utilization of blogging.

Garcia, Moizer, Wilkins, and Haddoud, (2019) in a comprehensive study investigated the correlation between various aspects of blogging and student perceptions such as student perceptions of digital technology and rhythm of blogging, students' perceived usefulness of blogging use and rhythm of blogging, and rhythm of blogging and perceived learning. The rhythm of blogging refers to the way people blog, and it comprises of reading, writing, commenting in (receiving a comment), and commenting out (providing a comment) of blogs. The study concluded that a higher rhythm of blogging through reading, writing, and *commenting in* led to higher perceived learning by students. However, the study couldn't establish a correlation between commenting out and perceived learning.

2.9.2. Blogging Studies in Turkey

Can and Devrim (2006), investigated learners' attitudes towards using blogs; their findings indicated that learners generally have positive attitudes towards blog use in their coursework, and most of the participants in those studies believed that using blogs improved their writing skills. Akcay and Arslan (2010) carried out a study among Turkish educators to find out the function of blogging on the improvement of writing skills**.** The results indicated that the participants' attitudes towards blogging experience were substantially positive and that blogs could improve reading and writing skills greatly. Özkan (2011) conducted a study on the effects of blogging on pre-service teachers' teaching skills. The study revealed the emergence of a number of positive themes such as increased use of technology and learner autonomy, enhanced writing skills, and actualization of self-evaluation. Despite the positive outcomes of the

blogging experience on participants' academic skills, several themes associated with negativity were also observed regarding blogging activity in the same study.

Kazancı (2012) conducted a study with thirty participants for six weeks at the School of Foreign Languages of Akdeniz University to find out the effect of blogging on participants' EFL writing performances. The participants both in the control and the experimental group wrote three essays, each having a first, second, and final draft. The result of the study displayed that blogging contributed to the development of writing skills. Although the participants in the experimental group improved their grades by 23%, the progress rate for the control group remained at 5%. In addition to the pedagogical contribution of blogging activity, the participants also found blogging as a tool for increasing motivation through constructive feedback.

Dehneliler (2013) carried out a study to discover the effects of web-based writing, also known as e-writing, on EFL learners' writing performances. The study also ought to find about the learners' perceptions of blogging regarding writing instruction. The study was carried out with 20 participants who wrote fourteen drafts and the participants' first three and the last three blog posts were compared to find out the effect of blogging on participants' writing performances. The results of the study revealed that blogging enhanced participants' writing skills, and the participants in the experimental group outperformed the participants in the control group in terms of the enhancements in academic writing skills. Although the participants initially thought blogging to be a useless and time-consuming activity, at the end of the study their perceptions of blogging turned markedly positive.

Özdemir (2015) conducted a study with 40 freshmen EFL learners to investigate the effect of blogging specifically on writing achievement and motivation. While the participants in the CG submitted their tasks in the traditional handwritten format, the participants in the EG posted the tasks on the weblog. The study concluded that although process-based writing contributed to participants' writing skills, blogging enhanced writing instruction did not result in better writing performance on the part of the participants. The study also concluded the blogging integrated writing instruction was not superior to the traditional writing approach in creating motivation.

Üzer (2016), in a study aimed to enhance participants' foreign language writing skills through blogging, sought to learn about participants' experiences and attitudes. Twenty-one B1 level students participated in the study that was carried out at Antalya International University. During the five-week intervention, while the control group

received traditional pen-and-paper EFL writing instruction, the participants in the experimental group received blogging integrated instructional practices. According to the results of the study, while the progress rate for the participants in the experimental group was recorded as 20.9%, the progress rate of the control group remained at 5.9%. The results of the questionnaire conducted to the participants made clear that the participants had affirmative attitudes towards blogging and the majority of the learners considered blogging a beneficial activity in terms of foreign language writing.

Sekmez (2017), in a mixed-method type study, aimed to gain insights into the learners' attitudes towards blogging. The study was conducted at Mersin Çağ University School of Foreign Languages with twenty participants for ten weeks. The intervention aimed to find out the contribution of blogging on students' autonomy, motivation, social and academic skills. The results of the study revealed that the participants were content with the pedagogical and social affordances created by blogging. The study concluded that the blogging process not only contributed to the participants' academic progress but it led to increased interaction between peers and students and the teacher through feedback as well, thereby enhancing critical thinking skills.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the information concerning the overall design of the study, data collection and data collection tools, analysis procedures, participants, and the settings. In the following sections, the underlying rationale determining the employment of each method and step are given.

3.2. Methodology

This study intended to find out the use of blogs in foreign language writing context; it primarily aimed to cast light on the effects of web-based writing on EFL learners' writing performances and learners' perceptions of the use of blogs in writing instruction. To this end, the students in the intervention group were tasked with nine writing assignments for nine weeks and posting them on the class blog. The blog entries that the students provided served as the components of portfolio assignments. Of these nine blogging tasks, the first two and the last two were compared to discover the impact of blogging on students' writing performances.

The methodology adopted for the study is a quasi-experimental research design including both qualitative and quantitative data. The quasi-experimental study design is a type of evaluation that aims to determine whether a program or intervention has the intended effect on a study's participants. Studies employing mixed-data set, on the other hand, integrate both quantitative and qualitative approach (Hinkel, 2005; Mackey & Gass, 2012; Nunan & Bailey, 2009) through blending of methods consisting a number of writing assignments on blogs, the blogging inventory dealing with the effect of blogging process on students' writing performance and the interviews to explore the perceptions of the students on blog writing in the collection of data.

Creswell (2014) contends that the most advanced research designs are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research design. While the focus of qualitative research design is to discover the approach or way through which an individual or a group interprets a situation, quantitative research, on the other hand,

relies on data that are observed or measured to examine questions about the sample population.

The underlying rationale in employing a mixed-data set lies in the assumption that qualitative or quantitative data as standalone applications fail to depict a clear picture of the investigated phenomena; hence, employing both methodologies provides better insights (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). A number of mixed research designs have been mentioned in the literature; however, six designs, three of which concurrent and the other three sequential, are most commonly utilized mixed-method research designs (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). In studies adopting mixed data set having sequential explanatory design, the collection of the quantitative data precedes the gathering of qualitative data.

To collect qualitative data, the researcher also conducted semi-structured interviews to analyze the students' perceptions of blogging as a writing tool. The data collected was processed through thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2014) define thematic analysis as a method through which patterns of meaning across qualitative data are identified and interpreted. They note six recursive phases of analysis in the process of thematic analysis. They are; 1) being familiar with the data, 2) generating preliminary codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) generating a thematic map, 5) naming themes, and 6) reporting.

Furthermore, to examine the participants' perceptions of blogging, a five-point Likert scale inventory containing eighteen questions was also employed after the intervention. Prior to the study, the researcher conducted an Internet-use-questionnaire to shed light on students' internet use patterns. Likert-scales questionnaires are viewed as indispensable tools in psychology and social surveys in addition to being eternally effective tools in collecting data (Dittrich, Francis, Hatzinger, & Katzenbeisser, 2007). Jack and Clarke (1998) also emphasize that inventories can be cost-effective tools for use in data collection.

A thorough document analysis, including the results of the FLT exam, which determined participants' proficiency levels at the university entrance exam, writing sections of the proficiency exam administered before the beginning of the semester, the first mid-term exam, and the second mid-term exam, provided supportive data concerning the results of the pre-test, post-test, and the blogging scores. The FLT scores and the proficiency exam results along with the scores of the pre-test ensured that before the intervention there was no statistically significant difference between the groups

regarding their proficiency levels. With the analysis of the mid-term II, the researcher aimed to find out whether the results of the post-test and the blogging scores could be verified by the results of another exam the participants took. Data triangulation aimed to ensure the reliability of data collection tools and the process. In this respect, the current study followed a combined approach. All the data collection tools employed in the study and the analysis tools utilized in analyzing the data elicited from the data gathering tools are given in Table 1.

Table 1.

Research Design

Research questions	***Research tools***	***Analysis tools***
1. What are the effects of blogging on participants' writing performance in the blog-embedded preparatory EFL writing classes?	Documents Pre-test/Post-test Blog entries Interview Questionnaires	*SPSS 25.0* *Excel* Thematic analysis *Otranscribe*
2. Is there any difference between the writing performance of participants of blog-embedded and traditional writing classes?	Documents Pre-test/post-test	*SPSS 25.0* *Excel* *Otranscribe* Thematic analysis.
3. What are the EFL learners' perceptions of the blogging experience prior to, during, and post-exposure to this Web 2.0 environment in preparatory EFL writing classes?	Questionnaires Interview	*SPSS 25.0* *Otranscribe* Thematic analysis
4. What challenges did the teacher as a researcher encounter during the running of blogging-enhanced preparatory EFL writing classes?	Fieldnotes	Thematic analysis

3.3. Setting

The study was conducted during the fall semester of 2019-2020 academic year at the School of Foreign Languages (SFL), Harran University (HRÜ), Sanliurfa, Turkey. The school provides one academic year of English language program to both compulsory and non-compulsory students. Should ELT students fail to get a passing grade in their first year, they have to study one more year. While ELT students form the compulsory group, students coming from various departments such as engineering, vocational high schools, accounting, public administration, and medical studies, etc.

form the non-compulsory group. All the students enrolling in the SFL are expected to take a proficiency examination, which tests four language skills prior to their academic studies in September. The ELT students receiving a passing grade continue their normal studies in their department. Those who fail to obtain a passing grade, on the other hand, follow a year of mandatory preparatory program at the SFL. Following the proficiency exam, the students who are going to have the preparatory program at the SFL take a placement test so that they can be placed evenly in the classes, considering their performance levels in the placement test. Since the medium of learning at the university is Turkish, compulsory, and non-compulsory program students are placed into different classes. Compulsory group students start their academic year at A2 level as they come from an ELT instruction background and non-compulsory students begin at A1 level, with respect to the criteria of the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR).

The university entrance examination the ELT student take is a high-stake exam, which primarily tests students' grammar levels and reading comprehension skills. As a result, the school and the private courses, which students attend in order to succeed in the university entrance exam, devote no time for the development of writing or speaking skills. Therefore, the ELT students, coming to the School of Foreign Languages, if they have not paid any special attention to the improvement of their writing and speaking skills, are virtually devoid of writing or speaking skills in English.

As for the program followed at the SFL, preparatory class students are given twenty-four hours of English instruction each week, which are divided into three main parts: sixteen hours for main course instruction; four hours for reading and writing skills; and four hours for the development of listening and speaking skills. In the main course, students are mainly taught grammatical structures, and lessons are supported with content featuring, reading, writing, speaking activities, and vocabulary exercises to develop students' basic language skills. The employment of the computer software called i-tool, which is a software version of the student book, in the course provides audio-visual elements.

Listening and speaking course aims to improve the listening skills of the students by fluently and creatively using the structures and vocabulary they have learned in various situations and speaking environments. The course also aims to enable students to express themselves in the target language as much as possible during their education. In reading and writing courses, meanwhile, the primary objective is to strengthen

students' reading skills and increase their vocabulary by using reading items on various topics at a level appropriate to the structures they have learned during their education. Also, it is aimed that students develop their writing skills within a certain plan by using sample texts on different subjects at the level appropriate for the structures they have learned during the education process. The book utilized for the development of reading and writing skills follows sentence, paragraph, and essay writing order.

As for the physical environment, the School of Foreign Languages possesses a complete building dedicated to language learning. The first floor of the two-story building houses administrative offices and instructors' offices and the ground floor contains seven classrooms where students receive language education. Each classroom is equipped with a computer, a sound system, and a projector. In addition, there is wireless internet facility in the classes and on the campus, to which students can have free access. There is also a library and a computer room that is utilized as a cyber-library as well. Classrooms are spacious enough to host 30 students comfortably. Every year, approximately 40 compulsory and 100 non-compulsory students enroll in the school.

At the beginning of the academic year, the number of students in each class in non-compulsory groups may reach 30. However, by the end of the first term, approximately a third of the non-compulsory students leave the school due to various reasons. Therefore, the number of students in each class stabilizes around 16-20. As for the compulsory ELT students, the number is around twenty in each classroom. However, if ELT students, while studying at the School of Foreign Languages, get 70 points from any centrally conducted examination by Assessment Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM), or receive a grade equivalent of 70 points from any international examination approved by ÖSYM, can continue their education in the ELT department. In the fall semester of 2019-2020 academic year, four students in the ELT group got 70 or higher marks; therefore, in the spring term, they started their normal education at their department. Currently, the school of Foreign Languages hosts five active classes: two ELT classes and three non-compulsory preparatory classes.

3.4. Participants

All the thirty-nine ELT students from two classes in Harran University School of Foreign Languages formed the participant pool. The intervention group consisted of 18 participants; four boys (22.2%) and fourteen (77.7%) girls. The control group was

composed of 21 participants; five boys (23.8%) and 16 girls (76.2%), making the vast majority of the participants females. The age of the participants varied between 17 and 22, and the median age was found as 18.5, making the participants predominantly teenagers.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics for the Gender of the Participants

	Control Group		***Experimental Group***		***Both***	
	Female	***Male***	***Female***	***Male***	***Female***	***Male***
N	16	5	14	4	30	9
%	76.2%	23.8%	77.7%	22.2%	77.0%	23.0%

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics for the Ages of the Participants

	Control Group	***Experimental Group***	***Both***
M	18.5	18.4	18.5
Minimum	17	17	17
Maximum	22	20	21

Both in the control group and the intervention group there were two foreign nationals, all four being females. Foreign nationals took an examination for foreigners living in turkey to study ELT at university. Therefore, the statistical data obtained from the exam for foreign nationals were not included in the study. While all the participants in the control group, excluding the foreign nationals, studied for ELT during their high school education, in the experimental group six females and one male student studied subjects other than English in high school. The median of the Foreign Language Test (FLT hereafter) score for the control group found as 65.29 and for the experimental group as 62.93.

Table 4.

Statistical Data for FLT Scores

Items	***Control Group***	***Experimental Group***	***Both***
M	65.21	62.93	64.07
SD	3.79	2.95	3.37
Minimum	56	59	57.5
Maximum	71	68	69.5

The students who prepared for the FLT during their high school education where they enrolled in English departments received approximately 16 hours of English classes a week when they were in the 11th and 12th grades, excluding extra instruction some students received. The students coming from different educational backgrounds did not receive as much intense English instruction as the student prepared for the FLT. Additionally, whereas six participants in the control group were successful in the second year in FLT, following graduation from high school, in the experimental group seven participants succeeded in the exam in the second year and one student in the third year. The variables mentioned above might explain the difference between the mean scores of the control and the experimental group regarding FLT.

FLT scores obtained from the Student Selection and Placement Center (SSPC) were employed as the indicator of participants' language proficiency. As a determinant, FLT, in the year the participants took, consisted of 80 questions including five vocabulary, 10 grammar questions, five cloze items, eight sentence completion, 12 translation sentences from Turkish into English and English into Turkish, 15 reading items, five restatements of sentences, five-paragraph completion exercises, five situational items, five dialog completion items, and five irrelevant sentence questions were asked.

Since the number of the students available was limited and did not render random sampling a viable option, convenience sampling method which comprises adopting the nearest individuals to act as respondents (Cohen & Manion, 1994) was administered in the study.

Prior to the study, the approval of the Ethical Review Board, whose aim is to supervise, check and approve behavioral researches including people to protect their rights and well-being, was obtained through the administration of the School of Foreign Languages. Also, before the onset of the intervention, a written consent form for the

study from each participant was obtained. For ethical considerations, the researcher explained the purpose and the scope of the study to the students and assured that their real names would remain anonymous and they were guaranteed that their composed items and posts on their blog pages would be kept confidential and would just be utilized for scholarly purposes. They were also acknowledged that they could withdraw from the study at any time they wished. All the students agreed to participate in the study that lasted for nine weeks.

3.5. Data Collection

The data for the assessment were collected through several mediums. In this way, the triangulation of data was ensured. Before the intervention, writing pre-test and Internet-use-questionnaire were administered to both experimental and control groups to assess their writing skills and to check their awareness and attitudes concerning the Internet and blogs. Following the nine-week intervention, a writing post-test was applied to both groups. Individual semi-structured interviews and a blog use perception inventory were implemented to collect data from the participants in the intervention group. The interviews included open-ended questions, conducted in the participants' mother tongue, and recorded digitally. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and member checked. Additionally, the proficiency exam administered to the participants before the beginning of the fall semester, the first midterm and the second midterm exam, which participants take at the end of the fall semester, were referred to as the data source. Also, the scores participants received on the Foreign Language Test at the university entrance exam were referred to as data sources to determine participants' proficiency levels before the study. The proficiency exam, the first and second mid-term exams, and the FLT formed the document analysis aspect of the study.

3.5.1. Proficiency Exam

Before students begin their normal language education in the fall term, the school administers a proficiency examination. The examination prepared by the school instructors aims to test students' four language skills. The examination has a dual function. For the non-compulsory program students, whose education at the School of Foreign Languages is limited to one educational year, it acts as a makeup exam before they continue their normal education in their departments. Should the non-compulsory

program students who failed in the spring term proficiency exam get a passing grade on the exam, they are entitled to receiving a certificate of success.

For ELT students, on the other hand, fall proficiency examination is a high-stake exam that acts as an exit exam. Upon receiving a passing grade on the examination, they can continue their normal academic studies in their department. However, if they fail, they have to receive a mandatory preparatory program, which aims to equip the students with necessary language skills for their academic studies, until they are successful.

In the writing section of the proficiency exam, students are given three topics from which they can choose one and write an essay of 120-150 words. The writing section comprises 15% of the proficiency exam. The results obtained from the writing section of the proficiency exam are a very useful source of information with regard to determining students' writing skills. To use a single grading scale throughout the study for the participants, all the grades the participants received were converted into the scale 100 grading system.

3.5.2. First mid-term exam (A2 level completion exam)

Having completed the first 8-week module, students take the A2 level completion exam known as the first mid-term exam. The exam prepared by the testing and the assessment department of HRÜ School of Foreign Languages aims to evaluate the levels of students who are assumed to be ready to be independent users of the language, and it assesses learners' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

3.5.3. Second mid-term exam (B1 level completion exam)

After completing the second 8-week module, students take the B1 level completion examination also referred to as the second mid-term exam. The exam is prepared by the testing and the assessment department of HRÜ School of Foreign Languages in parallel with the subjects studied during the term. According to the official CEFR guidelines, a learner at the B1 level in English is expected to comprehend the key elements of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. and should be able to deal with most situations likely to arise whilst traveling in an area where the language is spoken. Also, the learner is expected to produce simple connected texts on topics which are familiar or of personal interest,

describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

3.5.4. Pre-test

Before the intervention, the researcher who was also the reading and writing skills instructor administered a pre-test including two essay questions to the participants. The researchers explicated the process of writing an essay before the pre-test. With the implementation of the pre-test, the researcher aimed to find out whether there existed a meaningful difference between the control group and the experimental group. Bearing reliability issues in mind, the researcher evaluated the papers with the collaboration of two other colleagues working at the same institution to ensure reliability. The results revealed no statistically significant difference between the groups. The mean score of the control group was 45.6, and the mean score for the experimental group was 45.5. The scores of the control group ranged between 11.6 and 60.0 while the standard deviation was 11.3. The grades of the EG, on the other hand, fell between 31.0 and 61.6 and the standard deviation was 9.74.

3.5.5. The Internet-use-questionnaire

Aiming to discover to what extent the participants were technology literate in terms of the Internet and related technologies, internet use frequency and habits, and how they interacted with the internet, the researcher conducted a survey containing 14 items to both the intervention and the control group. The questionnaire was adapted and renewed through reviewing related studies in the field (Bashir, Mahmood, & Shafique, 2008; Malik & Mahmood 2009; Kazancı, 2012). The participants were requested to provide answers to items on a 5-point Likert scale with options ranging from totally agree (1) to disagree (5). During analysis operation, the-end points of the dual items in the questionnaire were merged to display affirmative and negative tendencies in general. Hence, responses for “agree” and “totally agree” options were brought together under one section as “agree”; Similarly, responses for “disagree” and “totally disagree” were bound as “disagree”. The focus of the questionnaire was to cast light on the learners’ frequency and patterns of internet use, their knowledge, and utilization of the Internet and blogs, electronic mailing systems, and the use of the Internet for educational purposes. The data obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire demonstrated that

the participants shared similar levels of knowledge concerning technology and computer literacy, which implies the existence of no significant differences that could adversely impact the study. A detailed analysis of the questionnaire is given in the table below.

Table 5.

The Analysis of the Internet-use-questionnaire for the Control Group

		Agree		***Not Sure***		***Disagree***	
	Questionnaire Items	***%***	***f***	***%***	***f***	***%***	***f***
1	I think the Internet is useful.	95.2	20	4.8	1	0	0
2	The Internet makes my life easy.	100	21	0	0	0	0
3	I log on to the Internet every day.	81.0	17	9.5	3	9.5	1
4	I do my homework by using the Internet.	61.9.	13	33.3	7	4.8	1
5	I read comments on the Internet.	81.0	17	9.5	2	9.5	2
6	I write comments on the Internet.	42.9	9	0	0	57.1	12
7	I check my e-mail account every day.	33.3	7	23.8	5	42.9	9
8	I like communicating through emails.	33.3	7	28.6	6	38.1	8
9	I send at least 1 e-mail every day.	23.8	5	14.3	3	61.9	13
10	I know how to use blogs.	23.8	5	38.1	8	38.1	8
11	I find the information on blogs beneficial.	52.4	11	33.3	7	14.3	3
12	I follow blog pages.	33.3	7	28.6	6	38.1	8
13	I read comments on blog pages.	33.3	7	28.6	6	38.1	8
14	I write comments on blog pages.	14.3	3	14.3	3	71.4	15

Table 6.

The Analysis of the Internet-use-questionnaire for the Experimental Group

		Agree		***Not Sure***		***Disagree***	
	Questionnaire Items	***%***	***f***	***%***	***f***	***%***	***f***
1	I think the Internet useful.	94.4	17	5.6	1	0	0
2	The Internet makes my life easy.	100	18	0	0	0	0
3	I log on to the Internet every day.	77.8	14	16.7	3	5.6	1
4	I do my homework by using the Internet.	61.1	11	33.3	6	5.6	1
5	I read comments on the Internet.	77.8	14	11.1	2	11.1	2
6	I write comments on the Internet.	50	9	0	0	50	9
7	I check my e-mail account every day.	33.3	6	22.2	4	44.4	8
8	I like communicating through e-mails.	38.9	7	22.2	4	38.9	7
9	I send at least 1 e-mail every day.	27.8	5	16.7	3	55.6	10
10	I know how to use blogs.	16.7	3	38.9	7	44.4	8
11	I find the information on blogs beneficial.	44.4	8	38.9	7	16.7	3
12	I follow blog pages.	27.8	5	27.8	5	44.4	8
13	I read comments on blog pages.	27.8	5	27.8	5	44.4	8
14	I write comments on blog pages.	16.7	3	16.7	3	66.7	12

3.5.6. Writing Performance Assignments

In the present study, the participants were tasked to produce and post nine essays on the class blog for nine weeks. The assignments were employed as a data-gathering instrument to find out the answer to the first research question: “What are the effects of blogging on participants’ writing performance in the blog-embedded preparatory EFL writing classes?” Each semester students take three writing quizzes for their writing course. Therefore, each three-writing assignment set was regarded as a writing quiz. The topic of each week was carefully selected by the researcher in parallel with the subjects the participants studied in their Reading and Writing Skills course. To evaluate participants’ writing assignments, a rubric prepared by the testing office of the School of Foreign Languages was employed during the process. In the evaluation process of participants’ papers, a range of macro and micro-level textual issues and their sub-elements encompassing content, organization of the text, topic development, cohesion and coherence, lexicogrammatical issues such as word choice, grammatical accuracy,

word order and mechanics (spelling, punctuation, spacing, indentation, titling, and capitalization) were taken into consideration.

3.5.7. Post-test

Having applied traditional writing lessons for 9 weeks to the control group and the blog-integrated writing lessons to the experimental group, the researcher administered a post-test that was identical to the pre-test to both groups. Two experienced English instructors at Harran University School of Foreign Languages and the researcher evaluated and graded the post-test papers. In the process, first, all the post-test papers were scanned and digitized. Then, to eliminate bias, each paper was given a code and anonymized by deleting participants' names and numbers digitally. Three copies of participants' anonymized papers were produced to be given to the evaluators. Each post-test paper was evaluated by three instructors separately. Format, punctuation, content, organization, and grammar grades were assigned, and then the overall writing score for each participant was calculated. The results from the three raters were brought together to find the final writing score for each participant. Subsequently, inter-rater and intra-rater reliability scores were calculated. The results revealed a statistically significant difference between the control and the experimental group. While the mean score for the control group was 63.6, the mean score for the experimental group was 78.1. The scores of the control group were between 40.3 and 89.0 and the standard deviation was 10.5. However, the scores of the experimental group were between 70.3 and 90.0, and the standard deviation was 6.33.

3.5.8. Blog Use Perception Inventory

After the completion of the blogging process, which lasted nine weeks, the researcher administered a five-point Likert scale perception inventory comprising of 18 items to the participants as a post-survey to find the answer to the research question "What are the EFL learners' perceptions of the blogging experience prior to, during and post-exposure to this Web 2.0 environment in preparatory EFL writing classes?" The inventory also aimed to find a partial answer to the research question "What are the effects of blogging on participants' writing performance in the blog-embedded preparatory EFL writing classes?" The inventory, which was adapted from Sekmez (2017), had already been used in similar studies aiming to enhance EFL students'

language learning through blogs. The inventory aimed to explore participants' perceptions regarding the use of blogs as a language input outside the classroom. The items on the inventory focused on two main categories: emotional and performance aspects of blogging. The former group contained three subcategories; motivational, de-motivational, and social aspects of blogging. The latter group focused on the contribution of blogging to the improvement of academic skills such as enhancement in vocabulary, grammar, and writing skills. The inventory was translated into Turkish to eliminate any misinterpretation of the items. Through the inventory, the participants were asked to evaluate the integration of blogging into writing lessons. The results revealed that an overwhelming percentage of the participants in the experimental group found blogging application as a very beneficial enhancement to L2 writing classes. The results of the post-test and second midterm exam seemed to support the findings of the blog use inventory.

3.5.9. Interviews

Following the blogging process, the researcher conducted five open-ended interviews with participants in the experimental group to gain better insight into participants' perceptions of the blogging process. The interviews lasted approximately eleven minutes, the longest lasting 11 minutes and the shortest being eight minutes. Considering the gender distribution in the class, the researcher conducted three interviews with girls and two with boys. During the blogging process, the researcher prepared a large number of questions to be asked in the interviews. With the help of an expert in the field, unrelated questions were eliminated, and 15 core questions were selected to be asked in the interviews. In addition to the questions that formed the framework of the interviews, the participants were encouraged to express and elaborate on their opinions and understanding regarding blogging experience through open-ended questions.

Prior to the interviews, the interviewees' written consent was taken. All five interviews were conducted one-to-one and in Turkish so that the participants could feel at ease and express themselves in their mother tongue without any restriction. The interviews were audio-recorded digitally by the researcher and transcribed verbatim using *Otranscribe*. Following the recording, member checking was conducted to verify the transcribed data. The transcribed data were translated into English by the researcher.

Table 7.

The Duration and Dates of the Interviews

Participants	***Duration***	***Date***
Student I	11 minutes	January 5th, 2020
Student II	9 minutes	January 5th, 2020
Student III	8 minutes	January 5th, 2020
Student IV	11 minutes	January 6th, 2020
Student V	11 minutes	January 6th, 2020

3.5.10. Researcher Diary

From the planning stage of the study onward and throughout the study, the researcher kept fieldnotes in which he recorded all the details concerning the blogging process. All the challenges and problems encountered were recorded systematically. The aim was to provide the context for the fourth research question "What are the potential challenges teachers as researchers encounter during the running of blogging-enhanced preparatory EFL writing classes?" A detailed analysis of the researcher's diary concerning the challenges encountered during the blogging process is presented in the findings section.

3.6. Procedure

The nine-week study was initiated in the fourth week of the fall term. In the first week of the term, all the students at the School of Foreign Languages received an orientation program that aimed to familiarize students with the school environment. In the second week, study groups were established. In the third week, a writing pre-test was administered to both control and the experimental group in order to find out whether any significant differences existed between their writing skills. Also, an internet-use-questionnaire was conducted to participants to obtain further information with regard to their internet use patterns and to gain insight into their internet-related technology literacy.

Before the study started, in a two-class hour session the researcher briefed the participants on the blogging process. Initially, the researcher established a class blog on www.blogger.com, a free blog provider. Following the establishment of the class blog account, the researcher asked each participant to create an e-mail account on *Gmail*. Then all the participants were asked to send their e-mail addresses to the researcher so

that he could invite them to contribute to the blogging process. The participants were taught how to write, edit, revise, and post their writings on the blog. In order to familiarize the participants with blogging, the researcher wrote a sample essay and posted it on the class blog. Subsequently, the researcher asked the participants to log in and post a draft on the class blog. Meanwhile, all the steps were displayed on the projector screen to ensure all the participants observed and understood the process thoroughly. After a question and answer session, the briefing ended, and the researcher asked the participants to follow the class blog for their first blogging assignment. Before the study, with the cooperation of two other instructors employed at the School of Foreign Languages, the researcher developed a set of coded error descriptors to employ in the process in case the participants preferred coded error feedback over direct feedback.

The day after the briefing session carried out, the researcher posted the first writing assignment following a welcome message posted on the blog.

Figure 1. The Start of the Blogging Process

Source: www.blogger.com

Following each blogging assignment instruction, participants began to write and post their essays on the blog. After participants completed posting their first work on the blog, the researcher provided direct corrective feedback under each participant's writing.

In the second week, however, the researcher provided coded corrective feedback to each student's essay on the blog. In the process, the researcher saved a copy of each post on the *word* document. Then, each text was checked for errors. Having completed the error analysis and included the coded feedback for each participant error, the researcher posted a replica of participants' writings including an error code guide on the blog. In the ensuing writing class, the researcher asked the participants for their preferred type of feedback. The participants opted for coded corrective feedback in unison. Hence, a detailed description of the error codes was provided to the participants so that they could understand the codes thoroughly. In the following weeks, the researcher provided only coded corrective feedback to participants' posts on the blog. Also, they were strongly advised and encouraged to read and write comments on their friends' posts to create a sense of social collaboration and belonging.

For the first week's assignment, the participants were asked to write an essay comparing living in a city and living in the country, in parallel with the subjects they studied in their reading and writing skills coursebook. After participants completed posting their essays on the blog, the researcher checked all the posts for errors. Having completed the checking process, the researcher posted his comments. Usually a day after posting the comments on the blog, the researcher announced the following week's assignment. The same cycle continued until the end of the study.

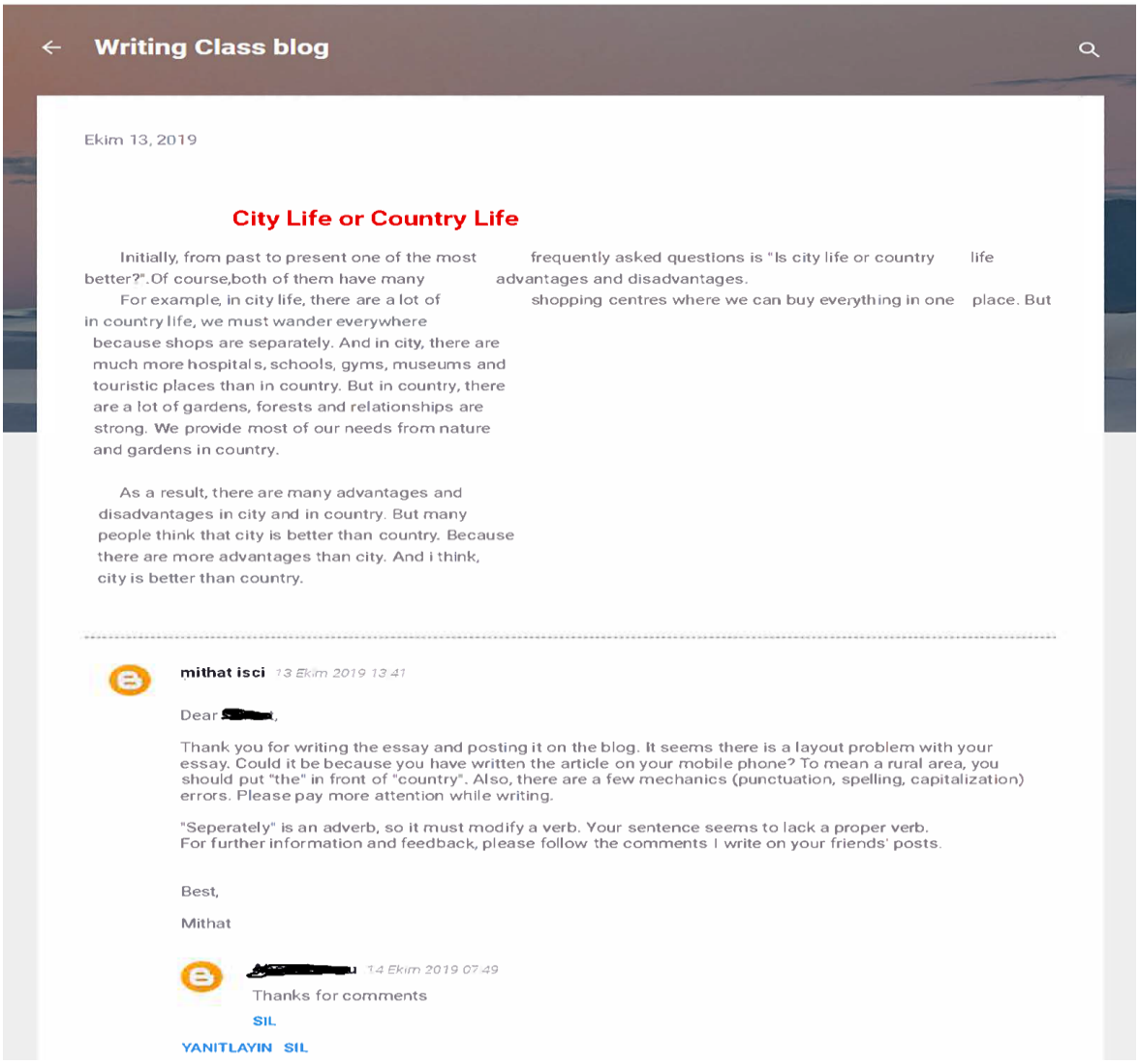

Figure 2. A Participant's Post on the Class Blog

Source: www.blogger.com

It should be noted that, from the first week onward, some participants failed to meet the deadline to post their essays on the blog. Therefore, the researcher had to provide extra time to participants so that they could submit their essays. The cycle of providing extra time for the weekly assignments continued throughout the study. Nevertheless, though very few, some participants failed to post their assignments on the blog. Whereas there should have been 162 student posts on the blog in total, there were 159 posts, which means three participants failed to post one of their nine essays on the blog.

3.7. Data Analysis

The data used in the analysis were elicited from various sources including the essays which participants posted on the blog for nine weeks, an Internet-use-questionnaire, a blogging perception inventory, semi-structured student interviews, and a pre-test and a posttest administered to participants during the fall semester in 2019-2020 academic year. Besides, the writing section of the proficiency exam, the first midterm exam, and the second midterm exam participants took during the semester and the FLT scores were also referred to as data sources. To assess the quantitative data gathered from the questionnaires the software program called *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 25* and *Excel* were employed. The statistical data elicited from the proficiency exam, the pre-test and posttest, the first and second midterm exams, and the student posts on the blog page were computed by employing *Excel* program. The data obtained from the interviews, on the other hand, were analyzed thematically and assessed accordingly and the results were discussed in a narrative method.

3.8. Reliability and Validity

The pursuit of reality and the elimination of error is the goal of science (Murphy & Dingwall, 2003). In this respect, reliability and validity are the two key concepts that play crucial roles in demonstrating the trustworthiness of research findings of a study and the appropriateness of the method employed in it. While reliability signifies to what extent a specific test or intervention, such as a questionnaire, can yield similar outcomes in different contexts, assuming no change has taken place, validity demonstrates whether a tool measures what we intend it to measure (Barnhardt, Kevorkian, & Delett, 1998).

While trying to find about participants' attitudes and perceptions of the blogging, to be on the safe side and not to have any validity concerns with regard the data employed in the study, the researcher adopted an inventory by Sekmez (2017), which had already been utilized in similar studies. Yet, the opinion of an expert in the field was asked for the clarity of the items in the questionnaire to finalize the decision. Upon receiving confirmation regarding the validity of the inventory, the researcher decided to employ the inventory in the study. A similar procedure was followed to select the questionnaire aimed to reveal participants' technology and computer literacy and internet use habits.

For the assessment of participants' written productions to be reliable, Hyland (2003) asserts that they should receive similar scores when assessed by different raters on different occasions. However, several factors such as the type of the written product, the physical conditions, the time of the exam, the composition of the rubric, and to a certain extent, the raters' state of mind at the time of assessment may impact the reliability of evaluation of written exams. Also, the complexity of the terminology employed and inadequate training of raters may adversely affect the reliability of a study (Henning, 1991).

Gronlund (1998) and Hughes (2003) contend that equally set physical conditions, clearly defined evaluation procedure, the restriction on the topic and the genre of the writing assignments, and the meticulous preparation of the rubric upon which scoring is built increase the validity and the reliability. Accordingly, in the current study, the topics on which the participants were asked to write essays were selected in line with the topics they covered in their reading and writing skills course.

Grading reliability is an important issue. Hyland (2003) asserts that grading students' writings is a two-dimensional process involving both inter-rater reliability, which signifies different raters' levels of agreement on the scoring of the same product and intra-rater reliability, which refers to the same raters' inner level of agreement on the scoring of different products. In this respect, in the current study, two experienced instructors who had already taught reading and writing skill courses assisted in grading the student writings throughout the study. Nevertheless, they were briefed on nature and the scope of the study and the grading process. At the ends of the grading process, each rater's scores were calculated to find the mean and the inter-rater reliability rate. Then, all the scores from the raters were calculated to find the mean for groups. Inter-rater reliability scores were checked.

Bias is another issue that may seriously impair or question the outcomes of a study. *Wikipedia* defines bias as disproportionate weight in favor of or against an idea or thing or a person, usually in a way that is closed-minded, prejudicial, or unfair. Bias is a detriment to constructing validity as it may dispute the language skills measured (Eckes, 2005; Messick, 1989; Weir, 2005). The educational setting in which the current study was conducted host a limited number of students. Hence, the raters may know all the participants in the study. Therefore, to obtain reliable scores for the participants' written products and to eliminate any bias, all the participants' assignment papers were first digitized, and each paper was coded. Following the coding process, the papers were

anonymized by deleting participants' names and numbers. Since participants' blog entries were already in digital format, they were also anonymized before the grading process.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This study aimed to find out whether blogging embedded writing classes enhance participants' writing skills in relation to participants receiving traditional writing instruction. A second aim was to discover the perceptions of the participants going through blogging experience. Another aim was to elicit the challenges the instructor faced during the running of the blogging process. To answer the questions, the data gathered from various tools were analyzed. This chapter presents the findings obtained through the questionnaires, interviews, document analysis, and blog entries created by the participants for nine weeks. In this quasi-experimental study, both quantitative and qualitative data were utilized. While for the analysis of the quantitative data, *SPSS 25.0* and *Excel* were employed, and the qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis.

4.2. Analysis of the Proficiency Exam

The results of the proficiency exam revealed no statistically significant difference between the control and experimental group. The mean score of the control group was 55.9, and the mean score for the experimental group was 55.0. The scores of the control group ranged between 44 and 86, while the standard deviation was 29.0. Similarly, the scores of the experimental group fell between 37 and 86, and the standard deviation was 29.8. The data made it clear that prior to the onset of the intervention participants in both groups maintained a high similarity in terms of writing proficiency. As can be seen in Table 8, the low number of students taking the proficiency exam implied that a large percentage of students opted to have one year of preparatory program since they believed their proficiency level to be inadequate.

Table 8.

Descriptive Statistics for the Proficiency Exam

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Control Group	12	86.00	44.0	86,00	55,9167	29,03433
Experimental Group	11	86.00	37.0	86,00	55,0909	29,81427

4.3. Analysis of the Pre-test

The pre-test administered to both groups was evaluated by a panel of three instructors. The grades from the three raters were brought together to find the final grades for participants and groups. Cronbach's alpha values for each group were computed separately to check the intraclass reliability rate. According to *SPSS 25.0* results, Cronbach's alpha value for the control group was found to be .945 while it was .944 for the experimental group, thereby rendering a very high intra-rater reliability rate.

The results of the proficiency exam revealed no statistically significant difference between the groups. The mean score of the control group was 45.6, and the mean score for the experimental group was 45.5. The scores of the control group ranged between 11 and 60, while the standard deviation was 11.3. Similarly, the scores of the experimental group fell between 31 and 67, and the standard deviation was 9.7. As the data suggests, participants in both groups shared almost identical levels of writing achievement, confirming the results of the proficiency exam. As for the difference between the means of the proficiency exam and the pre-test, a plausible explanation might lie in the fact that while the pre-test and the post-test were rated by three experienced instructors teaching ELT classes, the proficiency exam was evaluated by all the instructors employed at the School of Foreign Languages.

Table 9.

Descriptive Statistics for the Pre-test

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Control Group	21	48.33	11.67	60.00	45.6032	11.35812
Experimental Group	18	36.67	31.00	67.67	45.5185	9.74996

4.4. Analysis of the Internet-use-questionnaire

After the establishment of the experimental and the control group, the researcher administered a 14-item internet-use-questionnaire to both groups. The questionnaire

primarily aimed to shed light on the participants' internet-related technology literacy and internet use patterns. A secondary objective was to determine whether any difference that might adversely impact the study existed between the groups concerning internet use. The researcher, not an expert in the field, received the assistance of a professional to translate the data obtained from the questionnaire. The participants, a large majority of whom born in the new millennium, were the "native speakers" of the digital language of computers, cell phones, tablets, video games, and of course the Internet and they were called by many names: the N Generation (N for Net), or the Digital Natives, Prensky (2001). The data revealed no statistically meaningful difference that might affect the conduct of the study in terms of the Internet use habits and computer literacy between the groups or individuals. Since *iOS* and *Android* operating systems running smartphones make the provision of an e-mail a prerequisite to access the Internet and internet-related applications on smartphones, it was observed that all the participants had at least one e-mail. The table below provides a detailed description of the participants' internet use profiles. The original survey submitted to the participants was a 5-item Likert scale. However, in order to eliminate unnecessary details, the responses provided by the participants were converted into three main categories: a) *agree*, b) *not sure*, and c) *disagree*.

Table 10.

The Results of the Internet-use-questionnaire

	Questionnaire Items	Control Group			Experimental Group		
		Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
		%	%	%	%	%	%
1	I think the Internet is useful.	95.2	4.8	0	94.4	5.6	0
2	The Internet makes my life easy.	100	0	0	100	0	0
3	I log on to the Internet every day.	81.0	9.5	9.5	77.8	16.7	5.6
4	I do my homework by using the Inte	61.9	33.3	4.8	61.1	33.3	5.6
5	I read comments on the Internet.	81.0	9.5	9.5	77.8	11.1	11.1
6	I write comments on the Internet.	42.9	0	57.1	50	0	50
7	I check my e-mail account every day.	33.3	23.8	42.9	33.3	22.2	44.4
8	I like communicating through emails.	33.3	28.6	38.1	38.9	22.2	38.9
9	I send at least one e-mail every day.	23.8	14.3	61.9	27.8	16.7	55.6
10	I know how to use blogs.	23.8	38.1	38.1	16.7	38.9	44.4
11	I find the information on blogs beneficial.	52.4	33.3	14.3	44.4	38.9	16.7
12	I follow blog pages.	33.3	28.6	38.1	27.8	27.8	44.4
13	I read comments on blog pages.	33.3	28.6	38.1	27.8	27.8	44.4
14	I write comments on blog pages.	14.3	14.3	71.4	11.1	16.7	72.3

As the data analysis illustrates, an overwhelming majority of the participants in the control group (n=20, 95.2%) and the experimental group (n 17, 94.4%) were of the opinion that the Internet was useful. In each group, only one participant remained undecided regarding the usefulness of the Internet. All participants in both groups (100%, n=20 control, n=17 experimental) believed that the Internet eased their lives. While 81.0% (n=17) of the participants in the control group logged on to the Internet every day, 77.8% (n=14) of the participants in the experimental logged on to the Internet every day. 61.0% (n=13 control group, n=11 experimental group) of participants in both groups did their homework using the Internet. Very similar percentages were obtained for reading comments on the Internet: 81.0% (n=17) for the control group and 77.8% (n=14) for the experimental group respectively. For writing comments on the

Internet, on the other hand, the result was 42.9% (n=9) for the control group and %50 (n=9) for the experimental group. Only 33.3% (n=7 control group, n=6 experimental group) of the participants in both groups checked their email accounts every day. While only 23.8% (n=5) of the participants in the control group sent an e-mail every day, the rate was 27.8% (n=6) for the experimental group. The rate of knowing how to use blogs was 23% (n=5) for the control group and 16.7% (n=3) for the experimental group. As for the eleventh item on the questionnaire, 55.4% (n=11) of the participants found the information on the blogs useful, and the rate was found as 44.4% (n=8) for the experimental group. The blog following rate for the control group was found 33.3% (n=7) and 27.8% (n=5) for the experimental group. A small number of participants (n=7, 33.3% control group; n=5, 27.8% experimental group respectively) stated that they followed blog pages. As for the questionnaire item 14, only 14.3% (n=2) of the participants in the control group and 11.1% (n=2) in the experimental stated that they wrote comments on blogs. The analysis of the data elicited from the Internet-use-questionnaire disclosed no statistically meaningful difference between the groups to adversely impact the conduct of the study as both groups maintained similar Internet and related technologies literacy levels.

4.5. Analysis of A2 Level Completion Exam (Midterm Exam I)

After the first eight weeks of instruction in the first term of the academic year, participants took the A2 level completion exam, also known as midterm I. The results of the midterm I exam revealed a slight increase in favor of the experimental group. While the mean score of the control group was 45.6, the mean score of the experimental group was 48.5. The scores of the control group ranged between 30 and 86, and the standard deviation was 15.1. The scores of the experimental group, on the other hand, fell between 21 and 72, and the standard deviation was 13.0. It must be noted that when the first midterm exam was administered, the intervention was in its fourth week. The difference, though not significant, seemed to denote the beginning of a divergence between the two groups.

Table 11.

Descriptive Statistics for the Mid-term Exam I

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Control Group	21	56,00	30,00	86,00	45,6667	15,16026
Experimental Group	18	51,00	21,00	72,00	48,5556	13,05969

4.6. Analysis of the Post-test

Following nine weeks of intervention, the researcher administered a post-test that had the same essay topics as in the pre-test. The procedure followed in the pre-test was repeated in processing the post-test as well. The three raters who evaluated the pre-test also evaluated the post-test. As mentioned in the methodology section, both pre-test and post-test were anonymized to eliminate any bias concern and increase the reliability of the results obtained. Cronbach's alpha values for each group were computed to find out the intra-class reliability coefficient. According to the SPSS 25.0 results, while Cronbach's alpha value for the control group was found as .930, it became .945 for the experimental group, which displays the intra-rater reliability rate for each group was very high.

While the mean score of the control group was 63.6, the mean score of the experimental group was 78.1. The scores of the control group ranged between 40 and 89, and the standard deviation was 10.5. The scores of the experimental group, on the other hand, fell between 70.3 and 90.0, and the standard deviation was 6.3. The difference between the mean of the control group and the experimental group was found to be 14.5% in favor of the experimental group.

Table 12 clearly depicts that blogging led to a statistically significant increase in the grades of the participants in the experimental group with relevance to those of the control group. Accordingly, blogging activity aided in developing participants' writing skills.

Table 12.

Descriptive Statistics for the Post-test

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Control Group	21	48.70	40.30	89.00	63.6143	10.5196
Experimental Group	17	19.70	70.30	90.00	78.1471	6.33760

As seen in Table 12, the participants in the experimental group increased their mean score from 45.2 in the pre-test to 78.1 in the post-test. The lowest score, which was 31.0 in the pre-test, rose to 70.3 in the post-test. The highest grade, being 67.6, in the pre-test, rose to 90.0, and the mean score rose from 45.5 to 78.1, which meant that participants' writing performance increased by 32.6 percent in the post-test in comparison with the pre-test.

In the next step, a paired-samples *t*-test was applied to the results of the experimental group to find out whether the difference observed between the pre-test and the post-test results indicated any significance. The results of the paired-samples *t* analysis indicated a significant difference between participants' pre-test and post-test results ($p < 0.05$). As shown in Table 13, the intervention seemed to yield a meaningfully significant ($p < 0.05$) difference between pre-test and post-test (T= -17.24, sig=0.000). The paired-samples correlation coefficient was .617 and sig. value was found to be .008. Therefore, it can be stated that integrating blogging into writing instruction had an affirmative impact on the learners' writing performances.

Table 13.

Paired Samples Statistics for the Experimental Group T-test

	M	**N**	**SD**	**St. Error M**	***T***	**DF**	**Sig**
Pre-test	45.2529	17	9.99157	2.42331	-17.240	16	.000
Post-test	78.1471	17	6.33760	1.53709			

4.7. Analysis of the B1 Level Completion Exam (Mid-term Exam II)

Having completed the second eight weeks of instruction, the participants took the B1 level completion exam also referred to as midterm exam II. The results obtained from the mid-term II, which ends the first academic year, revealed meaningfully higher grades in favor of the experimental group. While the mean score of the control group was 68.0, the mean score of the experimental group was 77.5. The scores of the control group ranged between 44 and 93, and the standard deviation was 15.8. The scores of the experimental group, on the other hand, fell between 58 and 100, and the standard deviation was 14.2. As the statistics in Table 14 revealed, the participants in the experimental group clearly outperformed the participants in the control group at the

end of the 9-week intervention. Hence, it can be stated that blogging experience resulted in higher performance with respect to developing writing skills.

Table 14.

Descriptive Statistics for Mid-term 2

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Control Group	21	49,00	44,00	93,00	8,00	15,89654
Experimental Group	18	42,00	58,00	100,00	7,50	14,29932

4.8. Analysis of the Blogging Perception Inventory

With the aim of finding out the answer to RQ1 "What are the effects of blogging on participants' writing performance in the blog-embedded preparatory EFL writing classes'' and the third research question "What are the EFL learners' perceptions of the blogging experience prior to, during and post-exposure to this Web 2.0 environment in preparatory EFL writing classes?", the researcher administered a perception inventory to 18 participants. The items on the inventory focused mainly on two distinct groups: a) items describing the emotional aspect and b) items describing the performance aspect of blogging. The group of items dealing with the emotional aspect of blogging contained four subcategories: a) motivational, b) de-motivational, c) technology use, and d) social aspects of blogging. The group containing items on performance focused on the contribution of blogging to the improvement of academic skills such as enhancement in *vocabulary*, *grammar*, and *writing skills*. The participants were asked to reflect their opinions on the statements as follows: 1) *strongly disagree*, 2) *disagree*, 3) *no idea*, 4) *agree*, and 5) *strongly agree*. The researcher employed descriptive statistics to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire. Table 15 displays the statistical results of the responses the participants provided to the items. A detailed analysis of student responses to items on the inventory is given below.

Table 15.

Participants' Views on Context

	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	M	SD
1.	Writing on the blog makes me feel better.	10 55.6%	6 33.3%	2 11.1%	0 0 %	0 0 %	.44	.70
2.	Writing blogs helped me learn and use grammar rules.	11 61.1%	6 33.3%	1 5.6%	0 0 %	0 0 %	.55	.61
3.	Blogs helped me improve my writing skills.	12 66.7%	5 27.8%	1 5.6 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	.61	.60
4.	I learned new vocabulary items while writing blogs.	10 55.6%	7 38.9%	1 5.6%	0 0 %	0 0 %	.44	.78
5.	I think blogging is a good way of cooperation with my classmates.	8 44.4%	6 33.3%	2 11.1%	2 11.1%	0 0 %	.11	1.02
6.	I see blogging as a part of writing lesson.	11 61.1%	7 38.9%	0 0 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	.61	.50
7.	I like sharing my ideas on the blog.	4 22.2%	11 61.1%	1 5.6 %	2 11.1%	0 0 %	.94	.87
8.	I like reading my friends' blogs.	9 50.0%	5 27.8%	1 5.6 %	2 11.1%	1 5.6%	.88	1.10
9.	I enjoy writing comments on my friends' blogs.	4 22.2%	8 44.4%	3 16.7%	1 5.6%	2 11.1%	.61	1.24
10.	I like it when my friends leave comments on my blog.	4 22.2%	8 44.4%	4 22.2%	2 11.1%	0 0 %	.77	.94
11.	I like it when my teacher comments on my blog and provides feedback.	11 61.1%	6 33.3%	1 5.6 %	0 0 %	0 0 %	.55	.61
12.	Blogging is a motivational activity for expressing my feelings and ideas.	10 55.6%	6 33.3%	2 11.1%	0 0 %	0 0 %	.44	.70
13.	Positive comments by my friends and teacher increase my self-esteem.	11 61.1%	3 16.7%	3 16.7%	1 5.6%	0 0 %	.33	.97
14.	I try to do my best while writing blogs because my classmates can read it.	12 66.7%	5 27.8%	1 5.6%	0 0 %	0 0 %	.61	.60
15.	Writing blogs takes a really long time.	2 11.1%	3 16.7%	6 33.3%	6 33.3%	1 5.6%	.94	1.10
16.	I have connection problems while uploading my writings.	4 22.2%	1 5.6%	2 11.1%	5 27.8%	6 33.3%	.55	1.58
17.	My computer skills are not enough for writing blogs.	2 11.1%	3 16.7%	1 5.6%	4 22.2%	8 44.4%	.27	1.48
18.	I don't want to blog because others can easily copy my ideas.	0 0 %	0 0 %	2 11.1%	9 50.0%	7 38.9%	.27	.66

As Table 15 clearly indicates, all the items on the questionnaire are structured to yield qualitative data. While items number 1, 6, 12, and 13 deal with the motivational aspect of blogging, items number 2, 3, and 4 are set to reveal participants' perceptions of academic performance. Items number 5, 7, 8, 9,10,11, and 14, on the other hand, are set to elicit data concerning the social aspect of blogging. Questionnaire items 15,16,17,

and 18 aim to find participants' perceptions concerning negative implications of blogging if any. Items 16 and 17 in the last group specifically deal with the technical aspect of blogging.

Participants' responses to Item 1 revealed that an overwhelming majority of the participants (88.9% n= 16) perceived blogging as a tool that made them feel good. Only two participants (11%) remained neutral. In response to Item 2, which deals with the contribution of blogging to mastering grammar rules, 61.1% (n=11) of the participants showed total agreement and six participants (33.3%) showed agreement, resulting in an outstanding 94.4% (n=17) agreement level with a 4.55 mean score. Questionnaire Item 3, which focuses on participants' perceptions about academic achievement in terms of improving writing skills, received a staggering 94.4% (n=17) confirmation in total, with one of the highest mean scores of 4.61. Only one student out of eighteen remained undecided. Similarly, the item "I learned new vocabulary items while writing blogs." received 94.4% (n=17) endorsement from participants. The mean score and the standard deviation were 4.44 and 78 for the item respectively. Responses given to the questionnaire Items 2, 3, and 4 provided a solid base to the first research question. For the statement "I think blogging is a good way of cooperation with my classmates.", which focuses on the social cooperation aspect of blogging, 44.4% (n=8) of the participants strongly agreed, and 33.3% (n=6) of the participants agreed. Two participants (11.1%) disagreed with the statement. As for the questionnaire Item 6, which states that blogging is a part of the writing lesson, 61.1% (n=11) of the participants strongly agreed and 38.9% (n=7) agreed, thereby making an impressive 100% agreement among participants with a mean score of 4.61. It is noteworthy that all the participants perceived blogging as an integral part of the writing lesson.

Questionnaire Items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 as a group deal with the social aspect of writing blogs. Within the social context, 22.2% (n=4) of the participants expressed full agreement and 66.1% (n=11) with questionnaire Item 7, which deals with the joy of sharing opinions on the blog. The mean score of this item was computed as 3.94. As for the questionnaire item "I like reading my friends' blogs", 50% (n=9) provided full agreement and 27.8% (n=5) provided agreement. Three participants (16.7%) expressed a negative opinion regarding this item. The mean score of the item was found at 3.88. Item number 9 on the questionnaire endeavored to find out whether participants enjoyed writing comments on peers' posts. The rate of full agreement and agreement totaled 66.6% (n=12) and the number of participants expressing opposing ideas was 3 (16.7%)

while 2 participants (11.1%) remained neutral. The mean score of the item was 3.61. The next item describing the enjoyment of receiving comments on one's posts received the same amount of agreement as the previous one from the respondents: 66.6% (n=12) agreement in total. While no participants (0%) expressed a negative opinion, 2 participants (11.1%) remained undecided. The mean score for item number 10 was found as 3.77. The next item, which deals with the enjoyment of receiving feedback given by the teacher, received a great amount of approval, 61.1% (n=11) full agreement, and 3.3% (n=6) agreement, from the participants. While only 1 student (5.6%) remained undecided with regard to the comment the teacher provided, the item received a 4.55 mean score. The item revealed that participants had a very high esteem of interaction with the teacher during the blogging process. To sum up, the participants seemed to attribute a great deal of importance to social interaction with peers and teachers.

Item 12 on the questionnaire aimed to explore participants' perceptions concerning whether they perceived blogging as a means through which they can express their thoughts and feelings. While 55.6% (n=10) of the student strongly agreed, 33.6% (n=6) agreed, reaching 88.9% (n=16) agreement rate in total. Much as no participants (0%) voiced opposing views, 2 participants (11.1%) remained neutral. The mean score was found as 4.44 and the standard deviation was .70 for the item. Item 13 which investigated whether positive comments lead to increased self-esteem received 66.1% (n=11) percent full agreement and 16.7% (n=3) agreement, which signified the importance of receiving constructive feedback. Only one student (5.6%) responded negatively and three participants were found to be neutral. The mean score of the item was 4.33. The last item dealing with the social aspect of blogging on motivation is number 14. The item "I try to do my best while writing blogs because my classmates can read." received 66.7% (n=12) strongly agree and 27.8% (n=5) agree, which makes 94.4% (n=17) agreement with the statement. Only one student remained neutral and the item had a 4.61 mean score, one of the four items sharing the highest mean score. The result of this item suggests that the presence of such an authentic audience played a crucial role in participants' motivation.

The last four items on the questionnaire investigated negative or de-motivational aspects of blogging. Item 15 inquired whether participants found blogging as a time-consuming process. The results denoted that participants disagreed with the statement as only 2 participants (11.1%) strongly agreed and three participants (16.7%) agreed with the statement. While 33.3% (n=6) remained neutral, 38.9% (n=7) of the

participants disagreed with the statement. The mean score of the item was found at 2.94. Item 16 deals with a technical issue and it investigated whether participants experienced connection problems while uploading their works on to the blog. The result revealed that only 5 participants (27.8%) out of 18 went through connectivity issues while trying to upload their works. A large majority of the participants (61.1%, n=1) disagreed with the statement. As for the questionnaire item "My computer skills are not enough for writing blogs.", only 5 participants (27.8%) showed agreement, but a large majority (66.7%, n=12) in total disagreed with the statement. The item received 2.27 mean score, making it the second-lowest mean on the whole test. The last item inquired whether participants were unwilling to share their ideas with other participants. To our surprise, no participants at all (0%) agreed with the statement. As 16 participants (88.0%) revealed disagreement with the statement, two participants remained undecided. The item received, 1.27 mean, rendering it the lowest mean score obtained on the questionnaire.

4.9. Analysis of the Blog Writing Performances

As revealed in the *Internet-use-questionnaire*, blogging was a novel experience for a substantial majority of participants in the experimental group. Only one them had written on a blog in English as a part of the school project and one had written blogs in Turkish. Hence, one of the objectives of the current study was to probe the effects of blogging on ELT participants' writing performances. In this respect, to find about the impact of blogging activity, the first research question was formulated as follows: What are the effects of blogging on participants' writing performance in the blog-embedded preparatory EFL writing classes? To answer the question, the statistical data obtained from the assessment of the first two and the last two blogging performances were compared. Table 16 presents a comparison of participants' first two and last two blogging achievements according to criteria determined in the rubric.

Table 16.

Paired Samples Statistics for Blogging Performance T-test

	M	**N**	**SD**	**Std. Error Mean**	***T***	**DF**	**Sig**
Pre-scores	47.7647	17	9.45733	2.29374	-23.073	6	000
Post-scores	76.5882	17	11.22530	2.72254			

In order to see whether a meaningful difference existed between the first two performances and the last two, a paired samples t-test was applied to the results obtained from the participants' writings on the blog. The results revealed a statistically significant difference between the scores ($p < 0.05$). The paired samples correlation coefficient was found as .890 and significance was .000. Participants increased their writing performances from 47.7 to 76.5 mean score during the intervention program, recording a 60.34% development.

As for the criteria detailed in the writing performance assessment rubric, the highest improvement rate was recorded in the organization of the ideas section. In this section, participants' development became 71.4%. As for the grammar section, the participants increased their performance by 57.2%. Similarly, the development level in the content section was measured as 51.5%. Progress in the last two sections remained relatively low compared with the other sections. In the format section improvement rate remained at 42.5% and, finally, the lowest progress rate was by 41.4% in the punctuation/mechanics section. Drawing on the enhancement of the participants' writing scores through blogging, it can be concluded that blogging fostered participants' writing skills substantially.

Table 17.

Impact of Blogging on Pre-scores and Post-scores

Grading Criteria	**Pre-scores**	**Post-scores**	**Difference %**	**SD**
Format (5 points)	2.35	3.35	42.55%	0.71
Punct. Mech (5 points)	2.58	3.65	41.47%	0.76
Content (20 points)	10.64	16.12	51.50%	3.87
Organization (45 points)	20.35	34.88	71.40%	10.27
Grammar (25 points)	11.11	17.47	57.25%	4.50

4.10. Analysis of the Blogging Perception Interviews

To find out the answer to RQ3 "What are the EFL learners' perceptions of the blogging experience prior to, during, and post-exposure to this Web 2.0 environment in preparatory EFL writing classes?" the researcher designed a semi-structured interview including both structured and open-ended questions. The interviews were conducted in the week following participants' posting their last writing assignments on the blog. The researcher conducted five interviews with the participants. The data were collected

through fifteen questions that established the core of the interview. The participants were encouraged to give details concerning the answers they provided with the help of follow up questions. While the first two questions aimed to elicit background information regarding the prior experience of writing in English and blog writing, the remaining questions aimed to elicit participants' perceptions of blogging experience. Through thematic analysis participants' perceptions about the blogging process were classified into three main sections: a) participants' views on the education process, b) participants' views on the development of academic performance, and c) participants' views on blog usage.

4.10.1. Participants' Views on the Blogging Process

The participants' opinions about the process provided deep insights into the entire education process. It was observed that during the process, notable changes took place in participants' perceptions.

First, some participants stated that they experienced some challenges since blogging was a new technology introduced to the language teaching process. Even though the participants were mostly members of the *Net* generation, they experienced challenges in accessing a proper computer having internet access, which they needed to utilize to type their essays and publish them on the blog. Some of the participants stated that they did not have a computer, and they had to use their smartphones to actively participate in the process. However, the smartphones were not proper devices to write academic texts on. Beyond all, they could not write according to the proper writing rules like punctuation, spacing, indentation, and a proper layout. The following excerpt can serve as an example to show the technological equipment problem.

I encountered difficulties because we write on the phone. I don't have a computer and typing on the phone is unfortunately not practical enough. Also, the screen is small, the keys are not ideal (Participant I).

As made clear in the excerpt given by the participant I, smartphones posed some problems for the participants. They had small screens and inappropriate keyboards. Therefore, they had challenges in writing properly and correcting their typing errors. They could not properly organize the writing layout because of the lack of a computer

as well. Moreover, the participants stated that they sometimes did not have wireless internet coverage on their devices, which posed another challenge. Some of the participants had to travel to an internet café to have access to both a computer and the Internet. However, that was time-consuming for them. They could not go to an internet café in the evening, and that was another challenge for the participants.

Moreover, they stated that participating in the learning process at the beginning was a challenge for them. Many reasons were put forward to explain why the process seemed to be annoying for them initially. Firstly, the participants could not get accustomed to employing academic language. Secondly, they had to undergo intense brainstorming sessions to come up with new ideas and to be creative in their writings. They also stated that they needed language sources like dictionaries and the Internet very often at the beginning of the process.

Blogging was a novel experience for most of the participants. Therefore, prejudice dominated their feelings at the outset. For example, they stated that the process was boring initially. Seeing their frequent errors seemingly led to despair and discouragement. Therefore, they did not have much fun. However, it would take a while for the participants to realize and appreciate the language enhancement affordances offered by the blogging process. Their opinions turned affirmative as time passed because they started to observe differences and progress in their writings. The following excerpt which was elicited from an interviewee gives some concrete clues about how participants' perceptions of blogging evolved throughout the process.

We improved ourselves in writing, and we became more motivated while writing. So, it motivated us as we developed ourselves. We had fun writing on some topics. Unlike in traditional paper and pencil works, effective reading and participation were achieved. When I shared a post on my blog, I felt like a journalist (Participant II).

As stated in the excerpt above, the participants felt more motivated and enthusiastic when they started to observe their improvements. Also, the excerpt implied that blogging allowed the participants to actively and effectively participate in the learning process, unlike in traditional writing approaches.

4.10.2. Participants' Views on the Development of Academic Performance

The blogging process also had a substantial impact on the participants' writing competencies. To start with, the participants stated that the instructor followed a comprehensive corrective feedback system that focused the participants' attention on a number of textual issues including punctuation, spelling, grammatical accuracy, consistency, and coherence. This systematic approach let the participants focus directly on their errors and the opportunity to reflect on the errors and correct them. The coded feedback system also enhanced the individual development of the participants by creating affordances to reflect on the errors through critical and analytical thinking. This process, in turn, may have led to learner autonomy, as they had to find out the correct forms by themselves. The following excerpt explains how the learners improved their language skills through feedback from both the instructor and their peers.

Unlike in classroom writing activities, we did not have time limitations, and it was more individual. I was anxious to read the feedback after sharing my essays. Thanks to this feedback from my teacher and my friends, I improved myself. Also, I was generally reading my friends' essays. I could get ideas from them. We both developed ourselves by looking at each other, and our teacher was very interested in us (Participant V).

As made clear in the excerpt, the participants were satisfied with the individual feedback system. Also, the participants endeavored to scaffold each other by providing feedback to one another as well. The opportunity of reading each other's writings also was evidence for the positive interaction which was enhanced by the blogging activity. Additionally, throughout the blogging process, participants' frequency of referring to a dictionary also decreased as their L2 vocabulary built up. Hence, as their dependence on a dictionary decreased, their fluency in writing increased.

The participants learned how to use newly learned lexical items properly and effectively in a given context. In the following excerpt, it can be inferred that the participants improved their writing skills and learned how to produce more consistent and coherent essays. Therefore, the interview results suggested that blogging enhanced the learners' language skills including grammar, vocabulary, and spelling.

The teacher selected writing topics among current topics. In this process, we improved our writing skills. We have learned how to produce better essays. We were able to see the errors we made while writing on the blog (Participant IV).

In the excerpt, it was stated that the process allowed the participants to improve their writing skills, and the blogging could provide a solid context for a reflective learning process. Therefore, individual improvements could be possible because the instructor closely monitored the participants' progress. Blogging integrated writing instruction also enhanced learners' individual developments. To illustrate, in the interviews, some participants stated that their self-esteem boosted as well since they overcame the problem of shyness and timidity through blogging.

4.10.3. Participants' Views on Blog Usage

The results of the qualitative analysis also provided valuable information regarding the participants' perspectives on the use of blogs. In this respect, the participants voiced many affirmative aspects concerning the advantages of blogging as well as underlining some adverse aspects of using blogs as a tool for language learning. To start with, blogging allowed the participants to receive mostly constructive feedback from their peers with respect to their writings on the blog. Therefore, most of the participants suggested that peer support increased their courage and let them become aware of their errors, which helped them improve their writing skills. The following excerpt gives valuable clues about the participants' views regarding the strengths of blogging concerning peer support.

We read our friends' essays and wrote comments under their posts. But I was worried while sharing my articles because I thought I might have some shortcomings in my essays. My friends' comments were instructive, so we had fun during the blogging process in general (Participant II).

As made clear in the excerpt above, the participants' feedback on each other's writings was instructive. Also, their comments about the writings made the learning process more entertaining for the participants. The results revealed that the peer comments on the posts enabled the learning process to be more effective and reflective.

Additionally, the participants explained that peer support was an effective way to motivate each other in the process, which stimulated a more constructive learning environment.

Enhanced social interaction was another positive aspect of blogging on the part of the participants. They stated that blogging experience increased and sustained a high level of social interaction among them. Also, the prospect of having a real audience for their posts made participants feel motivated. Furthermore,they had the opportunity to read various opinions on the same topic. From this point of view, some of the participants believed that the process enhanced their writing skills by letting them perceive various views on a single issue. At this point, some participants stated that they felt anxious about facing the teacher's feedback initially because seeing their errors would discourage them. However, they appeared to be more confident as they made progress in EFL writing, and the social interaction with peers and the instructor turned out to create a student-friendly constructive teaching/learning environment. The following excerpt can be a prime example of the general views of the participants regarding the cooperation which they sustained in the learning process.

It is very encouraging for me to see my friends' comments on the blog. I think that as we write, we make mistakes, and with the help of friends we notice our errors, we strive to correct our writings and we have the opportunity to improve ourselves (Participant III).

The excerpt given above clearly illustrates the encouragement enhanced by social interaction among participants. The participant III highlighted that his peers' comments under his post encouraged him to write more enthusiastically and properly. The student also touched upon the benefit of his friends' comments which urged him to concentrate more on his writings and produce more elaborate writings.

Finally, the participants touched upon some negative issues related to the use of blogs. For example, having to write on a topic of not their own choice seemingly became a demotivational factor for some participants. One participant especially pointed out that they could have been more productive had they been given the chance to choose their topics. Additionally, believing that they might disenchant their friends by showing their mistakes, some participants opted not to provide feedback to their friends' posts.

4.11. Analysis of the Researcher Diary

From the onset of the planning of the study to the end of the blogging process, to find out the answer to the fourth research question "What are the potential challenges teachers as researchers encounter during the running of blogging-enhanced preparatory EFL writing classes?" the researcher kept a detailed record of all the incidents and observations of participants' works, behaviors, and reflections on blogging and blogging related activities in a timely manner. During the implementation process of the study, the researcher encountered and had to deal with a number of issues and challenges ranging from technical problems to participant-related issues and the challenges attributed to the nature of writing itself. The analysis of the data revealed the emergence of fourteen themes pertaining to the challenges encountered during the conduct of the blogging activity. A thorough picture of the emergent themes with respect to the challenges encountered is given below.

Lack of interest and demotivation: Throughout the study, it was observed that many participants lacked interest in both the lesson and blogging. Very few participants came to school having prepared for the lesson. Some participants even did not bother to bring their course books to school since the teacher displayed the content of the coursebook on the whiteboard through a projector. To find out whether the lack of interest was specific to writing lesson, the researcher referred to other course instructors. They also voiced concerns regarding demotivation, which in turn led to a lack of interest.

Distractors: Smartphones seemed to be the main culprit that prevented the participants from focusing on their academic studies including blogging. Various social media applications on smartphones such as *Facebook, Instagram, YouTube*, instant messaging platforms including *WhatsApp, Telegram, Snapchat*, and many others, online gaming applications, and online shopping sites all seemed to have roles in the distraction. In various casual dialogs, some participants confessed that they usually spent up to eight hours on the Internet, which suggests that participants barely allocated time for their academic studies.

Excessive workload: Both the participants and the researcher suffered from excessive workload. Participants received 24 hours of English instruction a week, which was divided between 12 hours of the main course, four hours of reading and writing skills course, and four hours of listening and speaking skills course. They frequently complained about the intensity of homework assignments, daily to-do tasks, speaking

presentations, and frequent quizzes. Excessive workload reportedly played a role in the lack of interest on the part of the participants. As for the researcher, downloading the participants' essays on the computer and then converting each one into Word format, locating and identifying every error and inserting an appropriate error code for each error on the text and then uploading it back to the blog under the original essay was a time and energy-consuming task. Providing constructive feedback to each student essay took about twenty minutes of tedious work, oftentimes much longer.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism was an important issue regarding the essays participants posted on the blog. It was observed that some participants, instead of producing authentic products of their own, opted to carry out internet search with regard to the related essay topics. Having found the texts or essays written on the assignment topic, they made some alterations to them and posted them on the blog as their essays. Despite being advised to produce authentic works, some participants kept posting inauthentic works on the blog. Similarly, the high resemblance rate of some essays posted on the blog led to suspicions that some participants simply copied their friends' ideas. The researcher, being the instructor teaching reading and writing skills to other classes, found out that not only the participants in the experimental group but also the participants in other classes display similar plagiarism tendencies regarding out of class writing assignments.

Web-based online translation: Another important issue discovered concerning the essays posted on the blog was an online translation method. It was observed that some participants, especially foreign nationals, frequently wrote their essays in their mother tongue and processed them through *Google Translate* and posted them on the blog. Two of the foreign nationals admitted employing the online translation method in their essays. The employment of this technique might be due to the fact that those participants felt not competent enough in the target language to produce essays.

Writing anxiety: As explained in the interview part, most of the participants interviewed stated that they had never written essays while they were in high school. Only one of the interviewees expressed that they had learned how to write paragraphs. Since the university entrance exam does not test writing skills, virtually all participants lack proper writing skills in English. Lack of proper writing instruction seemed to be a crucial factor that led to writing anxiety. Another reason for writing apprehension might lie in the fact that their essays may not reflect their real thoughts due to their low

linguistic levels. One further factor that led to writing apprehension might have been the nature of writing itself.

Perfunctorily produced written works: Many participants failed to follow traditional essay structure while writing; accordingly, in many instances, participants would post poorly organized written works, which hardly could be identified or categorized as essays. Many posts lacked a proper title or a visually appealing look as most of the participants preferred writing on their smartphones. In some cases, they posted very short works on the blog. Moreover, the texts they posted on the blog lacked coherence and cohesion. In some other instances, as the participants failed to focus on the topic and generate authentic ideas, they looked stuck in a vicious cycle, repeatedly stating the same idea throughout the written work.

Missing the deadline for submitting assignments: From the first week of the blogging process to the very end, many participants failed to post their texts on the blog on time. The researcher had no choice but to extend the deadline by several days every week throughout the process of the study. Nevertheless, a few participants failed to post their texts on the blog despite the facilitative policy the researcher adopted. Had the researcher not provided extra time, the number of the posts on the blog would have decreased substantially, thereby leading to reliability and validity concerns and even jeopardizing the course of the study.

Slow pace of progress: During the implementation process of the study it was observed that it took a considerable amount of time for some learners to internalize even some basic mechanics rules such as indenting the first sentence of the paragraph, or some simple digital writing rules such as putting a space after each punctuation mark. As for the grammar rules, slow-on-the-uptake tendency continued longer for some individuals in the experimental group. Despite all the corrective feedback provided to every text uploaded to the blog for nine weeks, some participants failed to improve their writing skills effectively and the learner uptake remained relatively limited for some participants.

Fluctuations in performance: The results of the data analysis revealed that there existed some level inconsistencies between participants' perceived success levels and their actual performances. Blog use inventory and the interviews suggested that the intervention had led to substantial improvement in all participants' writing skills. However, the grades they received for their blogging performance were not congruent with the participants' statements. The importance they attributed to the contribution of

peer feedback to their enhancement of L2 writing skills was also found to be problematic. The scarcity and low linguistic accuracy of the peer feedback on participants' blog posts seemed to be a source of contradiction with the perceived usefulness of peer feedback.

Erroneous peer feedback: From the very beginning, most of the participants in the experimental group, seemed reluctant to provide feedback to their friends' posts, much as they enjoyed having comments on their own posts. Before the blogging process, the researcher clearly emphasized the ethical and motivational aspects of peer feedback and asked the participants to refrain from posting discouraging comments. Drawing on the positive effects of social interaction on participants' motivation, the researcher encouraged the participants to provide constructive comments on their peers' posts. As a result, some participants provided markedly short feedback to the posts of their peers. However, in many cases, the corrective feedback that aimed to correct an erroneous use was, in fact, itself incorrect. Bearing in mind motivational concerns, the researcher decided not to interfere with the incorrect peer feedback on the blog. Also, the limited feedback the participants provided to their peers revealed the fact that participants' self-images about their linguistic competence did not match with their actual performance.

Insistence on writing on smartphones: Having seen the unusual layout of some of the texts on the blog in the first week of the study, the researcher realized that most of the participants wrote their assignments on their smartphones instead of writing on proper computers. The researcher asked the participants to write their assignments on proper computers. However, some participants, especially those living in dormitories, not having access to computers, continued writing their assignments on their smartphones. Since they lacked proper keyboard and *Word* program while typing, and the shortcomings caused by the relatively small smartphone screens, their texts failed to meet the expected standards specifically APA guidelines. Additionally, some foreign nationals wrote their texts using non-Latin keyboards, making it extremely difficult for the researcher to insert the error codes into the text while trying to provide feedback.

Connectivity issues: As reported in the results of the blog use questionnaire, five participants stated that they experienced connection problems while trying to upload their writings to the blog. Some participants who failed to post their writings on the blog on time blamed the ineffective internet infrastructure. Additionally, some participants complained that due to frequent power failures in their districts, they had difficulty accessing the Internet.

Technology illiteracy: Though to a lesser extent in comparison with the other challenges encountered, technology illiteracy also emerged as a challenge encountered in the running of the blogging process. Five participants stated that their computer skills were not enough to write blogs. However, prior to the blog writing process, it was discovered that only one student in the experimental group had not a smartphone. Since all participants were born into an age characterized by the digital revolution and expected to be *digital natives* (Prensky, 2001) they were not supposed to have any difficulty in utilizing smartphones, tablets, or computers.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

This study primarily aimed to investigate the effect of blogging on participants' writing skills and their perceptions of blogging. A second objective was to discover whether any difference existed between the performance of blog-embedded and traditional writing classes. The study also aimed to find out the challenges the instructor as a researcher encountered during the implementation of blogging activity. To find out the answers, the researcher conducted a nine-week experimental blogging activity, in which participants wrote an essay and posted on the blog for each week. A multitude of data collection tools including two questionnaires, six semi-structured interviews, a proficiency exam, A2, and B1 completion exams, a pre-test, and a post-test, participants' blog entries, and researcher diary were employed in the study to ensure the validity and reliability of the study. In this chapter, the results obtained from this study were introduced and discussed in reference to similar studies carried out in the field.

5.2. Research Question 1: What are the effects of blogging on participants' writing performance in the blog-embedded preparatory EFL writing classes?

A comparison of participants' pre-tests and posttests, and the analysis of blog entries revealed that blogging contributed to the development of participants in a number of ways. The contribution of blogging on participants could be classified into two main groups: Effects of blogging on writing skills and academic achievement and the effects of blogging on social skills and motivation.

Effects of blogging on writing skills and academic achievement: The term *writing skills* encompasses a large number of textual issues including, grammar, punctuation, mechanics, content, and organization. The analysis of the data revealed that participants improved their overall writing scores significantly through blogging, thereby performing high academic achievement. The improvement was reflected in the writing scores they obtained at the end of the implementation of the study. The results of the post-test also seemed to support the effect of blogging scores as the participants increased their post-test scores as well. The data elicited from the blogging perception

questionnaire revealed that 94.4% of the participants stated that blogging improved their writing skills. These findings are in line with results obtained from earlier studies (Cifci, 2009; Dehneliler, 2013; Kızıl & Arslan, 2007; Sun, 2010) regarding the effect of blogging on participants' writing performances.

As stated in the interviews, writing in English was a novel experience for a large majority of participants since they had received no writing instruction while in high school. Therefore, applying grammatical rules into writing and employing appropriate contextual vocabulary created a serious challenge for most of them. The analysis of the pre-test revealed that participants seemed to make frequent errors in their writing tasks. As evidenced in the statistical data elicited from the participants' blog entry scores, the participants made far fewer errors in the last two posts. By the end of the intervention, participants increased their structural accuracy by 57.2%. This is supported by the data elicited from the blogging perception questionnaire. Out of 18 participants, 17 of them stated that they improved their grammar skills through blogging. Only one student remained undecided. Similarly, in the interview participants emphasized the contribution of blogging activity to the improvement of grammar skills. As for the vocabulary, prior to the study most of the participants had difficulty in employing lexical items appropriate to the context. The utilization of academic vocabulary was scarce. As revealed in the data obtained from the blogging perception questionnaire, most of the participants admitted the contribution of blogging to the development of lexical items. All the participants interviewed stated that their frequency of looking up words in the dictionary reduced drastically due to blogging. The findings regarding the effect of blogging on the improvement of structural accuracy and vocabulary development are in line with similar studies (Fellner & Apple, 2006; Rahmany, Sadeghi, & Faramarzi, 2013) conducted on the effects of blogging in developing grammatical accuracy and vocabulary enhancement.

On the other hand, in the literature, there are other views (Krashen, 1984; Semke, 1984; Truscott, 1996) opposing the findings obtained from this study concerning the efficacy of corrective feedback. To illustrate, Truscott claimed corrective feedback policies employed by teachers to improve the grammatical accuracy of participants are discouraging for a large number of participants. In a similar line, Kepner (1991) found out that error feedback provided by the teacher not to be effective for developing accuracy in foreign language writing. In another study, Chandler (2003) found out that

both direct correction and simply underlining the error to be very effective for structural accuracy in EFL writing.

Fluency in writing was found to be a serious challenge that many participants confronted. It usually took a very long time for the participants to complete a writing task. Having begun to write regularly on the blog, they seemed to gain momentum in producing written assignments. As evidenced in the interviews, many participants stated that writing on the blog regularly helped them gain fluency in writing. Similar results have been found by Bernstein (2004) and Fellner and Apple (2006) who confirm that blogging facilitates the development of writing fluency through frequent writing.

Content and organization are two of the main criteria determining the quality of an essay. It was evident that participants grappled with crafting essays prior to the study. However, after nine weeks of blogging intervention, participants improved the content of their essays significantly. The highest improvement was realized in the organization of ideas. In the last two blogging assignments, participants increased their content and organization grades by 51. 5% and 71.4% respectively in relevance to the first two blog entries. These results are in parallel with the findings of Simsek (2009), Anderson (2010), Arslan, and Şahin-Kızıl (2010), and Cequena, and Salle, (2013) who claim that blogging enhances content and organization in EFL writing.

Since participants had devoted no time and effort to writing while preparing for the university exam, they experienced serious challenges in internalizing punctuation skills and maintaining a proper paper layout while writing their essays. Through comprehensive feedback they received on their essays for nine weeks, they improved formatting and punctuation skills to a certain extent. However, since most of the participants preferred or had to write on smartphones, as they explained in the interviews, they failed to maintain a proper essay layout in their posts and the punctuation remained poor. Hence, the improvement rate in format and punctuation units was found rather low relevant to other assessment criteria. Improvement in the format was found 42.5 % and the punctuation was 41.4% relevant to the first two blogging evaluation grades.

In light of the data, it can be concluded that blogging facilitated the improvement of writing skills, corroborating the previous studies (Drexler, Dawson, & Ferdig, 2007; Fageeh, 2011; Jones, 2006; Kelley, 2008; Roth, 2007; Simsek, 2010; Zhang, 2009) conducted in the field.

Effects of blogging on social skills and motivation: Apart from the contribution of blogging to the enhancement of L2 writing skills and better academic performance, it also played a constructive and facilitative role in the improvement of a series of social skills and motivation. An important contribution of blogging was observed in the field of social interaction among the participants. Blogging provided a conduit through which participants could interact with both their peers and their teacher outside the school context. By having access to each other's posts on the blog, participants had the opportunity to know their peers better. Hence, participants having little or no social interaction at school were able to meet in a virtual environment. The related findings seemed to be in line with the results of Ray, Hocutt, and Patterson, (2005), and Shin and Son's (2007) study which suggested that blogging led to more student-student and teacher-student interactions.

Another important contribution of blogging was in the field of social cooperation. It was obvious that blogs functioned as a platform on which participants could offer and receive assistance and feedback. The constructive feedback they provided to their peers increased and strengthened social and personal bonds among each other. In this respect, blogging seemed to create a strong sense of community among participants. As evidenced in the interviews, most of the participants held the feedback they received from their peers in high esteem and stated that the feedback helped them greatly in both learning about their errors and correcting them. The findings are in line with previous studies (Churchill, 2009; Ellison & Wu, 2008) which suggest that reading others' posts, receiving comments, and reading peers' comments are beneficial and could assist in their perceived learning. However, the results of a study conducted by Yang and Chang (2012) suggested that when compared with isolated user blogs, interactive class blogs, on which all participants posted their essays, were associated with both academic achievements and increased peer interaction.

Another aspect of blogging is sharing ideas. As indicated in the blogging questionnaire, 83.3% of the participants stated that they liked sharing their ideas on the blog. Similarly, while interviewed, most of the participants expressed that they valued sharing their ideas on the blog. Two different studies conducted by Williams and Jacobs (2004) and Tekinarslan (2008) revealed that blogs foster personal reflections and sharing of the links to up-to-date information and resources by the participants displayed a sense of collaboration.

An important effect of blogging was in the creation of a sense of responsibility in participants. Having to write regularly on topics unfamiliar to them, participants began to research on the Internet and took notes regarding the information they found. Over time, regular searching, note-taking, and writing patterns seemed to evolve into study habits. Also, the constructive feedback they received from both the teacher and peers increased their sense of responsibility. In the interviews, most of the participants emphasized that searching for information, having to write regularly and the praise the received from the teacher and the peers were decisive in gaining regular study habits. Similarly, Munday (2010) presented that blogs help learners take responsibility for reflecting on and documenting their own learning.

One of the most noteworthy contributions of blogging was observed in the development of self-confidence. A major decline in the numbers of errors made in the essays, the comprehensive corrective feedback provided by the teacher, encouraging comments by peers, and gained fluency in writing were factors leading to self-confidence. As explained in the interviews, the participants emphasized the establishment of self-confidence through their blogging experience. In a similar line, Oravec (2002) suggested that blogging could improve participants' self-confidence by providing critical and analytical thinking skills.

Increased motivation was another issue that came to fore in the interviews with the participants. Some participants mentioned that the decline in the number of errors in their essays through the constructive feedback they received from both the teacher and peers and the fluency they gained in writing led to heightened motivation. Similar results have been noted by Montero-Fleta and Perez-Sabater (2010), who claimed that employing blogs for EFL language instruction would lead to an improvement in learner's motivation and writing quality. However, the results of a study conducted by Özdemir (2015) with 40 EFL students indicated that blogging had no effect in terms of providing extra motivation in relevance to traditional EFL writing instruction.

5.3. Research Question 2: Is there any difference between the writing performance of participants of blog-embedded and traditional writing classes?

To find out the answer to RQ2, the researcher applied a pre-test and a post-test having the same questions as in the pre-test to both participants in the control group and the experimental group. In addition, the grades participants received on the writing

section of both the proficiency examination they took before the start of the academic year, and the mid-term examinations I and II were compared. At the outset of the intervention, the results of the proficiency examination the participants took before the start of the academic year and the pre-test ensured that participants in both groups maintained very similar proficiency levels in terms of EFL writing skills. As stated in the findings section, the mean score of the control group on the writing section of the proficiency examination was 55.9 and the mean score for the experimental group was found as 55.0. The mean score of the pre-test for the control group was 45.6 and 45.5 for the experimental group.

A comparison of the grades the participants received in the writing section of the mid-term examination I, which coincided with the fourth week of the intervention, revealed that participants in the experimental group performed slightly better relevant to the participants in the control group. While the mean score was 45.6 for the control group, it was found 48.5 for the experimental group. The results denoted that the grades the participants in the experimental group received began to diverge.

A comparison of the pre-test and the post-test results revealed a statistically meaningful difference in favor of the participants in the experimental group. Following a nine-week intervention, while the participants in the control group increased their mean score from 45.5 to 63.6, the mean score of the participants in the experimental group rose from 45.1 to 78.1. The difference between the grades was found 14.5 in favor of the experimental group. The results indicated that the participants in the experimental group outperformed the participants in the control group in the post-test writing performance. Furthermore, the grades the participants received on the mid-term exam II, which ends the fall academic term, also seemed to support the findings obtained from the pos-test. While the mean score of the control group was 68.0 on the mid-term examination II, it became 77.5 for the experimental group. The difference between grades revealed that participants in the experimental group outperformed the participants in the control group not only in tests evaluated by the same panel of raters but also in the tests evaluated by different raters in the program.

The findings of this study are supported by various studies conducted in the field. Kazancı (2012) carried out a study with 30 participants at Akdeniz University Higher School of Foreign Languages to find out the effect of blogging on writing performance. The six-week study concluded that blogging contributed to the improvement of writing

skills and the participants in the experimental group received better grades relevant to those in the control group.

Dehneliler (2013) conducted a similar study with 20 participants who wrote 14 essays. The researcher compared the grades the participants received on the first three and the last three blog posts. The participants in the experimental group outperformed the participants in the control group. In another study conducted by Üzer (2016) in Antalya International University (AIU) School of Foreign Languages, with 28 participants, aiming to see the effect of blogging on participants' EFL writing performances, it was observed that the participants in the EG received higher grades in comparison with the participants in the CG. On the other hand, Lin (2014) found out that blogging was a less effective method for EFL writing than the traditional pen-paper approach. Similarly, the results of a study conducted by Özdemir (2015) with 40 EFL students indicated that blogging itself failed to provide a better performance in terms of writing achievement in EFL.

5.4. Research Question 3: What are the EFL learners' perceptions of the blogging experience prior to, during, and post-exposure to this Web 2.0 Environment in preparatory EFL writing classes?

To find out the answer to RQ3, the researcher referred to the blogging perception inventory administered to the participants and semi-structured face-to-face interviews conducted with five participants. The analysis of the data obtained from both tools revealed significant output regarding the participants' perceptions of blogs and their blogging experience. It was discovered that prior to the intervention participants held various perceptions regarding blogging. The analysis of the data revealed that most of the participants had no opinion regarding blogging since they had no related previous experience. While a few participants already familiar with blogs and blogging thought it to be beneficial for the development of EFL writing skills, those unfamiliar with blogging felt apprehensive when the researcher explained the procedure of blogging tasks. Some others thought that blogging would be an unnecessary, tiring, useless, demanding, and time-consuming venture that would yield no positive outcomes. As a result, it can be stated the prevalent feeling towards blogging was not affirmative at the outset of the study.

The findings of this study are supported by a number of previous studies. Dehneliler (2013) found that the participants in the study were unwilling to blog at the very beginning of the study as they thought it to be a useless activity. Similarly, in another study conducted by Lin (2014), the participants were found to be reluctant to write blogs. Some participants did not seem eager to write on the blog for fear that their errors would be revealed to the whole group. Hence, for the participants, the prospect of one's errors to be exposed to a community, and fear of criticism seemed to be overriding factors leading to writing apprehension and reluctance in writing blogs. Similar results were obtained in a study conducted by Masny and Foxall (1991). The study suggested that a correlation existed between high apprehension and unwillingness to write in L2 especially among linguistically less competent individuals. The study also concluded that individuals' writing apprehension was context-sensitive, which meant that variables such as language proficiency, previous exposure to writing, instructional practices, and course content played crucial roles in L2 writing apprehension.

Although before the intervention most of the participants' perceptions about blogging were marked by obvious negativity, a few weeks into the intervention their perceptions seemed to undergo a radical transformation. Nevertheless, especially the first three weeks seemed very disheartening for a large majority of the participants as the number of errors displayed on their blogs failed to decline. However, after the first three weeks, a gradual decrease was noted in EFL learners' errors. Observing the decline in the errors they made seemed to be a turning point in the perceptions the participants held about blogging. A combination of factors such as improved linguistic accuracy and therefore a decrease in the number of errors made on the texts, scaffolding practices offered by the teacher to the participants, the opportunity of observing all the blog posts and the feedback on them, and the constructive peer scaffolding through comments they received seemed to contribute to an alteration in their perceptions about blogging. Hence, it can be stated that from the third week into the intervention, some of the participants' writing apprehension began to diminish gradually. The findings of this study concur with the results obtained by Masny and Foxall (1991) who maintained that teaching strategies and the policies adopted by teachers are important variables to deal with writing apprehension and eliminate reluctance in L2 writing.

Towards the end of the intervention, the perceptions of participants were observed to have evolved into more positive and constructive perspectives. Increased fluency in writing, enhanced academic vocabulary skills, improved textual issues such

as punctuation, mechanics, formatting, better topic progression in texts, and employment of complex sentences contributed to the evolution of participants' feelings concerning the blogging process. The change in their perceptions reflected itself in the results obtained from the blogging perception inventory. Surprisingly, all the participants in the experimental group (100%) supported the idea that blogging should be an integral part of EFL writing classes. Similarly, all the participants interviewed held the opinion that blogging should be integrated into EFL writing instruction.

5.5. Research Question 4: What are the potential challenges teachers as researchers encounter during the running of blogging-enhanced preparatory EFL writing classes?

The fieldnotes the teacher as a researcher took throughout the entire process of the blogging experience were referred to as the primary source of data regardingRQ4. From the outset of the intervention to the very end, the researcher kept a detailed account of the events, the experiences, challenges encountered, and the observations made while conducting the study. The analysis of the data revealed the emergence of fourteen themes pertaining to the challenges encountered during the conduct of the blogging activity, and it was observed that some of the themes to be closely related to each other, one leading to the other or the latter being the result of the former, as in the relationship between lack of interest and demotivation. Also, there appeared to be a negative correlation between some themes such as the one between linguistic competence and writing anxiety or positive correlation as in the enhancement in academic performance and heightened self-perception and motivation. While most of the themes had already been observed and discussed in earlier studies, to the researcher's knowledge, no mention had been made regarding some of the emerging themes in the related literature. The results elicited from the fieldnotes were presented and discussed in reference to the similar studies carried out in the field.

With the onset of the blogging activity, many participants in the experimental group seemed to suffer from a *lack of interest and demotivation* in not only the blogging activity but also the EFL writing course. Some participants did not even bother to bring their writing course books to school. This lack of interest found its reflections in the casually written, poorly organized, and markedly short texts posted on the class blog. Similar observations were made by AlBakri (2016) who noted that most of the students

were not committed to their studies, nor did they take the teacher corrective feedback seriously. This is also in parallel with the results of the study conducted by Guénette (2007), who claimed that so long as learners are not willing to improve their writing skills, there will be no improvement, no matter what kind of feedback teachers provide. As stated by some of the participants in the interviews, having to write on topics of not their own choice led to demotivation in some participants. Lack of interest seemed to result in demotivation. A plausible explanation of lack of interest and demotivation also might lie in writing anxiety in the foreign language, which is another emergent theme of this study. Similarly, Kırmızı and Kırmızı (2015) emphasized that writing anxiety led to demotivation and discouragement in participants, which in turn resulted in the development of negative attitudes towards EFL writing.

Another theme that emerged from the data analysis was the *distractors.* Smartphones with internet access seemed to be the prime culprit causing distraction and preventing the participants from focusing on their academic studies including blogging. Instant messaging applications such as *WhatsApp, Telegram, Snapchat,* and *Messenger* installed on the smartphones seemed to trigger the urge to communicate even during class hours. Similarly, various social media applications such as *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *YouTube*, and synchronous and asynchronous gaming applications on smartphones, seemed to have roles in the distraction. In a similar line, Kamali (n.d.) found out that the students were distracted by technology and they utilized it as a means of entertainment. However, she declined to pinpoint the exact type of technology adversely influencing students' academic studies.

A theme that was found to be of great significance was *writing anxiety.* The perception interviews revealed that a substantial percentage of the participants experienced writing anxiety, a major impediment to willingness in EFL writing. Lack of proper previous writing instruction, linguistic and lexical incompetence appeared to be the determining factors leading to writing anxiety and reluctance in EFL writing for the participants of the study. The prospect of not being able to express their thoughts and feelings efficiently in the foreign language was also another factor that came to fore in the interviews which led to reluctance. In the same line, the results of a study conducted by Genç and Yaylı (2019) revealed that the majority of the preparatory school participants had a high and moderate level of second language writing anxiety. A study by Moon and Lim (2013) revealed that students with low levels of writing confidence could develop writing anxiety as they may be embarrassed by the possibility that others

may observe their mistakes. In another study, Özkan (2011) found out that the participants in the study felt reluctant to write. However, whereas in the current study the possible sources of reluctance to write were lack of proper writing instruction and linguistic incompetence, the reluctance in her study arose from the monotony of frequent writing tasks.

Another theme that emerged as a result of the analysis of the data was the *fluctuations in performance*. The results of the data analysis revealed that a contradiction existed between participants' perceived success levels and their actual performances. The data from the blog use inventory and the interviews displayed that participants benefitted from the intervention to a large extent. However, the grades they received for their blogging performance fell short to verify their statements. Another point of discrepancy was related to participants' perceived effectiveness of peer feedback. Both in the blog use inventory and the interviews, they emphasized that the feedback they received on their posts helped them improve their EFL writing skills greatly. However, the paucity of the peer feedback on their posts and the low correctness levels of the so-called corrective feedback, they received on their essays on the blog seemed to contradict their statements. The findings of the studies by Sitzmann et al. (2010) and Clayson (2009), which point out the distinction between actual learning and perceived learning, supported the findings of this study. Similarly, Kruger and Dunning (1999) found out that less capable individuals exaggerated their perceived learning more than highly capable individuals. And finally, Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) pointed out that learners' affective and motivational states influenced the judgments learners made about themselves.

Plagiarism was another important theme that emerged. During the running of the blogging process, the researcher observed that some participants, instead of producing and posting authentic essays, opted to post texts already found on the WEB. It appeared that having made some alterations to the texts they found on the Internet sources, they posted them on the blog as their own. Another type of plagiarism was found to be in the form of copy-and-paste. The high resemblance rate between some essays posted on the blog led to doubts concerning the authenticity of the posts on the blog. Kamali (n.d.) also touched upon plagiarism issues in blogging activities concerning L2 writing tasks. A similar issue of copy-and-paste type plagiarism was mentioned within a pre-service language teacher education study conducted by Özkan (2011).

Another challenge encountered concerning the content of the essays participants posted on the blog was *the web-based translation method.* As evidenced in the interviews, some of the participants experienced challenges in producing long and complex sentences in EFL. Hence, to overcome the shortcoming, some participants, especially foreign nationals in the experimental group, wrote the texts in their mother tongue and processed them through *Google translate,* a web-based instant translation provider. Since the web-based translation method is a fairly recent technological development, there seemed to be no reference pertaining to the employment of the web-based translation method in blogging studies featuring EFL writing to the researcher's knowledge.

Missing the deadline to post the essays was another challenge the researcher had to deal with. Some participants repeatedly failed to post their essays on the blog on time. To overcome the problem, the researcher had to extend the deadline for the submission of the essays by a few days each week throughout the study. Yet, some participants failed to post their essays on the blog.

During the running of the blogging process, a very tough challenge the researcher had to tackle was the *slow pace of progress* observed in some participants. Internalizing even some basic structural and mechanics rules appeared to be a real challenge. Despite comprehensive corrective feedback the researcher provided to every writing work posted on the blog, slow uptake prevailed for some participants and the amount of the consolidation and progress made remained relatively limited. Ashwell (2000) articulates that teachers believe that correcting students' grammatical errors in their works will help them achieve accuracy in their subsequent L2 writing. However, expecting the corrective feedback the teacher provides to address the problems will lead to accuracy in the subsequent writing is not realistic; on the contrary, corrective feedback leads to a change in performance over time (Ferris & Roberts, 2001).

Excessive workload was found to be a serious challenge not only for the participants but also for the teacher as a researcher. The participants' weekly intensive school schedule, the number and the content of assignments they were given, and the frequency of the quizzes they had to take reportedly played roles in the lack of interest in the lessons and reluctance to write blogs. Similarly, Özkan (2011) found that the participants complained about the excessive workload they had to carry out.

Another important theme that emerged from the analysis of the field notes was the *erroneous peer feedback*. From the outset of the study onward, the participants of

the study were encouraged to provide constructive feedback. However, the amount of feedback the participants provided to each other remained very limited despite the researcher's behest. To support this, Lin et al. (2014) found out that as commenting had not been rendered mandatory, the participants of their study failed to post enough feedback to their peers. In this study, it was observed that in many cases the feedback that participants provided to their peers' blog posts to treat an error, in fact, offered incorrect knowledge, and therefore following the feedback would lead to another incorrect usage. Much as there is a reference to inappropriate feedback in a study conducted by Kamali (n.d), the focal point of 'inappropriateness' seems to be related to the style of the feedback, rather than error treatment.

During the blogging process, many participants posted *perfunctorily produced written works* on the blog. It was discovered that many participants failed to observe traditional essay structure while writing; hence, in many cases, their posts appeared to be poorly organized written works. Many posts lacked mechanics rules. Since most of the participants wrote their essays on their smartphones, which is another emergent theme, the texts lacked proper essay layout and, in many cases, and they were too short to be referred to as essays. Topic progression, coherence of ideas in the paragraphs, cohesion at sentence, and paragraph-level were the issues the participants often failed to address. And finally, in some instances, having failed to generate authentic ideas, the participant seemed to fall in a loop, repeating the same idea throughout the essay. Although the issues mentioned here are frequently encountered occurrences in EFL writing, in the related literature we could not come across mention of the issues as a theme or a unit regarding blogs or blogging.

Writing blogging assignments on smartphones posed a challenge concerning maintaining a proper layout of the essays posted on the blog. During the blogging process, it was observed that the majority of the participants wrote their assignments on smartphones instead of proper computers. A number of issues related to smartphones such as relatively small screen size, lack of proper keyboard, text display area incompatible with APA guidelines led to unusual layout and distortion in the display of the essays and the essays failed to meet the expected standards. Although being advised to write their essays on proper computers, especially participants living in dormitories kept writing on smartphones since reportedly they could not access proper computers. Also, the foreign nationals in the experimental group wrote their texts using non-Latin keyboards, making it extremely difficult for the researcher to embed the error codes into

the text while trying to provide feedback. A similar reference concerning challenges posed by the employment of smartphones in carrying out blogging tasks has not been discussed in the related literature, thereby rendering it a novelty.

The analysis of the fieldnotes and participants' statements revealed that some participants experienced technical problems related to accessing the Internet while trying to post their texts on the blog. In several instances, the participants failed to upload their essays on the blog and put the blame on the insufficient internet infrastructure. Power failure incidents were also mentioned as the reasons for failing to post the essays on the blog. In some instances, the participants offered handwritten copies of their essays as they reportedly had no access to the Internet. A myriad of connectivity issues has been reported in the related literature. However, the availability of very fast and efficient broadband internet service across the country and the involvement of a very small amount of data transfer in uploading the essays at the time the study was conducted seemingly failed to render the existence of the aforementioned explanations viable.

Technology illiteracy also emerged as a theme impacting the blogging process. Data analysis revealed that five of the participants defined themselves as technologically not savvy individuals. In the Internet-use-questionnaire, they stated their computer literacy levels were not sufficient enough to carry out blogging activity. As virtually all the participants were born in the new millennium, characterized by the digital revolution, and therefore expected to be *digital natives,* the emergence of this theme came as surprise to the researcher.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction

The final chapter portrays an overall picture offered by the study. In this chapter, the study was summarized and concluded. Then, the limitations, pedagogical implications of the study, and recommendations for further research regarding the integration of blogs, a Web 2.0 tool, into EFL writing instruction were presented.

6.2. The Summary of the Study

This study investigated the effects of blogging on the development of preparatory class students' writing skills. The nine-week study was conducted in the 2019-2020 fall term at the School of Foreign Languages at Harran University, Turkey. The participants of the study were 39 ELT students taking a one-year mandatory preparatory program. Through this investigation, it was aimed (1) to see the what the effects of blogging activity would be on participants' writing skills, (2) to see whether there would be a difference between the writing performance of participants receiving traditional writing instruction and blogging integrated writing instruction, (3) to find out the perceptions of the participants regarding blogging process, and (4) to explore the challenges the researcher encountered in conducting blogging activity. Four research questions guided this study to follow a scientific evaluation process.

In the process, with the aim of reaching more reliable and valid results, both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools were utilized, and quasi-experimental research design was adopted. To elicit quantitative data, two questionnaires, a pre-test, and a post-test, and the essays the participants posted on the blog for nine weeks were utilized. In addition, the scores of the FLT exam, the writing sections of the proficiency exam the participants took before the start of the academic year, and the mid-term exam I and II were referred to as quantitative data sources. The qualitative data were elicited through five semi-structured interviews conducted with participants and the fieldnotes the researcher recorded during the running of the blogging process. While *SPSS 25.0* and *Excel* were employed to analyze the quantitative data, the qualitative data elicited

were processed through thematic analysis to explore the perceptions of participants regarding blogging activity.

6.3. Conclusion

Guided by the research questions, the study revealed a number of findings and conclusions that may have strong pedagogical implications. Although the results of the study were markedly positive in terms of student gains, it also led to the emergence of several themes associated with negativity

The contribution of blogging could be observed in two distinct aspects: a) contribution to writing skills, b) contribution to the social aspect and motivation. The results of the pre-test and post-test indicated that the integration of blogging into writing instruction positively affected participants' writing skills. The intervention reflected itself in the improvement of a number of textual issues including mechanics, content, and organization of ideas, and structural accuracy. Compared with the pre-test, the participants of the study increased their writing skills substantially in the post-test. As a result, it can be said that blogging activity enhanced participants' writing skills substantially.

Not only did blogging contribute to the development of writing skills, but it also had effects on the motivation and the social interaction of participants. The data elicited from the blogging perception inventory revealed that the class blog mediated as a platform through which participants could provide and receive assistance, thereby leading to increased social interaction and collaboration among peers. Also, participants admitted the constructive feedback they received from the teacher and peers played a key role in elevating their motivation. Besides, through searching for information about essay topics, they improved their lexicon, and writing every week led to fluency in EFL writing. Despite the obvious advantages of blogging, some participants stated that they could not access proper computers with internet access to write and post their essays on the blog. As a result, having to write assignments on their smartphones led to some technical issues regarding the mechanics and layout of the essays. Reportedly, problems accessing the Internet on the part of some participants resulted in not being able to post their essays.

The analysis of both the proficiency test the participants took before the start of the academic year and the pre-test indicated that the participants in both control and the

experimental group maintained very similar writing levels prior to the intervention. Although both groups increased their writing grades, the difference between the two groups' post-tests results was 14.3 points in favor of the experimental group, resulting in 22.4% better performance. The results indicated that integrating blogs, a Web 2.0 tool, to traditional text-based EFLwriting classes contributed to the improvement of participants' writing skills.

Before the intervention, the participants' perceptions of blogging were predominantly negative. Out of 18 participants in the experimental group, only two had previous blogging experience. Furthermore, as the university entrance exam does not assess the writing skills, most of the participants in the experimental group received no writing instruction in EFL at all. Given the challenges associated with the nature of writing, limited linguistic and lexical proficiency levels of the participants, and the addition of the aforementioned states of the participants, the idea of writing on a public platform led to negative perceptions. However, as the intervention progressed, through the constructive feedback and support they received both from the teacher and the peers, the participants improved their writing skills. The enhancement in the writing skills and lexical proficiency, increased writing fluency led to confidence in the participants. At the end of the intervention, as evidenced in the data elicited in the blogging perception inventory, an overwhelming majority of the participants admitted that through blogging they improved their writing skills. Furthermore, all the participants (n=18, 100%) in the experimental group strongly agreed that blogging should be an integral part of the EFL writing instruction. In conclusion, it can be said that while prior to the intervention participants' perceptions of blogging were markedly negative, with the outset of the intervention, their perceptions underwent a radical change and at the end of the blogging process it had evolved into more positive views.

In addition to the obvious contributions of blogging activity in the participants' academic writing skills, the study also revealed many themes that may be associated with negativity. To begin with, it was observed that a substantial number of the participants had writing anxiety, which may be related to a lack of linguistic and lexical proficiency and previous writing instruction. Seemingly, the writing apprehension led to demotivation in participants, which in turn created a lack of interest in not only the lesson but also the blogging process. Accordingly, some of the writings posted on the blog were markedly short and poorly organized. As evidenced in the perception interviews, most of the participants opted to write their essays on their smartphones.

Since the writing assignments were not produced on proper computers, they lacked a number of required standards in writing, such as proper line, paragraph and essay structure, proper paper layout, titling, and indentation. Also, a high similarity rate between some works posted on the blog raised some authenticity concerns. Another serious issue that came to the fore was the employment of an online web-based translation method, which some participants and especially foreign nationals seemed to resort to frequently. Given the scarcity of the comments which the participants provided to their peers, the effect of peer feedback seemed to be limited.

As a conclusion, the study revealed that despite the emergence of some themes that could be associated with negativity, it was observed that the integration of blogs, a Web 2.0 tool, into EFL writing instruction led to the enhancement of academic writing skills and improved lexicon on the part of the participants, which contributed to the establishment of confidence, self-esteem, and therefore motivation. Also, the class blog seemed to provide a venue through which participants could receive and offer feedback, which led to increased social interactions and collaboration among peers, creating a sense of community and belonging.

6.4. Limitations

Just as in many research studies, there may have been some limitations involved in this study as well. The first limitation is related to the number of participants in the study. The study was conducted at the School of Foreign Languages, Harran University, Turkey. In the year the study was conducted approximately 80 ELT students enrolled in the school, and roughly fifty percent of the students passed the proficiency exam. As a result, the number of students who participated in the study remained very limited. Therefore, the results obtained from the study may have failed to make a generalization. Secondly, due to the tight schedule of the school and the participants' cumbersome courses and the intensity of their studies, the research was limited to nine weeks. A study longer in duration might yield more meaningful results.

Since the blogging process was introduced as an extracurricular activity to the reading and writing skills course, it may have failed to reveal the actual performance of the participants. Hence, a study rendering the blogging process a constituent of the curriculum may yield better results. Another limitation is the general attitude of participants towards surveys and interviews conducted as a part of the study. As has

been reported in previous studies, when the participants are the students and the researcher is the participants' teacher at the same time, participants may abstain from making negative comments while responding to the questions in the interviews, or simply may opt to give answers that could please their teachers. Accordingly, the data gathered through interviews and questionnaires might not reflect the participants' real beliefs, thereby calling into the reliability of the results obtained from the study.

6.5. Implications and Suggestions for Further Studies

The present study endeavored to cast light on the effects of blogging on learners' EFL writing and gain insights regarding their perceptions of blogging as an out of class enhancement to writing instruction. Even though the study was carried out with a small number of participants, it presents a number of significant implications for the teachers and course developers who may consider integrating blogs into EFL writing instruction. When utilized for pedagogical purposes, blogs can offer many opportunities not only for learners but also for teachers. Since blogs do not require specialized computer or internet skills and their user-friendly structure, teachers can integrate blogging into EFL writing instruction with ease. Thanks to their asynchronous nature of communication, blogs can be utilized as tools to encourage the learners to practice the target language outside classroom settings. Furthermore, blogs seem to support the social and collaborative aspect of learning conceptualized by the constructivist theory of learning as they create channels through which learners can interact with peers, receive and offer feedback and, scaffolding. Additionally, with the help of blogs, learners can address a real audience through their written products. Accordingly, as this study suggests, it motivates them to write and improves their writing skills. As Dehneliler (2013) has stated, blogging can help learners to practice their language skills in authentic and meaningful communication which is open to a real audience.

Considering the outcomes obtained from this study regarding student attainments in improved structural and lexical accuracy, content, mechanics, and organizational skills, it can be stated that blogging can be an effective tool when integrated into the teaching of writing skills. The study has also revealed that blogging can be employed as a teaching tool since it leads to an increase in the motivation levels of the participants. It was also observed that blogs function as platforms where students find social interaction opportunities and serve as tools facilitating and fostering

collaboration among participants. In this respect, the study found out that learners would like to have blogging as an integral part of the curriculum, not only as an extracurricular activity. Hence, future studies adopting blogging as a constituent of writing instruction may obtain better results.

It should be noted that each technological innovation, besides the advantages it introduces, brings about new challenges as well. As the study disclosed, in addition to the obviously positive contributions of blogging to participants' achievements, it also led to many challenges, some of which emerged as novel occurrences. To begin with, blogging assignments were given as external activities in this study: Many participants assumed it as an extra workload; hence, it led to a lack of interest in some participants. However, if blogging is introduced into the curriculum, students' attitudes may be more positive, and better results may be obtained. Demotivation was also another challenge encountered during the implementation of the study. In future studies, researchers may have to develop policies to tackle the demotivation issue.

As mentioned in the discussion section, the university entrance exam does not evaluate writing skills. Accordingly, the students registering at the schools of foreign languages are not geared with EFL writing skills. Lack of previous writing instructions, coupled with the challenges attributed to the nature of writing, seems to lead to writing anxiety in participants. Integrating EFL writing into the university exam may offer solutions to writing anxiety problems in students. Given the limited amount of the feedback participants provided to their peers, the provision of feedback may be rewarded to increase participation in blogging activity. Writing blogging assignments on smartphones caused a number of problems in terms of student essays. Therefore, in future studies, ensuring that participants prepare their essays on proper computers may lead to better results. Erroneous peer feedback was another challenge encountered during the running of the blogging process. In future studies, researchers may have to develop corrective devices or employ suitable policies to eliminate feedback offering incorrect structural use. In this respect, training students regarding how to provide feedback on their peers' blog posts may lead to the provision of better peer feedback. Plagiarism was another challenge encountered during the blogging process. Just as the Internet has eased many aspects of life, it has also facilitated access to information. In this respect, ensuring the authenticity of students' works may create a serious challenge for the teachers and researchers in future studies. Accordingly, researchers who want to conduct blogging studies or teachers wishing to employ blogging into writing

instruction may need to create awareness about producing authentic written works. Web-based online translation method was another problem encountered during the implementation of the study. In the process, seemingly lacking linguistic and lexical proficiency in English, some participants resorted to a Web-based translation method. In future blogging studies featuring foreign language writing, teachers and researchers may have to find ways to tackle the issue. As evidenced in the student statements, writing on topics of not their interests may have caused disinterest and demotivation in some participants. Giving students writing assignments from a list of topics created by participants may yield better results.

Much as a detailed and systematic approach was employed in this study, it is possible to conduct more comprehensive studies on blogging. To illustrate, studies may be conducted with wider populations and with the participation of students from different universities. The participants of this study were A2 level ELT students and the study lasted only nine weeks. Future studies may be conducted with the participation of students at different proficiency levels and for longer periods. Data collection tools and applications not employed in this study may be utilized in future studies. This study showed that blogging can enhance writing skills. In future studies, the effects of blogging on other language skills may be investigated. And finally, this study followed a quasi-experimental design; however, a direct experimental study using random sampling method may yield better results.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Consent and Information Form (English)

The aim of this study is to get your opinions about the effects of blogging on the development writing skills in L2 at university preparatory class level.

Participation in the study is voluntary.

The personal information of the participants will be kept strictly confidential.

If you wish, you have the right to review the information obtained from you.

Any information that you do not want to share in the study will not be asked from you.

You have the right to leave the study at any time.

If you leave the study, your information and data will be removed from the study.

If you want to have more information about the study, you can contact the researcher at mithatisci@gmail.com

I have read and understood the information written above. I agree to participate voluntarily in the study.

Participant:

Name	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____

Researcher:

Name	Signature	Date

APPENDIX A: Gönüllü Katılım ve Bilgilendirme Formu (Türkçe)

Bu çalışma üniversite hazırlık sınıfı seviyesinde blog yazmanın öğrencilerin yazma becerilerinin üzerindeki etkisini öğrenmek amacıyla yapılacaktır.

Çalışmanın doğası hakkında bilgilendirildiğimi ve araştırma hakkında soru sorma fırsatımın olduğunu onaylıyorum.

Çalışmaya katılmayı gönüllü olarak kabul ediyorum.

Anladığım kadarıyla herhangi bir zamanda sebep göstermeden ve olumsuz sonuçlara yol açmadan çekilebilirim.

Araştırmacı ile birlikte, bu onay formunu imzalamayı ve tarih atmayı kabul ediyorum.

Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi sahibi olmak isterseniz mithatisci@gmail.com adresinden araştırmacı ile iletişime geçebilirsiniz.

Katılımcı:

Katılımcının Adı	İmza	Tarih
_____	_____	_____

Araştırmacı:

Araştırmacının Adı	İmza	Tarih

APPENDIX B. Blogging Perception Inventory (English)

Dear students,

This questionnaire aims to investigate the effects of blogging on EFL students' writing skills and their perceptions of blogging. Please read the statements below carefully and choose the appropriate response that suits best to your ideas and experiences. Your answers will be kept confidential.

(1) Totally Disagree (2) Disagree (3) No idea (4) Agree (5) Strongly agree

Age: **Gender:**

	Items	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1.	Writing on the blog makes me feel better.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	Writing blogs helped me learn and use grammar rules.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	Blogs helped me improve my writing skills.	5	4	3	2	1
4.	I learned new vocabulary items while writing blogs.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	I think blogging is a good way of cooperation with my classmates.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	I see blogging as a part of writing lesson.	5	4	3	2	1
7.	I like sharing my ideas on the blog.	5	4	3	2	1
8.	I like reading my friends' blogs.	5	4	3	2	1
9.	I enjoy writing comments on my friends' blogs.	5	4	3	2	1
10.	I like it when my friends leave comments on my blog.	5	4	3	2	1
11.	I like it when my teacher comments on my blog and provides feedback.	5	4	3	2	1
12.	Blogging is a motivational activity for expressing my feelings and ideas.	5	4	3	2	1
13.	Positive comments by my friends and teacher increase my self-esteem.	5	4	3	2	1
14.	I try to do my best while writing blogs because my classmates can read it.	5	4	3	2	1
15.	Writing blogs takes a really long time.	5	4	3	2	1
16.	I have connection problems while uploading my writings.	5	4	3	2	1
17.	My computer skills are not enough for writing blogs.	5	4	3	2	1
18.	I don't want to blog because others can easily copy my ideas.	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX B. Blog Yazma Anketi (Türkçe)

Sevgili öğrenciler,

Bu anket, EFL hazırlık sınıfı öğrencilerinin İngilizce yazma becerilerini geliştirmek için Blogları kullanmanın etkilerini ve bloglamaya yönelik tutumlarını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Lütfen aşağıdaki ifadeleri dikkatlice okuyun ve fikir ve deneyimlerinize en uygun yanıtı seçin. Cevaplarınız gizli tutulacaktır.

(5) Tamamen katılıyorum (4) Katılıyorum (3) Fikrim yok (2) Katılmıyorum (1) Tamamen katılmıyorum

Yaş: **Cinsiyet:**

	5	4	3	2	1
1. Blogda yazmak kendimi iyi hissetmemi sağlıyor.	5	4	3	2	1
2. Blog yazmak, İngilizce dilbilgisi kurallarını daha iyi anlamama ve kullanmama yardımcı oldu.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Bloglar, yazma becerilerimi geliştirmeme yardımcı oldu.	5	4	3	2	1
4. Bloga yazarken yeni İngilizce sözcükler öğrendim.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Blogda yazmanın sınıf arkadaşlarım ile işbirliği yapmanın iyi bir yolu olduğunu düşünüyorum.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Blogları İngilizce yazma dersinin bir parçası olarak görüyorum.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Fikirlerimi blogda paylaşmayı seviyorum.	5	4	3	2	1
8. Arkadaşlarımın bloglarını okumayı seviyorum.	5	4	3	2	1
9. Arkadaşlarımın bloglarına yorum yazmak hoşuma gidiyor	5	4	3	2	1
10. Arkadaşlarım bloguma yorum yazması hoşuma gidiyor.	5	4	3	2	1
11. Öğretmenimin blogda yazdıklarıma dönüt vermesi hoşuma gidiyor.	5	4	3	2	1
12. Blog yazmak, benim hislerimi ve fikirleri ifade etmek için motive edici bir etkinliktir.	5	4	3	2	1
13. Arkadaşlarım ve öğretmenimin olumlu yorumları kendime olan güvenimi arttır.	5	4	3	2	1
14. Blog yazarken elimden gelenin en iyisini yapmaya çalışıyorum çünkü blogu sınıf arkadaşlarımın tamamı okuyabilir.	5	4	3	2	1
15. Blog yazmak çok uzun zaman alıyor.	5	4	3	2	1
16. Bloga yazılarımı yüklerken bağlantı sorunları yaşıyorum.	5	4	3	2	1
17. Bilgisayar becerilerim blog yazmak için yeterli değil.	5	4	3	2	1
18. Blog yazmak istemiyorum çünkü başkaları fikirlerimi kopyalayabilir.	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX C: The Internet-use-questionnaire (English)

Name - Surname:

Age: **Gender:**

Please circle the option suits you best.

Questionnaire Items	5. Totally agree	4. Agree	3. No idea	2. Diasaggree	1. Totally disagree
1. I find the Internet useful.	5	4	3	2	1
2. The Internet eases my life.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I log onto the Internet every day.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I do my homework by using the Internet.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I read comments on the Internet.	5	4	3	2	1
6. I write comments on the Internet.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I check my email account every day.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I like communicating through emails.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I send at least 1 email every day.	5	4	3	2	1
10.I know how to use blogs.	5	4	3	2	1
11.I find the information on blogs beneficial	5	4	3	2	1
12. I follow blog pages.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I read comments on blog pages.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I write comments on blog pages.	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX C. Internet Kullanım Anketi (Türkçe)

Ad-Soyad:

Yaş: **Cinsiyet:**

Lütfen size uyan şıkkı işaretleyin.

	5. Tamamen katılıyorum	4. Katılıyorum	3. Emin değilim	2. Katılmıyorum	1. Tamamen katılmıyorum
1.Bence İnternet faydalıdır.	5	4	3	2	1
2.İnternet hayatımı kolaylaştırıyor.	5	4	3	2	1
3.Hergün İnternete giriyorum.	5	4	3	2	1
4.Ödevimi İnterneti kullanarak yapıyorum.	5	4	3	2	1
5.İnternette yorumları okuyorum.	5	4	3	2	1
6.İnternette yorum yazıyıyorum.	5	4	3	2	1
7.Hergün e-postalarımı control ediyorum.	5	4	3	2	1
8.E-posta aracılığıyla iletişimi seviyorum.	5	4	3	2	1
9.Günde en az bir e-posta yolluyorum.	5	4	3	2	1
10.Blog kullanmayı biliyorum.	5	4	3	2	1
11.Bloglardaki bilgileri faydalı buluyorum .	5	4	3	2	1
12.Blog sayfalarını takip ediyorum.	5	4	3	2	1
13.Blog sayfalarında yorumları takip ediyorum.	5	4	3	2	1
14.Blog sayfalarında yorum yazıyorum.	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX C. Essay Scoring Rubric(English)

	Maximum Score	Actual Score
Format: 5 points Title centered (2), First line of each paragraph intended (2) margins left on both sides (1)	5	
Punctuation and Mechanics: 5 points Periods, commas, apostrophes and quotation marks (3) Capital letters (1) Spelling (1)	5	
Content: 20 points The essay fulfils the requirements of the assignment. (5) The essay is interesting. (5) The essay shows that the writer used care and thought. (10)	20	
Organization: 45 points The essay follows the outline, and it has an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. (5) **Introductory Paragraph:** The introductory paragraph begins with several general sentences and ends with a thesis statement. (5) **Body** Each paragraph of the body discusses a new point and begins with a clear topic sentence. (5) Each paragraph has specific supporting material: facts, examples, quotations, paraphrased or summarized information, and so on. (10) Each paragraph has unity. (5) Each paragraph has coherence. (5) Transitions are used to link paragraphs. (5) **Concluding Paragraph:** The concluding paragraph summarizes the main points or paraphrases the thesis statement, begins with a conclusion signal, and leaves the reader with the writer's final thoughts on the topic. (5)	45	
Grammar and Sentence Structure: 25 points Estimate a grammar and sentence structure score.	25	
Grand Total	100	

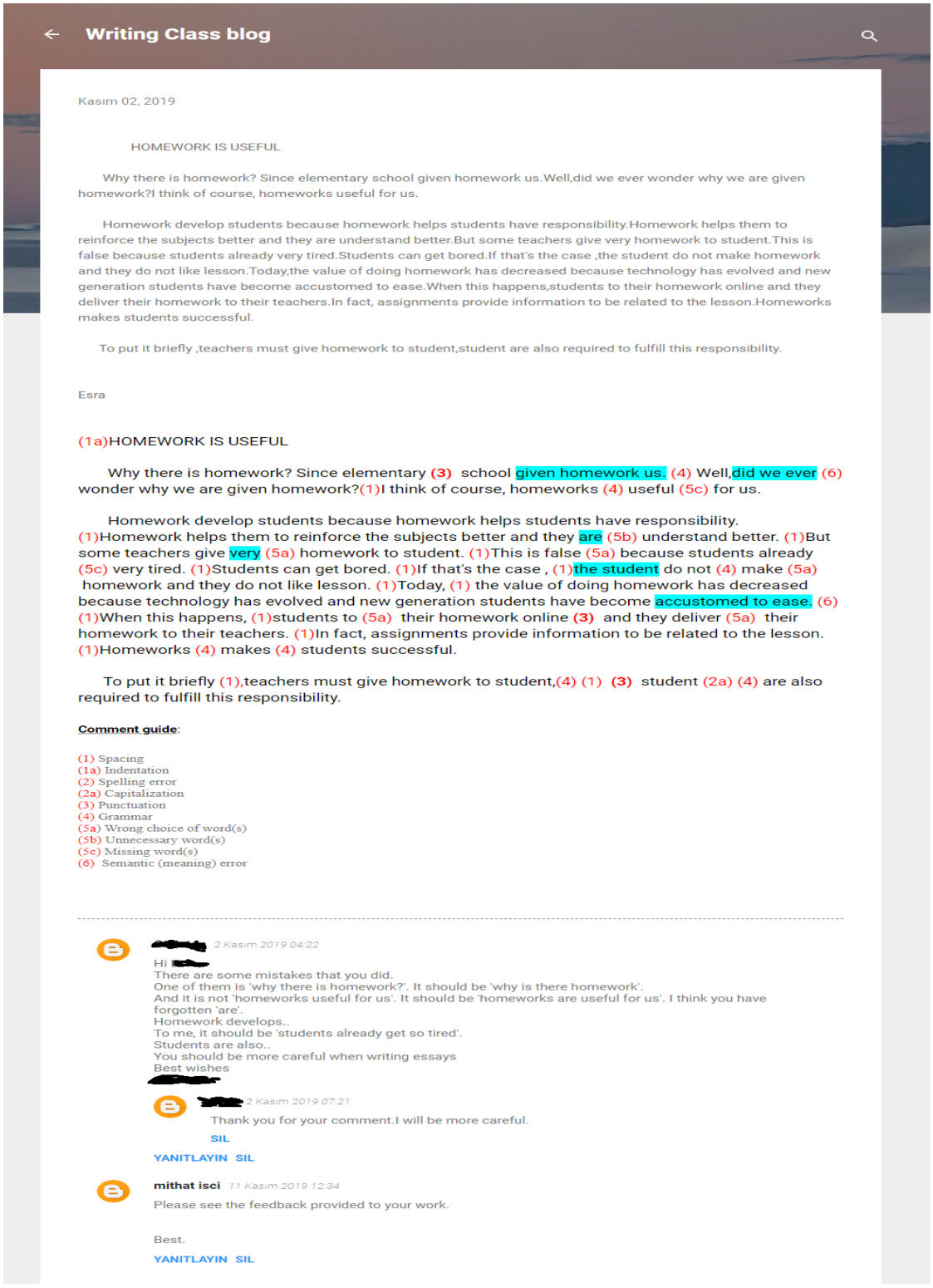
APPENDIX D. Interview Questions (English)

1. Had you written blogs (in Turkish or English) before the study?
2. Did you write paragraphs or articles in English while you were in high school?
3. Could you tell us about the issues you think are particularly difficult about writing in English?
4. What did you feel when your teacher talked about blogging, what are your thoughts on blogging at the end of blogging process? Is there a difference between your first thought and your last thought? How why?
5. Is blogging a form of communication? If so how? Why?
6. What are the differences between writing on blog and writing on paper? Can you evaluate in terms of difficulty or convenience?
7. Can you tell what has been the contribution of blog writing to you?
8. What aspects of blogging do you like the most?
9. What did you dislike most with respect to the blogging process?
10. How did you feel after writing and posting a blog?
11. What did you think about your friends' comments on your blog?
12. What did you think about your teacher commenting on your blog?
13. Did you comment on your friends' blogs? Why did you write?
14. Should blogging be used as an out-of-class writing activity? If so, why?
15. If there any other points that you want to talk about, please feel free to do so.

APPENDIX E: ***Görüşme Soruları*** **(Türkçe)**

1. Çalışma öncesinde hiç Türkçe veya İngilizce blog yazdın mı?
2. Lisedeyken İngilizce paragraf veya makale yazdın mı hiç?
3. İngilizce yazma ile ilgili özellikle zor olduğunu düşündüğünüz hususları anlatır mısınız.
4. Blog yazma ile ilgili olarak hoca ile olarak bahsettiğinde ne hissettin, blog yazmanın sonunda blog yazma ile ilgili düşüncelerin nedir? İlk düşüncenle düşüncen ile son düşüncen arasında bir fark var mı? Nasıl,Neden?
5. Blogging bir iletişim biçimi midir? Öyleyse nasıl? Neden?
6. Blogda yazma ile kağıda yazma arasında ne gibi farklar var? Kolaylık zorluk açısından değerlendirebilir misin?
7. Blogda yazmanın size olan katkılarını söyleyebilir misin?
8. Blog yazmanın en çok hangi yönleri hoşunuza gitti?
9. Blog yazma süreci ile en çok hangi ksımı hoşunuza gitmedi?
10. Blog yazıp yayınladıktan sonra nasıl hissettin?
11. Arkadaşlarınızın blogunuza yorum yapması ile ilgili neler düşündün?
12. Hocanızın blogunuza yorum yazması ile ilgili neler düşünüdünüz?
13. Arkadaşlarının bloglarına yorum yazdın mı? Neden yazdın?
14. Blogging sınıf dışı bir yazım aktivitesi olarak kullanılmalı mıdır? Neden?
15. Bunların dışında eklemek,söylemek isteiğiniz şeyler var ise lütfen söyleyin.

APPENDIX E. Samples of Participants' Blog posts



Writing Class blog

Kasım 02, 2019

HOMEWORK IS USEFUL

Why there is homework? Since elementary school given homework us.Well,did we ever wonder why we are given homework?I think of course, homeworks useful for us.

Homework develop students because homework helps students have responsibility.Homework helps them to reinforce the subjects better and they are understand better.But some teachers give very homework to student.This is false because students already very tired.Students can get bored.If that's the case ,the student do not make homework and they do not like lesson.Today,the value of doing homework has decreased because technology has evolved and new generation students have become accustomed to ease.When this happens,students to their homework online and they deliver their homework to their teachers.In fact, assignments provide information to be related to the lesson.Homeworks makes students successful.

To put it briefly ,teachers must give homework to student,student are also required to fulfill this responsibility.

Esra

(1a)HOMEWORK IS USEFUL

Why there is homework? Since elementary **(3)** school given homework us. (4) Well,did we ever (6) wonder why we are given homework?(1)I think of course, homeworks (4) useful (5c) for us.

Homework develop students because homework helps students have responsibility. (1)Homework helps them to reinforce the subjects better and they are (5b) understand better. (1)But some teachers give very (5a) homework to student. (1)This is false (5a) because students already (5c) very tired. (1)Students can get bored. (1)If that's the case , (1)the student do not (4) make (5a) homework and they do not like lesson. (1)Today, (1) the value of doing homework has decreased because technology has evolved and new generation students have become accustomed to ease. (6) (1)When this happens, (1)students to (5a) their homework online **(3)** and they deliver (5a) their homework to their teachers. (1)In fact, assignments provide information to be related to the lesson. (1)Homeworks (4) makes (4) students successful.

To put it briefly (1),teachers must give homework to student,(4) (1) **(3)** student (2a) (4) are also required to fulfill this responsibility.

Comment guide:

(1) Spacing
(1a) Indentation
(2) Spelling error
(2a) Capitalization
(3) Punctuation
(4) Grammar
(5a) Wrong choice of word(s)
(5b) Unnecessary word(s)
(5c) Missing word(s)
(6) Semantic (meaning) error

[redacted] 2 Kasım 2019 04:22

Hi [redacted]
There are some mistakes that you did.
One of them is 'why there is homework?'. It should be 'why is there homework'.
And it is not 'homeworks useful for us'. It should be 'homeworks are useful for us'. I think you have forgotten 'are'.
Homework develops..
To me, it should be 'students already get so tired'.
Students are also..
You should be more careful when writing essays
Best wishes
[redacted]

[redacted] 2 Kasım 2019 07:21

Thank you for your comment.I will be more careful.

SIL

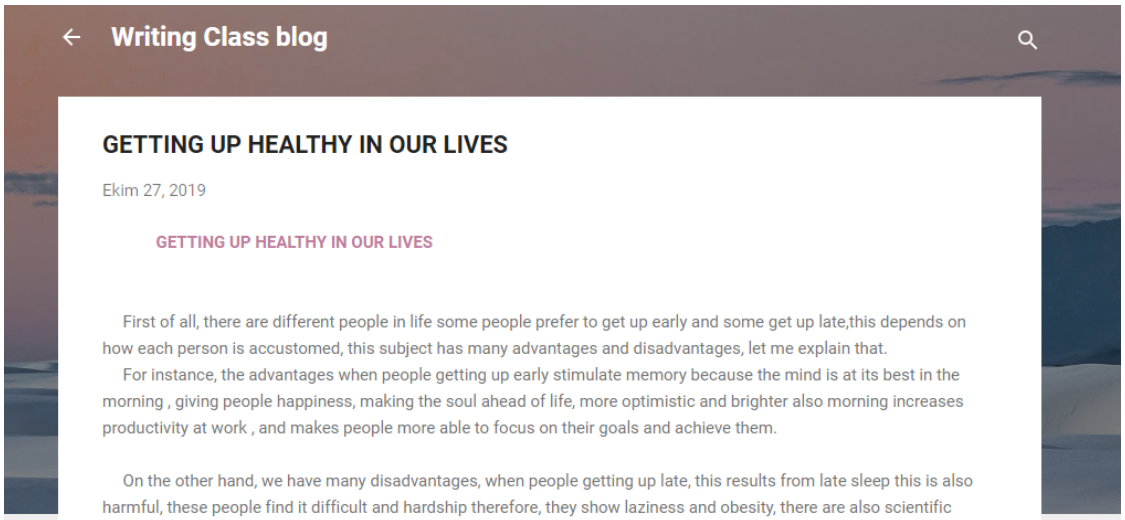
YANITLAYIN SIL

mithat isci 11 Kasım 2019 12:34

Please see the feedback provided to your work.

Best.

YANITLAYIN SIL



Writing Class blog

GETTING UP HEALTHY IN OUR LIVES

Ekim 27, 2019

GETTING UP HEALTHY IN OUR LIVES

First of all, there are different people in life some people prefer to get up early and some get up late,this depends on how each person is accustomed, this subject has many advantages and disadvantages, let me explain that.

For instance, the advantages when people getting up early stimulate memory because the mind is at its best in the morning , giving people happiness, making the soul ahead of life, more optimistic and brighter also morning increases productivity at work , and makes people more able to focus on their goals and achieve them.

On the other hand, we have many disadvantages, when people getting up late, this results from late sleep this is also harmful, these people find it difficult and hardship therefore, they show laziness and obesity, there are also scientific studies that say they are at greater risk of premature death .

In conclusion, it seems to me that getting up early it prevents you from facing problems health and increases your activity also your vitality. We must pay more attention to this subject .

GETTING UP HEALTHY IN OUR LIVES

First of all, there are different people in life **(3)** some **(3)** people prefer to get (4) up early and some get up (4) late,(1)this **(3)** depends on how each person is accustomed, this **(3)** subject has many advantages and disadvantages, let **(3)** me explain that.

For instance, the advantages when people getting up (4) early stimulate memory because (6) the mind is at its best in the morning(1) , **(3)** giving people happiness, making the soul ahead of life, more optimistic and brighter **(3)** also morning increases productivity at work(1) , and makes people more able to focus on their goals and (4) achieve them.

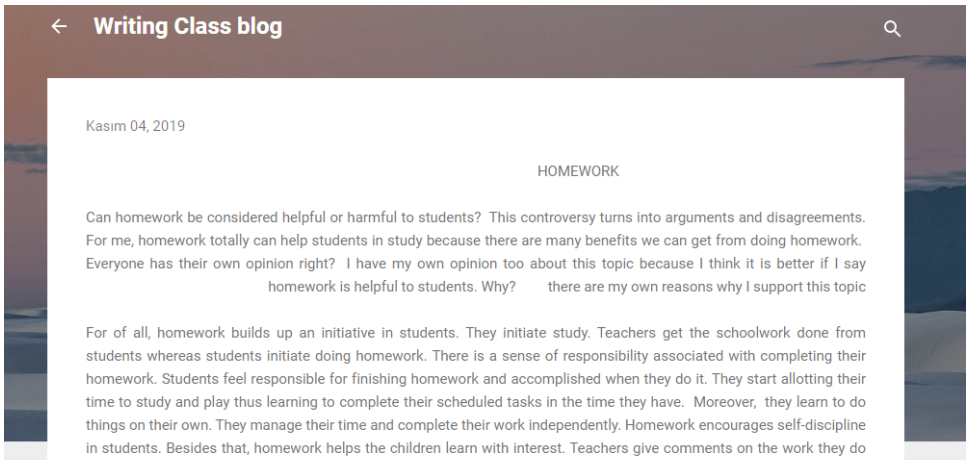
On the other hand, we have many disadvantages, **(3)** when people getting up late, **(3)** this results from late sleep **(3)** this is also harmful, **(3)** these people find it difficult and hardship (5a) (3) therefore, they show laziness and obesity, **(3)** there are also scientific studies that say they are at greater risk of premature death (1) .

In conclusion, it seems to me that getting up early it (5b) prevents you from facing problems health **(3)** and increases your activity also your vitality. We must pay more attention to this subject(1) .

My comment:

(1) Spacing
(2) Spelling error
(3) Punctuation
(4) Grammar
(5a) Wrong choice of word
(5b) Unnecessary word
(5c) Missing word(s)

(6) Semantic error



Writing Class blog

Kasım 04, 2019

HOMEWORK

Can homework be considered helpful or harmful to students? This controversy turns into arguments and disagreements. For me, homework totally can help students in study because there are many benefits we can get from doing homework. Everyone has their own opinion right? I have my own opinion too about this topic because I think it is better if I say homework is helpful to students. Why? there are my own reasons why I support this topic

For of all, homework builds up an initiative in students. They initiate study. Teachers get the schoolwork done from students whereas students initiate doing homework. There is a sense of responsibility associated with completing their homework. Students feel responsible for finishing homework and accomplished when they do it. They start allotting their time to study and play thus learning to complete their scheduled tasks in the time they have. Moreover, they learn to do things on their own. They manage their time and complete their work independently. Homework encourages self-discipline in students. Besides that, homework helps the children learn with interest. Teachers give comments on the work they do Teachers positive remarks boost the students to learn. Students learn to follow instructions and complete their assignments successfully. They need to explore on topics, refer research material, and read about related topics in order to do their homework assignments. And students learn to cope up with their school activities

Secondly, students who are like to do homework that are given their teachers are mostly get the good achievement in their study. Two British studies found that while homework in secondary schools produced better exam results, the influence was relatively small. Students who spent seven hours a week or more on a subject achieved about a third of an A level grade better than students of the same gender and ability who spent less than two hours a week. This is because homework teaches students the importance of planing, staying organized and it teaches students how to work independently

For the conclusion, homework actually give many advantages to students and it is helpful to help students to be more understand on what they had learn from what their teachers teach. Besides that ,homework helps teachers determine how lesson are being understood by their students. I totally agreed with topic is homework harmful or helpful to students because for my opinion, I choose that homework are helpful to students

HOMEWORK

Can homework be considered helpful or harmful to students? This controversy turns into arguments and disagreements. For me, homework totally can (4b) help students in (5c) study because there are many benefits we can get from doing homework. Everyone has their own opinion (3) right? I have my own opinion (3) too about this topic because I think it is better if I say homework is helpful to students. Why? (1) there are my own reasons why I support this topic (3) (5a)

For of all,(6) homework builds up an initiative in students. They initiate study. (6) Teachers get the schoolwork done from (5a) students (3) whereas students initiate doing homework.(6) There is a sense of responsibility associated with completing their homework. Students feel responsible for finishing homework and accomplished when they do it. They start allotting their time to study and play thus learning (6) to complete their scheduled tasks in the time they have. (1) Moreover, they learn to do things on their own. They manage their time and complete their work independently. Homework encourages self-discipline in students. Besides that, homework helps the (5c) children learn with interest. Teachers give comments on the work they do (3) Teachers (4) positive remarks boost the students to learn. Students learn to follow instructions and complete their assignments successfully. They need to explore on (5b) topics, refer research material, and read about related topics in order to do their homework assignments. And students learn to cope up with their school activities

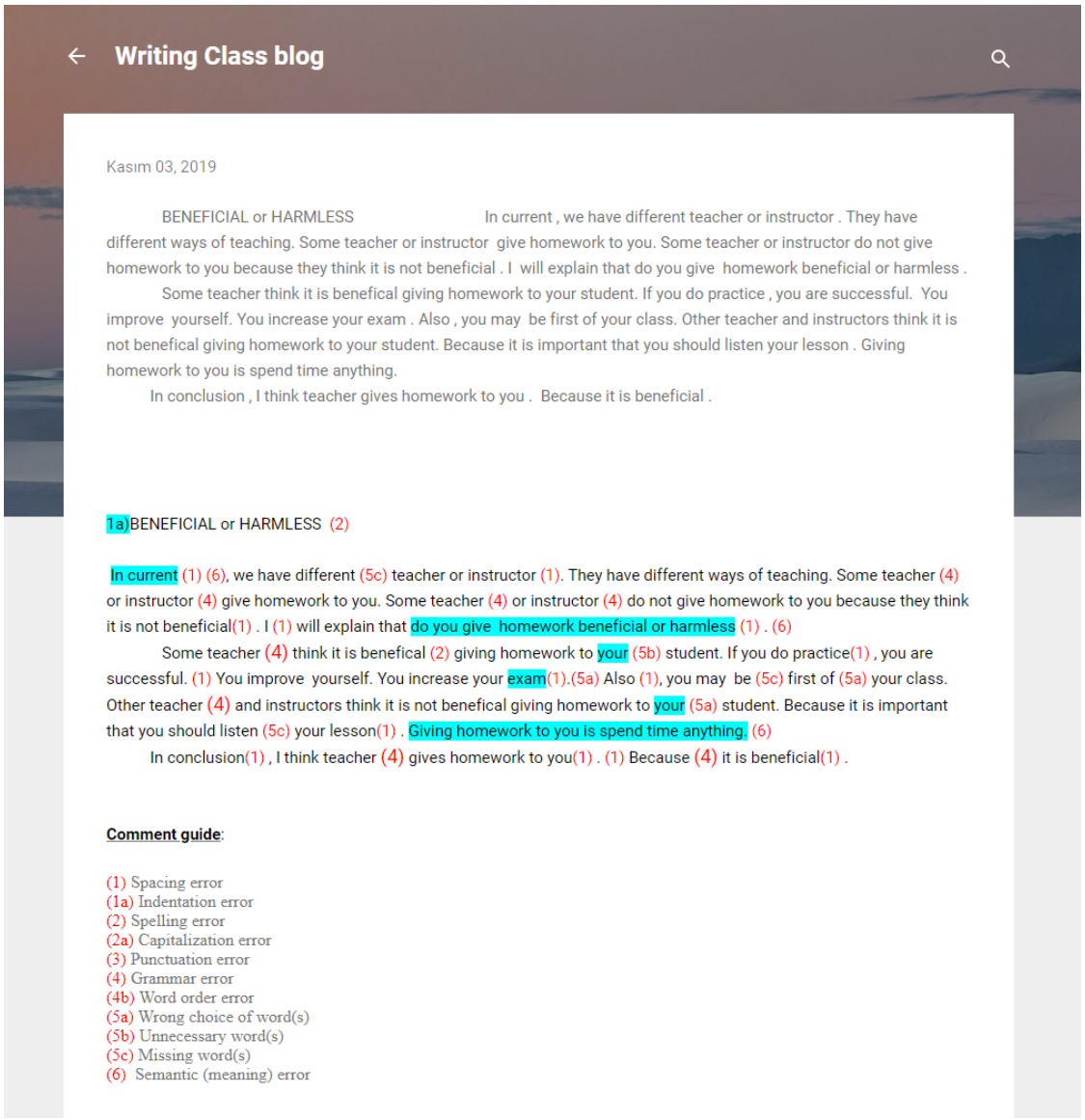
Secondly, students who are (5b) like to do (5a) homework that are (5a) given (5c) their teachers are mostly (5c) get the (5b) good achievement in their study.(4) Two British studies found that while homework in secondary schools produced better exam results, the influence was relatively small. Students who spent seven hours a week or more on a subject achieved about a third of an A level grade better than students of the same gender and ability who spent less than two hours a week. This is because homework teaches students the importance of planing,(2) staying organized (3) and it teaches students how to work independently (3)

For the conclusion, homework actually give (4) many advantages to students (3) and it is helpful to help students to be more understand (5a) on what they had learn from what their teachers teach. Besides that (1) ,(1) homework helps teachers determine how lesson are being understood by their students. I totally agreed with (5c) topic (5c) is homework harmful or helpful to students because for my opinion, (1) I choose that homework are (5a) helpful to students

:Comment guide

Spacing (1)
Indentation (1a)
Spelling (2)
Capitalization (2a)
Punctuation (3)
Grammar (4)
Wrong word order (4b)
Wrong choice of word(s) (5a)
Unnecessary word(s) (5b)
Missing word(s) (5c)

Semantic (meaning) (6)



Writing Class blog

Kasım 03, 2019

BENEFICIAL or HARMLESS In current , we have different teacher or instructor . They have different ways of teaching. Some teacher or instructor give homework to you. Some teacher or instructor do not give homework to you because they think it is not beneficial . I will explain that do you give homework beneficial or harmless .

Some teacher think it is benefical giving homework to your student. If you do practice , you are successful. You improve yourself. You increase your exam . Also , you may be first of your class. Other teacher and instructors think it is not benefical giving homework to your student. Because it is important that you should listen your lesson . Giving homework to you is spend time anything.

In conclusion , I think teacher gives homework to you . Because it is beneficial .

1a)BENEFICIAL or HARMLESS (2)

In current (1) (6), we have different (5c) teacher or instructor (1). They have different ways of teaching. Some teacher (4) or instructor (4) give homework to you. Some teacher (4) or instructor (4) do not give homework to you because they think it is not beneficial(1) . I (1) will explain that do you give homework beneficial or harmless (1) . (6)

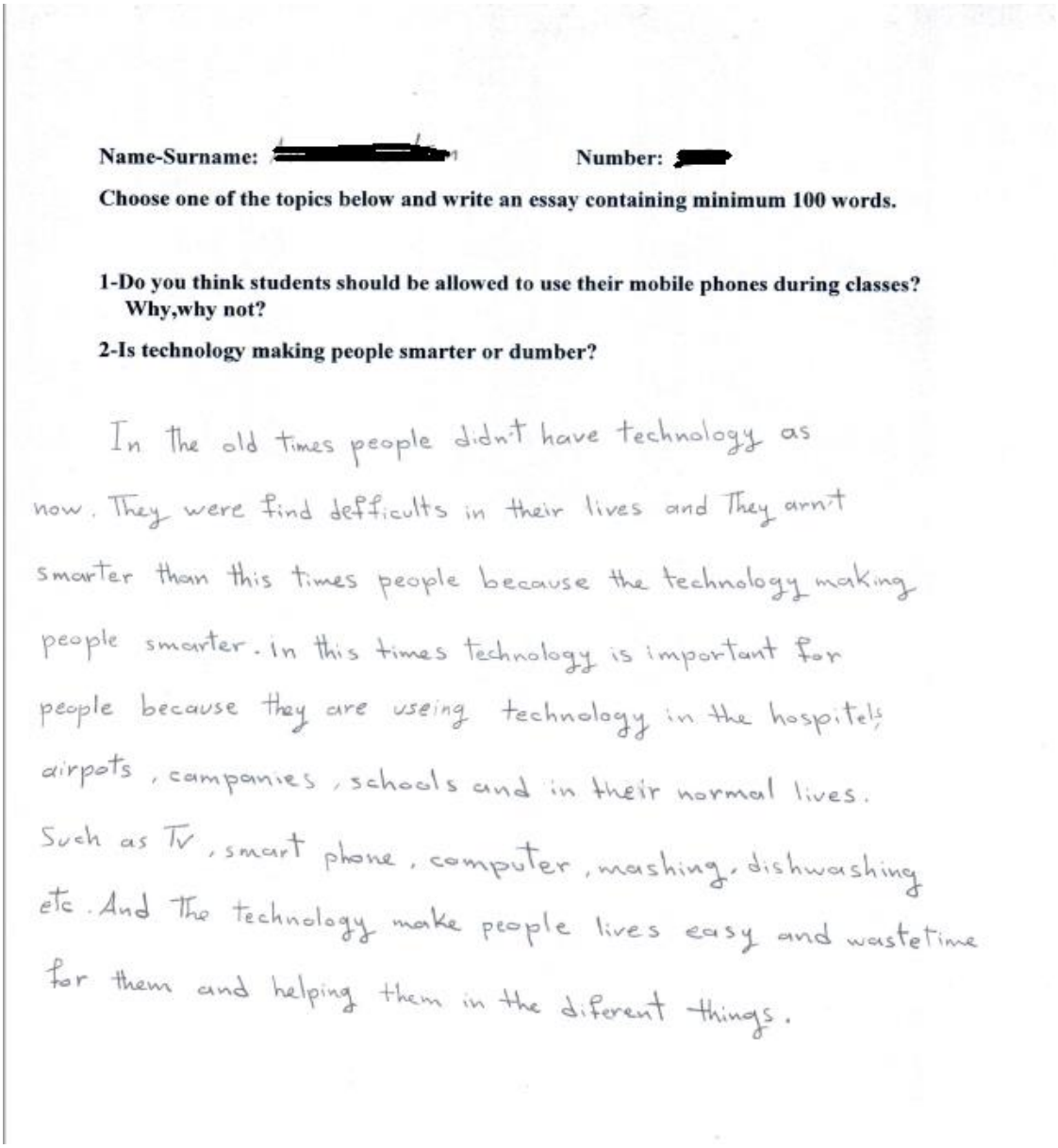
Some teacher (4) think it is benefical (2) giving homework to your (5b) student. If you do practice(1) , you are successful. (1) You improve yourself. You increase your exam(1).(5a) Also (1), you may be (5c) first of (5a) your class. Other teacher (4) and instructors think it is not benefical giving homework to your (5a) student. Because it is important that you should listen (5c) your lesson(1) . Giving homework to you is spend time anything. (6)

In conclusion(1) , I think teacher (4) gives homework to you(1) . (1) Because (4) it is beneficial(1) .

Comment guide:

(1) Spacing error
(1a) Indentation error
(2) Spelling error
(2a) Capitalization error
(3) Punctuation error
(4) Grammar error
(4b) Word order error
(5a) Wrong choice of word(s)
(5b) Unnecessary word(s)
(5c) Missing word(s)
(6) Semantic (meaning) error

APPENDIX F: Samples of Participants' Pre-test



Name-Surname: [redacted] **Number:** [redacted]

Choose one of the topics below and write an essay containing minimum 100 words.

1-Do you think students should be allowed to use their mobile phones during classes? Why,why not?

2-Is technology making people smarter or dumber?

In the old times people didn't have technology as now. They were find defficults in their lives and They arn't smarter than this times people because the technology making people smarter. In this times technology is important for people because they are useing technology in the hospitels airpots, companies, schools and in their normal lives. Such as Tv, smart phone, computer, washing, dishwashing etc. And the technology make people lives easy and wastetime for them and helping them in the diferent things.

Name-Surname: [redacted] **Number:** [redacted]

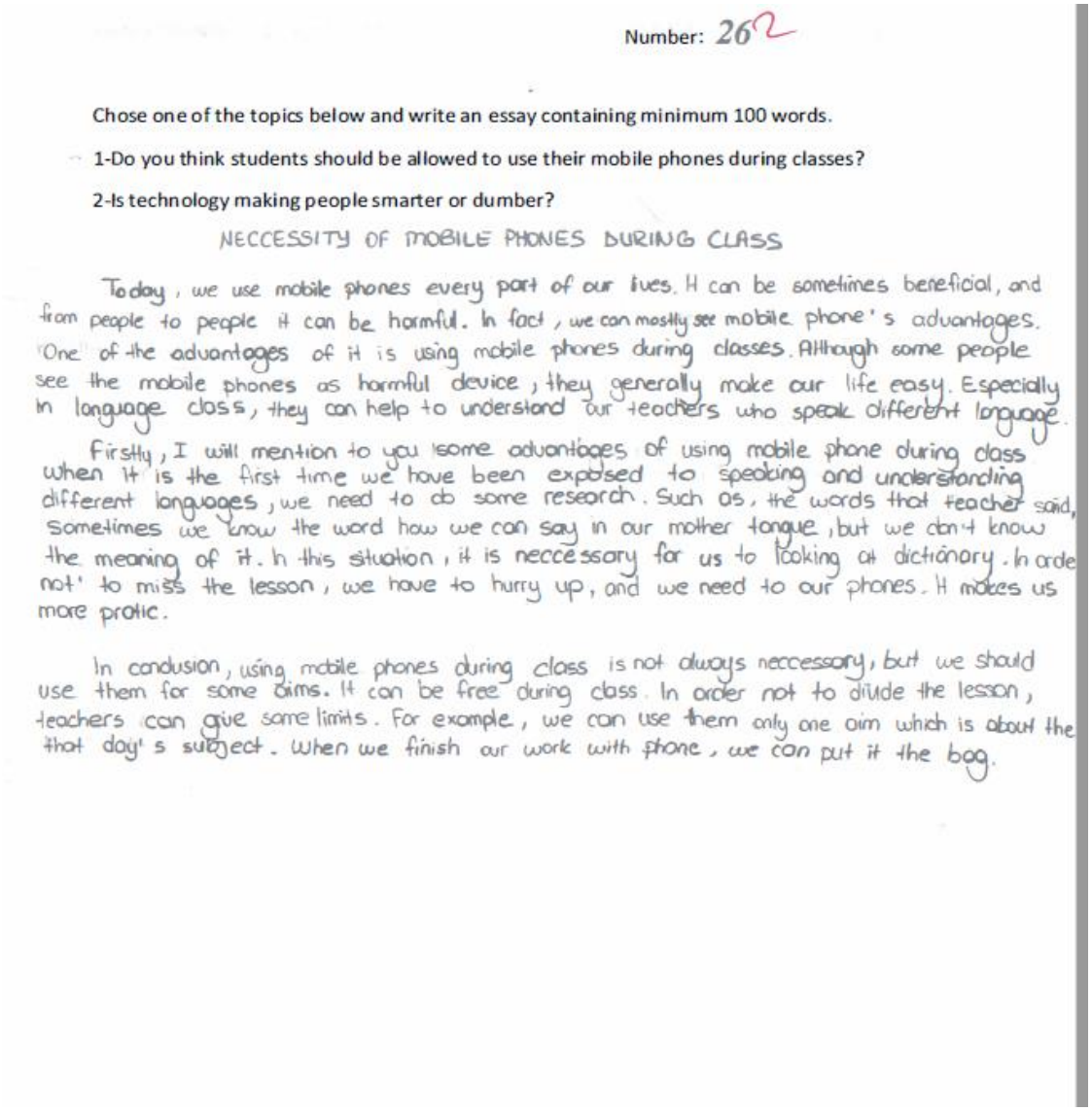
Choose one of the topics below and write an essay containing minimum 100 words.

1-Do you think students should be allowed to use their mobile phones during classes? Why,why not?

2-Is technology making people smarter or dumber?

According to me, students should not be allowed to use their mobile phones during classes. Because it affects their performances in the class. And phones bother teachers, as well. When phone of a student calls, he/she wonders about what it happend. Because of that, he/she starts to think about that. If we use mobile phone during classes, it faild us. Maybe there can be expectation such as urgent calls, something special... Expect from something special, I think that students should not be allowed to use their mobile phones during classes.

APPENDIX F. Samples of Participants' Post-test



Number: 262

Chose one of the topics below and write an essay containing minimum 100 words.

1-Do you think students should be allowed to use their mobile phones during classes?

2-Is technology making people smarter or dumber?

NECCESSITY OF MOBILE PHONES DURING CLASS

Today, we use mobile phones every part of our lives. It can be sometimes beneficial, and from people to people it can be harmful. In fact, we can mostly see mobile phone's advantages. One of the advantages of it is using mobile phones during classes. Although some people see the mobile phones as harmful device, they generally make our life easy. Especially in language class, they can help to understand our teachers who speak different language.

Firstly, I will mention to you some advantages of using mobile phone during class when it is the first time we have been exposed to speaking and understanding different languages, we need to do some research. Such as, the words that teacher said, sometimes we know the word how we can say in our mother tongue, but we don't know the meaning of it. In this situation, it is neccessary for us to looking at dictionary. In orde not' to miss the lesson, we have to hurry up, and we need to our phones. It makes us more pratic.

In condusion, using mobile phones during class is not always neccessary, but we should use them for some aims. It can be free during class. In order not to dilide the lesson, teachers can give some limits. For example, we can use them only one aim which is about the that day's subject. When we finish our work with phone, we can put it the bag.

Name-Surname:

Number: 29

Chose one of the topics below and write an essay containing minimum 100 words.

1-Do you think students should be allowed to use their mobile phones during classes?

2-Is technology making people smarter or dumber?

USING MOBIL PHONE

Nowadays, use of mobil phone is increasing. Especially, students use mobil phone at home, at school, at street; shortly they use everywhere. I will deal with argument should be allowed students to use their mobil phones during classes.

First of all, young people addict to use mobil phone, and some of them don't give up using mobil phone during classes. This causes a lot of things. For example, student who use mobil phone can't listen to teacher, so the student can be unsuccesful. Also, using mobil phone during classes diracts to teacher. On the other hand, if a student uses mobil phone during classes, other students want to use mobil phones, too.

Secondly, school is a place for education. Of course, students can use their mobil phones, but not during classes. If students should be allowed to use their mobil phones during classes, nobody can't pay attention to classes. This leads to unsuccesful.

In conclusion, it seems to me that student shouldn't be allowed to use their phones during classes. This is better for both student and teacher.

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name **:** Mithat İŞÇİ
Place of Birth **:** Siverek / ŞANLIURFA
Date of Birth **:** 01/03/1962
E-mail **:** mithatisci@gmail.com

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

2018-2020	Master of Arts, Çukurova University, The Institute of Social Sciences, English Language Teaching Department, ADANA
1984-1988	Bachelor of Arts, Faculty of Education, Dokuz Eylül University, Foreign Language Teaching Department, İZMİR

EXPERIENCE

1999-	Instructor, Harran University, ŞANLIURFA
1989-1999	English Teacher, Ministry of National Education (MEB)