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THE EFFECTS OF GRAMMAR-FOCUSED WRITING INSTRUCTION ON THE
WRITING ABILITIES OF STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
GAZIOSMANPASA IN TOKAT

A THESIS PRESENTED BY

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TO THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
ARTS IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

BILKENT UNIVERSITY

AUGUST 1997

TC YÜKSEKÖĞRETİM KURULU
GAZIOSMANPASA MERKEZİ

ABSTRACT

Title: The effects of grammar-focused writing instruction on the writing abilities of students at the University of Gaziosmanpasa in Tokat

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Improving student writing abilities has been one of the main concerns of language teachers and researchers. There have been numerous research studies to determine the effects of teaching writing in various ways. Some of these studies are related to the effectiveness of teaching grammar in the writing class. The results of these studies, however, have yielded controversial results (Holden, 1994; El- Banna, 1994). This study aimed at determining the effects of grammar-focused writing instruction on the writing abilities of EFL students focusing on the Turkish context.

There were two groups in this study: an experimental group which was taught how to write with a grammar-focused writing class and an experimental group which was taught with the process approach. All the subjects were first year students attending the University of Gaziosmanpasa.

The students were required to write a composition as a pre-test before the treatment started. The treatment took place over a period of four weeks. Every week students attended one session which lasted forty five minutes.

In the experimental group each writing class started with a grammar explanation which lasted about fifteen minutes. The grammar explanation focused on the grammatical items, the simple past and past continuous tense verbs. The explanation was followed by reading a passage based on the structures focused on in the grammar explanation which also lasted fifteen minutes. The subjects were required to read the reading passage so that they could see English sentences in context. The last fifteen minutes of each class was devoted to the writing of first drafts. At the end of each session, the researcher collected the compositions and gave written feedback on the grammatical accuracy of the compositions. These were given to the class teacher to be returned to the subjects the following morning. The students wrote a final draft at home according to the feedback given by the researcher on the grammatical accuracy of the compositions.

The control group, on the other hand, started with a pre-writing activity during which students produced words and ideas about the topic of the writing they were going to work on. A reading passage related to the writing topic was read by the students. Then, the subjects wrote their first drafts. Having written the first drafts, the subjects exchanged drafts and gave oral feedback to their peers which was mainly on the content of the draft. The subjects wrote their second drafts based on the feedback they received from their peers. The researcher collected the compositions at the end of the session and

gave written feedback based on the content and gave them to the class teachers. The compositions were returned to the subjects by the class teacher the following morning. The last drafts were produced according to this content feedback from the researcher.

At the end of the four-week treatment, as a post test, the subjects were required to write on the same topic given for the pre-test compositions. The same topic was used in order to compare more accurately the differences between the pre-test and post-test compositions. These compositions constituted the data to be analyzed to find out the effects of the treatment on student writing abilities.

The pre-test and post-test compositions were evaluated both holistically and analytically by two non-native English lecturers working at the same University. The results of the holistic and analytic scoring indicated that the subjects in both groups experienced an improvement in their writing abilities. It was observed that there was an increase in the mean scores between the pre-test and post-test compositions.

It was also found that the control group subjects who were instructed with the process approach improved more than the grammar focused writing group subjects on the components of writing such as, grammar, content, and organization along with the overall writing proficiency. This indicated that students' writing ability, including grammatical accuracy, can be improved without specific focus on grammar structures.

One outcome of this study suggested that teaching of writing as a separate course would improve students' writing abilities no matter which technique - grammar-focused or the process approach - is used in the writing class. This improvement can be seen as a result of students' receiving instruction on how to write and practice in writing several

compositions both in class and at home. Attention to writing and practice in writing had a positive effect on student writing abilities.



BILKENT UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
MA THESIS EXAMINATION RESULT FORM
AUGUST 1, 1997

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thesis examination of the MA TEFL student

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



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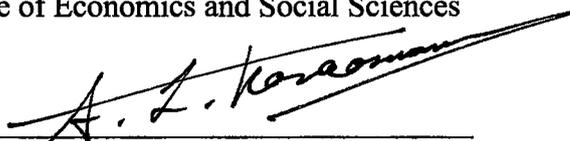


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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to my thesis advisor, Dr. Tej Shresta, for his contributions and support. He was always with me throughout the preparation of this thesis.

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Theodore S. Rodgers, our Program Director, whose guidance enlightened me about both language teaching and research studies. His comments throughout my studies played an important role in the preparation and completion of this thesis.

I am grateful to Dr. Bena Gul Peker for the invaluable feedback and courage she gave. I also would like to thank Ms. Teresa Wise for her help in all matters. My sincere thanks also go to my classmates, with whom I always exchanged ideas.

My thanks are also given to my colleagues at Gaziosmanpasa University in Tokat, Mr. Seyit Kocaker, head of the foreign languages department, Ms. Mahberi Erdost, the lead teacher of the subjects participating in my study, Mrs. Hanife Yorulmaz, and Mr. Ayhan Diril, who scored the compositions although they were very busy with their duties at that time.

Of course I am deeply grateful to the students at Gaziosmanpasa University in Tokat since they took part in this study willingly and tried to do their best during the treatment.



To my parents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
Introduction	1
Background of the Study.....	3
Purpose of the Study.....	3
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Significance of the Study.....	5
Research Questions.....	6
CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE	8
Introduction.....	8
What is Writing?.....	9
The Relationship between Reading and Writing.....	12
Responding to Students' Writing: Giving Feedback	13
The Relationship between Grammar and Rhetoric.....	15
Grammar Knowledge and Writing.....	16
Change in the Teaching of Writing and the Process Approach.....	18
Teaching Genre / Rhetorical Form and the Writing Ability	21
Formal Grammar Instruction and the Writing Ability.....	23
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY.....	33
Introduction	33
Subjects	34
Materials	29
Procedures	38
Pre-test	39
Post-test	40
Experimental Group Training.....	40
Session 1	41
Session 2	42
Session 3	43

	Session 4	44
	Control Group Training	45
	Session 1	45
	Session 2	46
	Session 3	47
	Session 4	48
	Data Analysis	50
CHAPTER 4	DATA ANALYSIS.....	51
	Overview of the Study.....	51
	Overview of the Analytical Procedures.....	52
	Results of the Study.....	53
CHAPTER 5	CONCLUSION.....	75
	Overview of the Study	75
	Summary and the Discussion of the Findings.....	75
	Limitations of the Study.....	79
	Implications for the Further Research.....	82
	Pedagogical Implications.....	83
REFERENCES	85
APPENDICES	91
	Appendix A: Reading Passage 1	91
	Appendix B: Reading Passage 2	92
	Appendix C: Reading Passage 3	94
	Appendix D: Reading Passage 4	95
	Appendix E: Holistic Scoring Criteria	96
	Appendix F: Analytic Scoring Criteria	98
	Appendix G: A Sample Pre-test Composition	101
	Appendix H: A Sample Post-test Composition	102
	Appendix I: Sample Compositions Written by an Experimental Group Subject	103
	Appendix J: Sample Compositions Written by a Control Group Subject	104

LIST OF TABLES

<u>TABLE</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
1	Pre-test Holistic Scores and T-test Results	53
2	Post-test Holistic Scores and T-test Results	54
3	Pre-test and Post-test Holistic Scores and T-test Results for the Control Group	55
4	Pre-test and Post-test Holistic Scores and T-test Results for the Experimental Group	55
5	Pre-test Analytic Scores and T-test Results	56
6	Post-test Analytic Scores and T-test Results	57
7	Pre-test and Post-test Analytic Scores and T-test Results for the Control Group	57
8	Pre-test and Post-test Analytic Scores and T-test Results for the Experimental Group	58
9	Pre-test Scores and T-test Results for the Grammar Component	59
10	Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Grammar Component	59
11	Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Grammar Component of Control Group Compositions	60
12	Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Grammar Component of Experimental Group Compositions	60
13	Pre-test Scores and T-test Results for the Content Component	61
14	Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Content Component	62
15	Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Content Component of Control Group Compositions	63
16	Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Content Component of Experimental Group Compositions	63
17	Pre-test Scores and T-test Results for the Organization Component	64
18	Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Organization Component	65
19	Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Organization Component of Control Group Compositions	65
20	Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Organization Component of Experimental Group Compositions	66
21	Pre-test Scores and T-test Results for the Vocabulary Component	67
22	Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Vocabulary Component	67
23	Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Vocabulary Component of Control Group Compositions	68

24	Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Vocabulary Component of Experimental Group Compositions	69
25	Pre-test Holistic Scores and T-test Results for the Sub-groups	70
26	Post-test Holistic Scores and T-test Results for the Sub-groups	70
27	Pre-test Analytic Scores and T-test Results for the Sub-groups	71
28	Post-test Analytic Scores and T-test Results for the Sub-groups	71
29	Inter-rater Reliability for the Pre-test	72
30	Inter-rater Reliability for the Post-test	72
31	Number of the Simple Past and Past Continuous Verbs on the Pre-test	73
32	Number of the Simple Past and Past Continuous Verbs on the Post-test	73



CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Students at all levels of education are required to write compositions that convey their ideas and knowledge on a subject. These student writers face several kinds of challenges while performing the writing task. Using grammatically correct sentences is one of these challenges to produce good writing.

The place of grammar in the teaching of writing both in first and second language has been a controversial matter among researchers and teachers (Holden, 1994; El-Banna, 1994). With the assumption that there is a relationship between grammar knowledge and the quality of student writing, studies have been conducted concerning how best to improve students' knowledge of grammar.

These studies, related to the instruction of grammar in writing class, have yielded different results. Krater (1984) reflects on view in citing a statement from the National Council of Teachers of English, a United States based professional organization, on the ineffectiveness of grammar teaching:

In view of the widespread agreement of research studies based upon many types of students and teachers, the conclusion can be stated in a strong and unqualified term: the teaching of grammar has negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and

practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing (Braddock, 1963, pp. 37-38).

Braddock's claim has been supported by some other research findings (Elley et al., 1976 cited in Hillocks, 1986; Bamberg, 1978 cited in Krashen, 1984; Clark, 1935 cited in Krashen, 1984; Holden, 1994). These studies indicated that grammar instruction was not effective in improving the quality of student writing.

However, some researchers in the second language acquisition domain have also maintained that form-focused teaching, that is to say formal grammar instruction in the writing class in this context, can be effective in some, but not all cases (Long, 1991; Ellis, 1990). These arguments are generally focused on the question: Should the focus of writing teaching be put on form? In other words, is it necessary to teach grammar for improving the quality of student writing?

Some studies provide evidence that grammar instruction might be effective in improving students' writing ability (Frantzen, 1995; El-Banna, 1994; McGirt, 1984 cited in Celce-Murcia, 1991). These studies report that grammar is an important factor in the production and the evaluation of student writing and indicate that grammar instruction can have positive effects on students' writing ability.

Background of the Study

Informal interviews that the researcher has made with students have indicated that their insufficient knowledge of grammar is considered an important factor that impedes their expressing ideas in writing. Along with students, some teachers of composition also think that grammar instruction in the writing class can be a solution to the problem students face in using grammatically correct sentences in writing. The question to be asked here is how instruction on grammar points in a writing class would affect students' writing abilities.

Until now studies related to the effectiveness of grammar instruction on writing have yielded mixed results: some reveal positive effects (Frantzen, 1995; El-Banna, 1994) and some reveal negative effects (Holden, 1994). This study was designed in order to determine whether formal grammar instruction would be beneficial for Turkish EFL students in their writing.

Purpose of the Study

Grammatical accuracy of the sentences in a piece of writing along with adequate control of other components such as content, organization, style, and mechanics is said to comprise good writing. Some studies have been conducted to determine whether instruction on grammar will be improve student writing. (Elley et al, 1976 cited in Hillocks,1986). There have also been some attempts to integrate grammar instruction in

writing classes in order to improve students' writing skills by increasing their use of grammatical structures (Frantzen, 1995).

It can be stated that these studies have been performed with the assumption that the improvement of grammar knowledge directly facilitates students' writing abilities. Anecdotal evidence also indicates that many teachers of writing in Turkey consider a high level of grammar knowledge crucial, so they focus their writing instruction on teaching or reinforcing grammar rules explicitly in writing classes.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the place of grammar instruction in the writing class and determine whether focusing on grammatical structures would help students produce better pieces of writing. Although this kind of instruction is, in fact, the traditional approach to teaching writing in Turkey, there are not many studies conducted to prove its positive or negative effects on student writing abilities.

Statement of the Problem

As indicated earlier, students are often required to write compositions in a way that will both convey their ideas and meet the expectations of their readers by paying specific attention to constituents of writing such as, content, organization, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary. Each of these constituents plays a role in the production of a piece of successful writing.

Since dealing with grammatical errors is delayed to the last stage of writing in some classes and in some cases error correction is left to the students to be dealt with at

home. As a result, a number of commentators have indicated that they also feel focus on form has been recently neglected.

Researchers and teachers of writing who want to improve the quality of student writing have conducted studies in order to investigate the effects of grammar instruction on writing. Since the results of these studies are ambiguous, teachers of writing are not sure about the importance of allocating writing class time to the teaching of grammar and correcting grammatical errors.

Anecdotal evidence reveals that while some writing teachers have a negative attitude towards grammar instruction in writing classes, some others teach grammar structures. This indicates that there is no general agreement on how to conduct a writing course and the place of grammar in the writing class is a debatable issue.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study might reveal whether it would be fruitful to teach writing with a focus on grammar for improving Turkish EFL students' writing abilities. On the other hand, the results might also indicate that giving grammar a place in writing classes is ineffective. The findings would also be a starting point for future studies related to best methods for teaching writing to Turkish tertiary level students.

Text-book writers of writing courses and teachers of writing who want to improve students' writing skills can benefit from the results of this study. The results may support the view of some writers who also give a place for grammar practice in their books along

with other aspects of writing such as content, organization, style, and vocabulary (Wishon & Burks, 1980).

If the results indicate that there is no reason for allocating class time to grammar instruction in writing class, it may be determined that the process of writing should be the focus in writing text-books. Teachers of writing might design their writing course syllabus taking these findings into account i.e. giving no or little class time to grammar reinforcement activities.

Research Questions

This study was designed to determine the effects of teaching writing with a focus of teaching grammar structures in the writing class on students' writing abilities in an English as a foreign language situation. To this end, the following research questions were asked.

1- Is there a significant difference between grammar-focused writing instruction group and nongrammar-focused writing instruction group in the development of general writing ability on the post-test scoring?

2- Is there a significant difference between grammar-focused writing instruction group and nongrammar-focused writing instruction group with respect to the grammatically accuracy in writing on the post-test scoring?

3- Is there a significant difference between grammar-focused writing instruction group and nongrammar-focused writing instruction group with respect to content quality in writing on the post-test scoring?

4- Is there a significant difference between grammar-focused writing instruction group and nongrammar-focused writing instruction group with respect to the development of organization ability in writing on the post-test scoring?

5- Is there a significant difference between grammar-focused writing instruction group and nongrammar-focused writing instruction group with respect to development of using vocabulary ability in writing on the post-test scoring?

6- Do the subjects in both the grammar-focused writing class and non-grammar-focused writing class make fewer grammatical mistakes on the post-test with specific reference to the simple past and past continuous verb tenses?

This chapter discussed the fact that students face problems in their writing classes and indicated that one of these problems is observed in the correct use of grammatical points. It was asked whether teaching grammar rules in the writing class would help students improve their consciousness about grammatical rules and help them apply these rules successfully while writing. The next chapter, a review of literature, discusses background views and studies related to grammar and the teaching of writing.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter provides discussions and studies on how to improve students' writing abilities focusing on grammar instruction and its effects on writing. It gives the definition of writing, the relationship between reading and writing, the issue of responding to students' writing. It presents the relationship between grammar and rhetoric in writing. It also discusses the relationship between grammar knowledge and writing, the change in the teaching of writing and the process approach. It provides the discussions and research studies conducted to investigate the effects of teaching genre/rhetorical form on writing. The effects of formal grammar instruction in the writing class on students' writing ability are discussed in detail.

This review of literature indicates that there is no agreement among researchers on the effectiveness of grammar instruction on student writing. Krater (1984) quotes Weaver referring to a teacher who observed students who do well when taking grammar tests, but who fail to make use of these skills while writing. The study of Elley et al. (1976) cited in Hillocks (1986) indicated that grammar instruction to improve students' writing ability was not a solution. Holden (1994) concluded from the results of his study that grammar instruction in the writing class is not effective. On the other hand, some researchers like Frantzen (1995) and El-Banna (1994) indicate that grammar instruction has a positive effect on writing skills.

One conclusion that can be drawn from these research studies is that the effect of grammar instruction may vary according to the context of the instruction. While the studies in L1 situations (Holden, 1994) and second language settings (Elley et al. 1976, cited in Hillocks, 1986) generally indicate that grammar instruction has had little effect on students' writing abilities, the studies performed in foreign language settings (El-Banna, 1994; Frantzen, 1995) have yielded results in favor of grammar instruction. This study was conducted to determine the effect of explicit grammar instruction on writing abilities of Turkish students who are learning English as a foreign language.

What is Writing?

Celce-Murcia (1991) defines writing as the expression of ideas in a written form. She also indicates that writing with reasonable accuracy and coherence in a second language or foreign language requires effort. As this definition by Celce-Murcia implies, writing should communicate ideas to readers. According to McKay (1984) writing has been defined in various forms but in all definitions there are some common terms such as thinking, process, style, organization, form, and correctness. Seeing writing as more than production of sentences, Byrne (1979) says that writing requires organization of sentences into a text through which communication is successfully provided.

Dehghanpisheh (1979) says that the aim of a writing course should be to help students develop the ability to produce a piece of writing that contains both creative, rhetorical forms, and grammatically correct sentences. In accordance with this

expression, Raimes (1978) indicates that the aim of a writing teacher should be help students improve their abilities in both using grammatically correct sentences and rhetorical aspects. This statement indicates that teachers of writing should focus on helping students acquire ability such that they can write creatively paying attention to the rhetorical and grammatical aspects of writing.

Raimes (1983) also gives the aspects of writing that students have to deal with as follows: (1) syntax: sentence structure; (2) content: relevance, clarity; (3) grammar: rules for verbs; (4) mechanics: spelling, punctuation (5) process: getting ideas, writing drafts, revising; (6) audience: the reader; (7) organization: cohesion and unity; (8) purpose: the reason for writing, and (9) word choice-vocabulary.

According to Hairston (1986), good writing should contain something to communicate. There must be something enlightening, persuading, or surprising for the reader. He asserts that writing should be clear, that is, it should not confuse the reader. Readers should not have difficulty in understanding what the writer is trying to communicate to them. He points out that a piece of writing is said to be unified or coherent when it is organized according to a plan and the parts of the writing are combined by making use of “an underlying pattern or transitional words or phrases” (p. 15). These help the writer put everything into its proper place in his / her writing. Hairston also indicates that good writers must try to delete all unnecessary words in their writings in order not to make readers waste time. It is necessary for the writer to say only what is needed, otherwise the attention of the readers might be lost. He further points out

that mistakes in the use of the grammatical rules of language in a piece of writing will prevent its readers from concentrating on what the writing is saying. These mistakes distract the readers' attention from "what you are saying to how you are saying it" (p. 18).

Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and Hughey (1981) mention an ESL Profile developed by Texas A& M University to evaluate the compositions of foreign students admitted to their university. This ESL Profile which contains five aspects of composition - content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics - presents what is expected from the students in order to produce an acceptable piece of writing.

According to the profile, a piece of good writing should demonstrate the five aspects of writing: "(1) content: knowledgeable, substantive, thorough development of thesis, relevant to the assigned topic ; (2) organization: fluent expression, ideas clearly stated / supported, succinct, well-organized, logical sequencing, cohesive; (3) vocabulary: sophisticated range, effective word / idiom choice and usage, word form mastery, appropriate register; (4) language use: effective complex constructions, few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order / function, articles, pronouns, prepositions; (5) mechanics: demonstrates mastery of conventions, few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing"(Jacobs, p. 30).

The Relationship between Reading and Writing

Using reading passages in the writing class is one method attempting to improve students' writing abilities. Many teachers and researchers in the field of writing have focused their studies on this issue (Smith, 1985; Krashen, 1984).

Krashen (1984) indicates that there is a strict relationship between reading and writing. He points out that "it is reading that gives the writer the "feel" for the look and texture of reader-based prose" (p. 20).

Kroll (1991) cited in Celce-Murcia (1991) points out that reading passages in the writing class are helpful in some practical concerns for ESL writers who do not have a high level of proficiency in the language. According to Kroll, reading passages provide the student writers with English prose style. She also maintains that reading exercises in class may draw students' attention to some aspects of language such as style, grammar, structures, and methods of development.

Frodesen (1991) asserts that exercises on the analysis of a text may be helpful for ESL / EFL student writers in understanding the way grammatical aspects are used in context. Frodesen elaborates on this as follows:

Text analysis can be especially useful as an inductive approach for helping learners who are already familiar with prescriptive grammar rules but who still have problems understanding and using appropriately grammatical appositions such as definite and

indefinite articles, restrictive and non-restrictive clauses, and present perfect and past-or present-tense verb form (p. 266).

Smith (1985) says that reading and writing can not be dealt with separately.

According to Smith, whatever one learns about reading is helpful in his/her improving writing abilities.

Hairston (1982) cited in Celce-Murcia (1991) gives the steps of teaching writing in which reading and writing are integrated. According to him, these steps are:

- (1) instruct the students in fairly rigidly defined principles of rhetoric and organization which were presented as “rules” for writing;
- (2) provide a reading text for classroom discussion, analysis, and interpretation (preferably a work of literature);
- (3) require a writing assignment based on the text; and (4) read, comment on, and criticize student papers prior to beginning to next instance of this circle” (p.252).

Celce-Murcia (1991) points out that this method of teaching writing described above might be called product approach. According to her, this technique focuses more on refinement of finished product than on the processes of writing.

Responding to Students` Writing: Giving Feedback

Responding to students` compositions has been regarded as an effective factor in improving the quality of student compositions and this has drawn the attention of writing

teachers and researchers. As a result, the effect of giving feedback in various forms has been investigated and some suggestions have been made on how to give feedback to student compositions.

Beaven (1977) mentions three types of feedback : individualized goal setting, self evaluation, and peer response. According to Beaven, individualized goal setting is helpful since the teacher knows his/her students and can comment on very specific needs of each student setting a goal for them while responding to compositions. These needs of students can be very specific such as correcting spelling mistakes or very general such as developing ideas. However, Beaven warns that teachers should set one goal in order to focus students' attention. The second type of feedback, self-evaluation, is beneficial in that "this procedure helps students assume responsibility for assessing their writing"(p. 146). On the other hand, Beaven maintains that extensive use of self-evaluation may cause problems since students eventually expect their teachers to retake responsibility and give grades. Beaven says that the third type of feedback, peer evaluation, helps students to build skills to use in discussions which are essential for working together. The advantage of peer feedback, according to Beaven, is that students can detect "strong and weak passages" (p. 151) while evaluating peer compositions.

Kroll (1991) also reminds teachers of writing that feedback can be given both in a written form and orally. She suggests that individual conferences with students and tape- recording their compositions are useful techniques while giving feedback. Kroll draws attention to the issue of how feedback should be given in order for students to

utilize it positively. According to her, students should understand what the teacher expects them to correct. Kröll like Beaven (1977) also warns that feedback should require one goal at a time. If a major revision suggested by the teacher indicates that a paragraph is irrelevant, then, why should students spend effort on correcting the problems related to the verb usage in the paragraph? She also points out that in a process-writing class where students work on drafts feedback for the first draft should aim to improve the content and organization of the compositions rather than grammatical accuracy.

The Relationship between Grammar and Rhetoric

Connor (1986) points out that it is necessary to remember that grammar and rhetoric are not the same things. Connor quotes Campbell as saying that grammar is related to syntax while rhetoric requires beauty and strength. Where the grammarian's job finishes, eloquence begins. It can be inferred from the above statements that neither grammatically correct sentences nor attention to rhetorical aspect of writing alone is sufficient for the production of a piece of writing. Writing that does not present the rhetorical aspects will not be appreciated although it may consist of grammatically correct sentences.

According to Taylor (1976), grammar and rhetorical skills are different from each other. She also indicates that the ability to write "a clear, concise, logical, and convincing paragraph or essay involves more than just the ability to be able to write a grammatical sentence; it also requires knowledge of acceptable rhetoric"(p. 30). She

maintains that both nonnative and native speakers should be trained and should practice writing a great deal in order to produce a unified composition.

It can be said that rhetoric has more to do with aspects of writing such as content, organization, and the specific style of writing than with grammar. However, good writing should demonstrate mastery in both rhetoric and grammar. This fact has been maintained by many researchers such as Connor (1986), Taylor (1976), and Swales (1990).

Grammar Knowledge and Writing

The relationship between knowledge of grammar and writing skills has been an area of research studies since 1923 (Walsh, 1991). Walsh quotes a study by Asker who performed a statistical analysis to find out the connection between knowledge of grammar and writing skills. He found that there was little connection between knowledge of formal grammar and the ability to write effectively.

On the other hand, Celce-Murcia (1991) indicates that the importance of grammatical accuracy in writing can not be overstated and she mentions a study by McGirt (1984) in order to support the idea that grammatical accuracy affects the evaluation of compositions by raters. In her study, McGirt corrected the surface level morphological and syntactic errors in the essays written by university level ESL students. These essays before the correction had been rated as unacceptable by experienced writing teachers. After the corrections were done, 40% of the failing essays passed.

Leki and Carson (1994) performed a survey study to investigate students' perceptions of the relationships between the writing instruction the students received in ESL writing classes and the writing task they had to deal with in their content courses. The results showed that 31% of the students wanted to have learned or better learned language skills. 28% of them reported that they would like to have learned better task management strategies. 13% of them wanted to have studied rhetorical skills, and 4% of the students reported wanting to study thinking skills.

The data obtained from the study also revealed the specific needs that the students expressed. The most frequently expressed items included 38% vocabulary, 23% grammar, 18% greater challenge, 18% organization, 14% greater speed, and 13% discipline-specific needs. In the discussion part of this study, Leki and Carson state that "students' focus on the need for more language skills may be initially somewhat disconcerting for writing teachers who believe that language skills should not be the central emphasis of a writing course" (p.89).

Thomson (1994) also prepared a survey to solicit students' ideas about the revision of compositions. 100 students participated in this study and they were from different composition classes. The result of this study showed that a great majority of the students (80%) indicated that they would primarily revise the errors in spelling, mechanics, and grammar in compositions. The results of this survey indicate that students think that they make a lot of mistakes in spelling, mechanics, and grammar and need help in their correction.

It is observed that teachers of English often demand that their students write grammatically correct sentences (Leki, 1994). Leki mentions an informal study which was performed in an EFL setting. In this study, the errors made by students were evaluated in terms of their being serious and irritating by three groups of judges. The first group consisted of non-native speakers of English while the second group consisted of native-speaking teachers of English. The people in the third group consisted of native speakers of English, but who were not English teachers. Of these three groups, the two groups that consisted of English teachers tended to find more grammatical errors and were affected more negatively by these errors than the people in the third group. This study has revealed that teachers of language still emphasize grammatical accuracy in student compositions.

Another study that showed the relationship between grammar and composition skills was carried out by Ozbek (1995), who devised a questionnaire for students and did structured interviews with instructors in order to identify the problems that students and teachers noted in composition courses.

This questionnaire was given to 52 students, who had taken composition courses during their first year in the Department of Foreign Language Teaching at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. The questions aimed at defining problematic areas in the first year composition courses. Instructors were asked to give reasons for their students' inability to use grammar effectively in their writing and to make suggestions for overcoming this problem.

The answers from teachers and students support the belief that integrative teaching of grammar and composition, that is, grammar-focused writing class, will increase the students' motivation and improve their performance in writing. These results also revealed that students might benefit from an integrated course and that "grammar and composition can be reduced to only one course in which the teaching of grammar and composition is carried out simultaneously" (p. 47).

Change in the Teaching of Writing and the Process Approach

As recent trends have emphasized the communicative aspect of language teaching, explicit grammar instruction has lost some of its popularity in the classroom. Language teaching methods and textbooks focus on activities for comprehensible input and the meaningful use of second language without necessarily focusing on exercises practicing grammar rules (Pica, 1994).

This change of focus in the teaching of language has had its effect on the teaching of writing. For this reason, many teachers of composition have begun to question the value of grammar instruction in composition courses. For example, Leki (1994) in one of her articles on the current state of teaching second language writing, mentions the changes that have occurred in this field. In the past teachers of writing required students to focus only on grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The grades that students received were determined according to whether they managed to produce error-free compositions. Leki writes about grammar instruction as follows:

There is a new emphasis on the content of student writing.

Teaching writing no longer means simply having students do grammar exercises in writing; it no longer means having student manipulate alien texts that have no special meaning for them.

Instead, now students are writing about what they are interested in and know about, but most especially, what they really want to communicate to someone else, what they really want a reader to know (p. 172).

This change in the teaching of writing has resulted in a new approach - the process approach - which introduced processes of writing requiring students to write drafts until they are satisfied that they have expressed themselves. Harris (1993) says that in process writing there are three stages: pre-writing, writing, and re-writing.

In the pre-writing stage, students are prepared for the writing activity by “brainstorming”, that is activating their background knowledge about the topic on which they are going to produce a piece of writing. During the writing stage, students do the actual writing. The last stage, re-writing, is conducted in order to improve the first drafts according to feedback, mainly on the ideas of compositions, given by either teacher and / or peers. Leki (1994) says that in the process approach “students write several drafts, not necessarily so that the result will be error free but so that the results will express what the students want to say”(p. 175). According to Leki, this approach is quite unlike the

product approach which emphasizes error-free compositions as it minimizes and delays attention to grammatical accuracy.

Since teachers of writing and researchers search for models to improve students' writing abilities, the effect of teaching writing with a focus on form has also been investigated. In a general statement, Long (1991) points out that there is a "tension between the desirability of communicative use of the foreign language classroom, on the one hand, and the need felt for a linguistic focus in language learning, on the other" (p. 41). As a result, there have been some discussions on the effectiveness of teaching writing with a focus on form at word, discourse, and grammar levels. However, most of these discussions and studies have focused on the effectiveness of teaching genre / rhetorical forms and grammar structures in the writing class.

Teaching Genre / Rhetorical Form and the Writing Ability

Teaching the genre of writing, specific writing which is used in particular settings has been a debatable issue among researchers for some time (Swales 1990). In one of her articles on the effect of instruction on the learning of new genres by students, Freedman (1993) maintains that this type of instruction is unnecessary and mentions two studies she performed with her assistants. In the first study they examined how 7,500 students that were 5th , 8th and 12th graders controlled 'narrative structures' in their writings.

Freedman interpreted the result of this study as follows:

The study revealed that even elementary school children showed considerable mastery and sophisticated mastery of a structure that could be parsed by researchers using a highly developed story grammar, a grammar that was unavailable either to teachers or students in explicit forms (p. 227).

In the second study, Freedman (1993) and her assistants observed six undergraduate students who were learning to write essays appropriate in the field of law. The interviews held with these students indicated that although they managed to learn to write in the new genre, they did not feel a need to formulate any rules. Freedman concludes from these two studies that “clearly explicit teaching may not be necessary for the acquisition of even very sophisticated school genres” (p. 230).

On the other hand, Swales (1990), focusing on teaching of genre, refers to three case studies. The subjects received various academic degrees at American universities. While two of these subjects managed to improve their writing quality either by attending a writing course or paying attention to the genre of the writing, the third subject was unsuccessful because this person failed to meet the genre expectations of the specific reader(s) of the writing. Swales in accordance with some other researchers concludes that “ a knowledge of the rhetorical divisions of an experimental research paper and the function of those divisions within the paper greatly enhances ESL student reading and writing skills” (p. 213).

The studies and discussions mentioned above reveal that there is not a perfect agreement among researchers related to the effectiveness of teaching a genre-based writing class on improving students' writing abilities. As a result, more studies are required to determine the effects of teaching genre-based writing.

Formal Grammar Instruction and the Writing Ability

As indicated earlier, teaching the writing class with a focus on teaching grammatical structures has also been an issue of discussion since many research studies conducted to determine the effect of grammar instruction in the writing class have yielded mixed results (Holden, 1994; Frantzen, 1995).

In this study, the terms "grammar" and "formal grammar instruction" have the same meaning as defined by Noguchi (1991). According to Noguchi, the term "grammar" means "the set of categories, functions, and rules (both descriptive and prescriptive) that teachers commonly employ to describe a sentence and its parts" (p. 2). Noguchi describes "formal grammar instruction" as follows: "I use the phrase "formal grammar instruction" to mean the direct and sustained teaching of these categories, functions, and rules through definition, drill, and exercises" (p. 2). Noguchi also points out that teachers using formal grammar instruction in the writing class integrate discussion and drill in their writing classes.

Drills that are used in the writing class focusing on formal grammar instruction help students practice grammar. Some of the drills that are used in teaching oral English

have been adapted for teaching writing. Examples are from Richards and Rodgers (1986, pp. 54 - 56).

Repetition

I used to know him. I used to know him.

Inflection

He bought the candy. He bought the candies.

Replacement

Helen left early. She left early.

Restatement

Tell him to wait for you. Wait for me.

Completion

I'll go my way and you go I'll go my way and you go yours.

Transposition

I'm hungry. So am I.

Expansion

I know him. (hardly). I hardly know him.

Contraction

Put your hand on the table. Put your hand there.

Transformation

He knows my address.

He doesn't know my address.

Does he know my address?

Integration

They must be honest. + This is important. It is important that they be honest.

Rejoinder

Thank you. You're welcome.

Where did it happen? In the middle of the street.

He's following us. I think you're right.

Restoration

students / waiting / bus - The students are waiting for the bus.

Rutherford (1982) discusses the "grammatical contribution" to the second language learning process and says that "language as a formal system must be taken note of in some way" (p. 22). However, he points out that the issue is how this knowledge system is treated in order for students to acquire it.

According to Rutherford (1982) grammatical consciousness in teaching is closely related to the answers to the following questions: 1) What should be brought to consciousness? 2) How should it be done? He further elaborates on these questions and says that the first question involves our knowledge about language organization and its function in communication while the second question is related to our knowledge about the language learning process. He also explains the pedagogical attention to language form as follows:

Pedagogical attention to language form is rooted in a conception of language whose formalism is directly manifested in discrete entities such as the familiar bound morphemes, parts of speech, verb tense, clausal units, sentence types, and so forth. It is therefore a relatively easy matter to let such entities constitute points of focus in the teaching syllabus, or units to be mastered (p. 22).

Hillocks (1986) criticizes formal grammar instruction applied to improve the students' writing abilities. He expresses his ideas as follows:

The study of traditional school grammar (i.e., the definition of parts of speech, the parsing of sentences, etc.) has no effect on raising the quality of student writing. Every other focus of instruction examined in this review is stronger. Taught in certain ways, grammar and mechanics instruction has a deleterious effect on student writing. In some studies a heavy emphasis on mechanics and usage (e.g., marking every error) resulted in significant losses in overall quality. School boards, administrators, and teachers who impose the systematic study of traditional school grammar on their students over lengthy periods of time in the name of teaching writing do them a gross disservice which should not be tolerated by anyone concerned

with the effective teaching of good writing. We need to learn how to teach standard usage and mechanics after careful task analysis and with minimal grammar (pp. 248-249).

A study of Elley et al. (1976) cited in Hillocks (1986) is regarded as the most ambitious study conducted to determine the effects of formal grammar instruction on students' writing abilities since this study took three years to implement. 166 subjects, who, participated in this experimental study were placed into three groups. The students in group 1 studied traditional grammar while the students in group 2 studied transformational grammar. The students in group 3 studied no grammar. At the end of each year, Elley et al. measured the effects of instruction. The items measured were vocabulary, reading comprehension, syntactic complexity, English usage, spelling, listening comprehension and English literature knowledge. The students also wrote essays at the end of each year which were evaluated for content, organization, style, and mechanics. Hillocks writes about the most striking result of this study as follows:

Even after three years of work, the writing of students studying traditional or transformational grammar showed no significant differences in overall quality from that of students studying no grammar at all. Nor is the writing of grammar students different from that of nongrammar students on any of the subscales, not even on the mechanics of writing (pp.137-138).

Krashen (1984) also indicates that good writing will not be a result of studying language rules. According to him, there are too many rules and they are too difficult to learn by instruction. The studies of Bamberg (1978) cited in Krashen (1984) and Clark (1935) cited in Krashen (1984) have also yielded similar results. Bamberg conducted a study in order to find the effect of the amount of grammar and mechanics studied. The subjects that participated in this study were college freshmen. It was found that good and poor writers were not differentiated according to the amount of instruction they received. Clark dismissed teaching grammar and taught reading instead of grammar drills to see the effect of eliminating grammar. The results showed that a reading focus improved writing.

Holden (1994) conducted a study in order to find the effect of traditional (formal grammar instruction) and the process approach on students' knowledge of grammar and on their writing improvement. The traditional class received formal grammar instruction during the composition class while the treatment group was taught with a process approach which minimized the role of grammar in the teaching of composition writing. The students in both groups were given a pre-test and a post-test in order to assess the effect of the instruction. The results indicated that students in the treatment-the process writing- group scored higher in general writing proficiency than those in the formal grammar instruction group. Holden relates his study to other studies and concludes that his study also supports other research findings indicating that formal grammar instruction

is not effective in the improvement of students' writing skills and their grammar knowledge.

The studies mentioned above indicate that grammar instruction, or grammar-focused writing instruction, are not effective in making students produce better writing. Nevertheless, there are some studies that give counter evidence to the above findings. The following studies reveal how grammar-focused writing instruction is fruitful in developing students' writing abilities.

Frantzen (1995) performed a research study to determine the effect of grammar supplementation on written accuracy in a Spanish content course at the University of Indiana. 44 subjects were put into four groups that each contained 11 students. Of these four groups two groups were supplemented with grammar instruction while the other two groups did not receive any grammar supplementation. The students in all groups were required to write four essays in the class during the semester. The grammar study that was practiced by two groups involved daily grammar review and error correction feedback on written work. All the students also wrote essays out of the classroom as assignments. The non-grammar group compositions received grades for content only and the grammar errors were indicated, but not corrected. The grammar group compositions received grades for both content and grammar and they were required to correct their grammatical errors. The results of the pre-test and post-test revealed that although all groups showed improvement, the improvement of the grammar group subjects was greater than that of the non-grammar group students.

El-Banna (1994) carried out a study to investigate the effectiveness of teaching formal grammar and grammatical structures on the development of composing abilities of English language learners in an EFL setting. He formed two groups; one consisting of 46 students who received intensive grammar instruction for three months during their composition course while the other group consisting of 51 students did not receive intensive grammar instruction. The results of the grammar and composition post-tests administered to all of the subjects revealed that the experimental group - grammar instruction group - subjects submitted significantly better.

Another study to determine the effectiveness of explicit grammar instruction on the writing abilities of students and also to determine whether students perceived grammar as useful, was a classroom-based research study done by Manley and Calk (1997). They gave the subjects questionnaires before and after the course. These answers provided qualitative data. Quantitative data, on the other hand, were obtained by analyzing the grammar errors found in student compositions written throughout a semester. The responses given to the questions about the grammar study revealed that students think that grammar is important in language learning. However, their answers to the question "How do you learn grammar best?" ranged from traditional techniques such as exercise repetition and grammar explanations to communicative techniques. It was also noted in the post-test questionnaires that although students held the belief that the grammar instruction they had received in the class was helpful in writing better compositions, they also said that they did not make much use of their grammar

knowledge in the editing process. To discuss student perceptions on grammar study in relation to their successful use of grammatical points, a chi-square test was performed on the data obtained. The researchers concluded that grammar instruction helped the students improve their ability to use correct grammar.

A study performed by Toros (1991) in an English as a foreign language setting investigated the effectiveness of two approaches to writing. These two approaches were: a traditional approach that focused on the explicit teaching of structures to be used in writing classes and a process approach that mainly focused on the stages of writing such as, prewriting, writing, and editing. The independent variable of this study was students' use of contextual cohesive devices (e.g. and, or, but, because, in this way, and etc.) in their writing. At the end of a four-week treatment the results revealed that the students in the traditional approach group used more contextual cohesive devices than the students in the process approach group. Toros concluded that the students in this study benefited from a more grammatically structured approach.

While the results of some studies mentioned above show that explicit grammar instruction may not be effective on the students' writing abilities (e.g. Elley et al, 1976 cited in Hillocks, 1986, Holden, 1994) , some research findings reveal giving grammar instruction a place in the writing class may be effective (e.g. Frantzen, 1995; El-Banna, 1994, Toros, 1991). These findings indicate that putting the focus on formal instruction of grammatical forms in the writing class still seems to be a controversial matter.

The review of literature shows that the place of grammar instruction in the writing class remains an area of much debate since it is obvious that some researchers and students believe that grammar should be given a place in the writing class (Ozbek, 1995) while some studies indicate that teaching grammar points in the writing class is ineffective in improving students' writing abilities. The following methodology chapter explains how this study involving grammar instruction in the writing class was implemented to determine its effect on Turkish EFL students.



CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

A review of literature on the teaching of writing with or without grammar instruction shows that the effect of grammar instruction on the students' writing abilities is a controversial matter. Some research studies have given results that indicate grammar instruction is not an effective method to equip students with good writing skills (Elley et al., 1976, cited in Hillocks, 1986; Holden, 1994), while other research findings reveal that grammar instruction in the writing class is beneficial in improving the students' writing abilities (El-Banna, 1994; Frantzen, 1995).

This study investigated the effect of grammar instruction in the writing class on the writing abilities of university level Turkish students who learn English in a foreign language setting. It set out to determine to what extent such instruction helped students write better.

Designed as an experimental research project, this study used two groups: a control group in which the students were taught with the process approach to and an experimental group in which students received writing instruction focused on grammatical points- the simple past and past continuous- in their writing classes.

Subjects

Subjects in both the control and experimental groups consisted of twelve freshman students who were attending the Faculty of Science and Literature at the University of Gaziosmanpasa. The subjects learning English as a foreign language at the University were aged between 18-24. Some of them had not studied English regularly in their secondary education while some others had studied it regularly. The experimental group subjects were majoring in Biology (9) or Chemistry (3) while the control group subjects were from the Physics (7) and Mathematics Departments (5). Since the English language proficiency of these students was said to be the same, pre-intermediate or intermediate, they were accepted as intact control and experimental groups.

The total number of students in both groups was forty at the outset, but all of these students did not attend all the sessions, some were not present for the pre-test and the post-test. So, the number of the students who took both the pre-test and the post-test and attended all four training sessions was 12 for the experimental group and 12 for the control group.

The subjects study English three hours a week, which the teachers consider insufficient in order to give equal time to all of the language skills. So, the English classes are taught mainly with a focus on grammatical aspects of the English language allocating minimum or little time for other skills. As the students do not have writing, reading, speaking, or listening courses separately, they study all skills in an integrated way under the course called 'English'.

This study provided an opportunity to see the effect of grammar instruction in the writing class by comparing the effects of teaching one writing class with grammar explanation and one with the process approach that did not emphasize grammar explanation. Since the subjects had not taken a writing course before, they found this experiment different from their usual English language courses that are based mainly on grammar instruction with little time given to the other language skills.

Materials

The subjects in both groups were required to write two compositions: one before the treatment, which was the pre-test, and the other after the treatment, which formed the post-test. These compositions provided the data to be used for determining the effect of instruction on the improvement of students' writing. The topic of both the pre-test and post-test was the same "How I spent my last summer holiday." The topic was selected because it was felt all students could write on this topic.

In both the experimental (grammar-focused writing) class and the control (the process writing) class, four reading passages were used (Appendices A, B, C, D). These passages were taken from the book 'Exploring English' by Michael Thorn (1979) which is an intermediate level course book dealing with all of the language skills.

The reason for choosing this textbook was that many of the subjects taking part in this study were false beginners at pre-intermediate or intermediate level, who had not

mastered most of the grammatical points sufficiently. Thus, this text-book was thought to be suitable for the level of the students.

The grammar structures instructed in the experimental group were the simple past and the past continuous. Students were taught the underlying rules of these tenses explicitly at the very beginning of each session. The readings provided students with sentences in simple past and past continuous and helped them to acquire the sentence structures. In order to practice these structures, students were also provided with as many different types of exercises as possible. In addition to the exercise drills adapted from Richards and Rodgers (1986) to be used in the control group, the following exercises were used.

slot-fillers

He at home last night.

Answer: He was at home last night.

They.....looking for the post-office when it started to rain.

Answer: They were looking for the post-office when it started to rain.

Transformation

The cat was very small (Put into plural)

Answer: The cats were very small.

The bird was flying (Put into plural)

Answer: The birds were flying.

Translation from the target language into the L1 or vice versa

English: They went to Antalya two days ago.

Turkish: *İki gün önce Antalya 'ya gittiler.*

Turkish: Bu sabah erkenden kalktı.

English: He got up early this morning.

English: My aunt telephoned while I was studying

Turkish: Halam ben ders calisiyorken telefon etti.

Slot-filling or multiple choice based on meaning

He (works, is working, worked) yesterday.

They a new car last month.

a) buy b) bought c) are buying d) will buy

Susan was (has, having, had, have) breakfast when her friends called her.

Wewatching a film when the storm broke.

a) was b) have c) were d) has

Matching

He		soldiers
We		walking in the street
I		a nurse
She	was	a student
The men	were	late
Thomas		hungry

The materials used in the process writing class were the same reading passages used in the grammar-focused writing class (Appendices A, B, C, D). These readings

provided students with sentences in context and familiarized them with the style of English prose. However, there were no practice exercises focused on grammar points.

Procedure

Two classes were arranged as control and experimental groups. The control group consisted of the students who were taught how to write using the process approach to writing. The experimental group consisted of the students who were taught grammatical structures, namely, the use of the simple past tense and the past continuous in the writing class to improve their writing skills. The length of each class was forty-five minutes. The treatment comprised four classes taught over four weeks.

Both the control and the experimental group writing classes were conducted by the researcher. Since the researcher had not hypothesized about the outcomes of the study, he tried to be unbiased in his instructional treatments.

The subjects in both groups were required to write a composition before the instruction began. They were also informed that they would write another composition at the end of the instruction. In order to encourage the subjects to take part in this study, the lead teacher of these classes informed the students that the scores they would get for the compositions might be taken into account when their final score for the English course was being determined if they produced good pieces of writings.

Before the instruction started, the researcher met the teacher of both classes and informed her about how the classes would be taught. The researcher and the two judges,

who were lecturers at the University of Gaziosmanpasa, met twice. In the first meeting, the researcher informed the two judges about the study and in the second meeting trained them how to evaluate the compositions both holistically and analytically.

Pre-test

The researcher told the students they would write a short essay and introduced the topic of the pre-test and wrote it on the blackboard: " How I spent my last summer holiday. " To make sure that all the subjects were writing exactly on the same topic, the researcher also translated the topic into Turkish, the first language of the students.

The students in both groups told the researcher they had difficulty in getting started and they would not be able to write good compositions. Since they were informed that their performance would affect their final English grade at the end of the term, the students seemed to be anxious. So, the researcher told the students that no one would pass or fail because of the results of this study, but those who made an improvement would certainly be rewarded.

Although this announcement relieved the tension to a great extent, it was noticed that many of the students still had difficulty in completing the composition. At the end of the 20 minutes allocated for the writing of the pre-test the researcher collected all the essays (see Appendix G).

Post-test

At the end of the four sessions the students took the post-test. The topic was the same as in the pre-test: “ How I spent my last summer holiday. The time allotted for the writing of post-test compositions was twenty minutes as it was in the pre-test compositions (see Appendix H).

The following sections explain how the experimental and control groups were taught. As the study aimed at to determine the effects of grammar-focused writing instruction on students’ writing abilities, teaching method in these two groups were different.

Experimental Group Training

The experimental group was taught in a way that emphasized grammar instruction in the writing class. The grammar structures, in this case, the simple past tense and the past continuous, were explained for about fifteen minutes at the beginning of each class. To explain the grammar points the researcher made use of “formal grammar instruction” as described in the literature review. After these explanations, students were provided with reading passages written in the past tense. These passages presented the use of the structures explained in context. The comprehension questions about the passages were answered orally by the students. The researcher insisted on the students’ correct use of the structures while giving complete answers to the questions.

Session 1

The first session started with introduction of the topic for the first writing session: “An incident I always remember”. Then, the researcher asked students which tense verbs they would use to write on this topic. The students answered this question by saying “simple past”. This was followed by an explanation of how affirmative and negative sentences, and questions are formed in the simple past. The focus was put on the difference between the use of regular and irregular verbs in English. The researcher mainly asked questions related to the personal lives of students in order to attract their attention and to help them understand how these structures are formed. The sentences that were made by the students were put on the board. Then, the researcher explained the rules for the sentences in the simple past through defining and using exercises and reinforced the learning of the past form of the verbs by eliciting both oral and written responses.

The first reading passage (Appendix A) was used in order to provide students with some sentences in the simple past tense. The passage was about an embarrassing experience of a young man in London. The researcher directed the students' attention to how the sentences were formed in the passage. The researcher asked questions about the passage that were answered orally by the students.

The last step in the first session was to get the subjects to write a composition on a topic that was similar to that of the reading passage provided. In the last 15 minutes of the first session, the subjects wrote their compositions on the given topic introduced at the

beginning of the session. The researcher collected the compositions at the end of the class.

The researcher gave written feedback on the compositions, underlining all the grammatical errors made by the students, and the regular teacher of this class returned the compositions in the next class. Since the focus was on grammar instruction in this class, the feedback was not on the ideas of the students, but on the correct use of the grammar structures.

The researcher required the subjects to re-write their compositions and bring them to the second session. The compositions written according to the feedback were collected by the researcher, graded, and returned to the subjects. This evaluation procedure was applied for all of the compositions the students produced.

Session 2

The second session began with the introduction of the topic on which students are going to write: "My personal background". The researcher asked students questions which were related to their background : Where were you born? When did you first come to Tokat? Then, the questions and answers were put on the board. The students were told that the focus was on how the time adverbials, mainly, "ago" and others such as, "yesterday", "last year" are used. Exercise drills were also used to explain the rules for the place of adverb of time in the simple past sentences. Students were encouraged to participate in these activities giving both written and oral responses to the questions asked to reinforce their learning of the structure.

The second reading passage (Appendix B) was used in order to provide students with examples of simple past sentences that used the adverbial clauses. It was related to writing a curriculum vitae. The researcher asked questions related to the passage, which were answered orally by the students to enable the students to practice using the structure.

The subjects were required to write a composition in the last fifteen minutes of the second session on the topic announced at the beginning of the session. The researcher collected the compositions at the end of the class.

The researcher again gave written feedback on the compositions underlining the grammatical errors. The students were also required to re-write the second compositions correcting the grammatical errors and bring their writing to the next treatment class.

Session 3

The third session began with the introduction of the composition topic for third session: "An interesting trip I had." The researcher, as in the first two sessions, asked questions about their experiences while taking a trip. For example, How did you come to Tokat, by bus or car? Were there a lot of people on the bus? Did you see any fields while traveling? Some of these questions contained adjectives of quantity such as "some", "any", "no", "a little", "a lot of", "a few" which were the focus of the grammar explanation for the session. The questions and the answers were written on the board. These adjectives were explained in sentences and exercise drills were used to show how these adjectives of quantity are used in the simple past sentences.

A reading passage (Appendix C) was also used to provide the students with examples of simple past sentences that contained adjectives of quantity. It was about a visit to Greenwich. The researcher asked questions related to the passage in order to enable the students to practice these items.

In the last fifteen minutes of the third session, students wrote a composition on the topic that was similar to that of the reading passage. The topic the students wrote about was "An interesting trip I had" as introduced at the beginning of the third session. The researcher collected the compositions at the end of the session.

The researcher supplied the subjects with written feedback requiring them to correct their grammatical errors. The students rewrote their compositions according to the feedback they received and brought them to the next treatment class.

Session 4

The fourth session started with the introduction of the topic on which students are going to write: "An interesting bus journey." The researcher asked questions about their experiences while traveling by bus which are mainly interesting, or funny. For example, What happened on the bus? What were you doing when the little girl started to sing? The questions and answers were put on the board. Then the researcher explained the rules for the sentences in the past continuous tense. Exercises drills were used in order for students to practice the past continuous tense.

The reading passage (Appendix D) used in the fourth session also contained sentences in the past continuous which made it possible for the students to see how

sentences in the past continuous were used in context. The passage was about a bus journey. The researcher asked questions orally about the passage. The students answered these questions practicing the structure.

Students wrote a composition on the topic that was introduced at the beginning of the session. The topic, “An interesting bus journey”, was similar to that of the reading passage. The researcher collected the compositions at the end the of the session.

The evaluation procedure applied for the fourth composition was the same as the one used for the previous writings. The students brought back the compositions after they made the corrections indicated.

Control Group Training

The subjects in the control group were taught how to write using a process approach. In this class, students wrote a first draft, received feedback on the content of their compositions from their peers and wrote second drafts. The last drafts were written according to feedback, which was on the content, given by the researcher.

Session 1

The first session started with a pre-writing activity. For this activity, a mind-mapping technique was used. This technique is frequently used in writing classes to help students gather vocabulary and assemble ideas that may help them while producing their writing (Harris, 1993). The researcher wanted the subjects to think about an incident that they felt sorry, angry, or ashamed about and think of some words that they could use in describing this incident in a composition.

After eliciting the words, the subjects were presented the same reading passage used in the first session of the experimental group (Appendix A). First, the researcher read the passage aloud, and then students read this passage silently. This reading passage, which was about an experience of a young foreigner in London, provided the subjects with more ideas and also awareness of the style of an English language passage. The researcher very often gave the meaning of the words that the students asked while reading the passage. The subjects were required to write a first draft in ten minutes. The topic was : “An incident that I always remember.” Having completed their first drafts, the students exchanged papers with a peer sitting next to them and received oral feedback on the content of their compositions for five minutes. Following this, the subjects were required to write a second draft till the end of the class in almost ten minutes. The researcher collected the second drafts at the end of the first session.

The compositions were read and students were given feedback on the content of the compositions by the researcher after the class. The compositions were returned to them before attending the second session. The students submitted their last drafts to the researcher in the class.

Session 2

The second session also started with mind-mapping as a pre-writing activity in order to elicit words and ideas about the topic: Personal backgrounds. This mind-mapping technique was used to help the students produce words and assemble ideas about the topic.

The subjects were presented with the reading passage that was used in the second session of the experimental group (Appendix B). This reading passage, a curriculum vitae, provided the subjects with more ideas about the topic. Following this, the subjects were required to produce a first draft in ten minutes. The topic was: “ My personal background.”

After completing their first drafts, the students received oral feedback from their classmates on the content of the compositions. According to the feedback they received, the students wrote a second draft in ten minutes. The researcher collected the second drafts at the end of the session.

The students were given feedback by the researcher after the class and the compositions with feedback on them were returned to the students before their coming to the second session. The subjects wrote their last drafts at home and gave them to the researcher in the next class.

Session 3

The third session also began with mind-mapping which helped the subjects to produce words and ideas about taking a trip. After eliciting the words and gathering the ideas about the topic, the subjects were presented with the same reading passage used in the third session with the experimental group (Appendix C). This reading passage, which described a trip to Greenwich, provided students with more ideas about the topic. The subjects were required to write a first draft about a trip in ten minutes.

The procedure followed in this session was the same as the one applied in the previous ones. The subjects received feedback from their peers and produced second drafts in class in ten minutes. The third draft was written at home according to the feedback the students received from the researcher at home. The compositions were collected by the researcher in the following class.

Session 4

The last session started with the same pre-writing activity elicited words and ideas about the topic by making use of the mind-mapping technique. The topic was: "Traveling on a bus".

After this activity, the subjects were presented the same reading passage that was used in the experimental group during the fourth session (Appendix D). This passage, about a funny event taking place on a bus, provided the students with more ideas.

After reading the passage, the subjects wrote the first drafts, received feedback from their friends and wrote a second draft. The last draft was produced at home according to the feedback given on the content of the compositions by the researcher. The students brought their last drafts in the next class.

At the end of the four-week treatment, students in both groups had written four compositions. Since the process approach put the focus more on the ideas of the students than grammatical accuracy, errors related to the grammatical points were not dealt with in the control class through exercise drills.

The pre-test compositions had been written by the students before the instruction started and the post-test compositions were produced at the end of the instruction. These two sets of compositions were the data obtained to determine whether a writing class with a focus on grammar instruction was more effective than a writing class with the process approach in improving students' writing abilities. Since there was an explanation of the simple past and past continuous tenses in the experimental group, these structures were given specific attention in the pre and post-tests to see whether the subjects had improved their use of these structures.

In order to evaluate pre-test and post-test compositions, the researcher gave the judges both holistic scoring criteria (see, Appendix E) and analytic scoring criteria (see, Appendix F). The holistic scoring criteria were given as six levels of writing proficiency, level 6 being the highest score, which should be given when the writing approaches that of an educated native speaker, and level 1 being the lowest one, which should be given when the writer performs too poorly to communicate any ideas. Holistic criteria are used when evaluation will be based on a general impression obtained from a composition (Jacobs, et al., 1981).

Analytic scoring criteria, on the other hand, were used as a thorough evaluation of compositions was required. In this scoring type, components of writing such as organization, grammar, vocabulary, and content are evaluated separately and the scores given to each sub - component are summed to determine the final score. Compositions are read twice during the analytic scoring to determine the score for each sub-component.

Data Analysis

In order to determine the effects of grammar-focused writing class on students writing abilities, the data were collected from the pre-test and post-test compositions written by the experimental group (grammar-focused writing class) and the control group (process approach class). Statistical procedures were applied to analyze the data.

First, the mean scores for the pre-test and post-test compositions were computed both holistically and analytically for each group. Then, t-test analysis was performed to determine whether the improvement the groups had on the post-test scores was significant or not. T-test analysis was also done to determine whether each group had any improvement on the post-test scores. The same analysis was done for the grammar, content, organization, and vocabulary components also. The inter-rater reliability was assessed by determining the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients between the two judges. The last statistical procedure was to determine the percentages of verb errors on the pre-test and post-test compositions of both groups.

This chapter presented how this experimental study was designed and performed. The following chapter gives the statistical procedures that were applied to analyze the data obtained after the treatment. This analysis of the data provided the answers of this study.

CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS

Overview of the study

This study investigated whether teaching a writing class with a focus on grammar would help students improve their writing skills. In order to collect data two classes were formed as experimental and control groups. Before the instruction started, the subjects in both groups were given a topic to write on as a pre-test composition.

The students in the experimental group were taught by the researcher how to write in a grammar-focused writing class. The control group was also taught by the researcher on the same day, but the class was not based on grammar instruction, but on the process approach to writing which mainly focuses on the content of writing minimizing attention to grammar.

The main concern in the experimental group was grammatical accuracy. Two grammatical structures, the simple past and past continuous, were taught at the very beginning of the class after the introduction of a topic to be used in the production of a composition. Exercises and readings further focused on the grammar point introduced.

The control group writing class was taught using the process approach, which required students to write drafts and then re-draft their compositions with peer and researcher feedback. For the control group, the focus was mainly on the content, that is, the ideas, presented in the student writing. There was no grammar instruction in this class.

The experimental group wrote first drafts in the class and wrote their final drafts at home according to feedback on grammatical accuracy of their sentences (Appendix I). On the other hand, the first drafts in the control group were written after brainstorming about the topic and second drafts were written after receiving feedback from peers in class. The final drafts, however, were written at home based on the researcher's feedback on content (Appendix J).

At the end of the four week instruction period, the subjects were required to write a post-test composition on the same topic as that of the pre-test composition. The following section of this chapter presents the analytical procedures followed to analyze the data obtained from the pre-test and post-test compositions.

Overview of the Analytical Procedures

After scoring the pre-test and post-test compositions by the two judges, the following seven questions were addressed to analyze the data: 1) the level of improvement, if any, in students' overall writing abilities in both groups after the treatment; 2) level of improvement, if any, in the grammar component of writing in both groups; 3) level of improvement, if any, in the content component of writing in both groups; 4) level of improvement, if any, in the organization component of writing in both groups; 5) level of improvement, if any, in the vocabulary component of writing in both groups; 6) the significance of inter-rater reliability; 7) whether the subjects in the experimental group and control group made fewer grammatical mistakes on the post-test

than the pre-test. This analysis of data provided answers to the research questions of this study.

Pre-test and post-test compositions were evaluated both holistically and analytically for both groups by two English lecturers of Gaziosmanpasa University. The results are presented in the following section.

Results of the study

The first research question was about whether there would be an improvement in the writing proficiency of the subjects in the experimental and control groups after the treatment. The compositions written by the subjects in both groups were also evaluated both holistically and analytically by the two judges. Table 1 gives the writing proficiency of the groups evaluated holistically for the pre-test.

Table 1

Pre-test Holistic Scores and T-test Results

Group ^a	<u>M</u> *	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control	3.0	0.9	3	22	.01
Experimental	3.9	0.7			

Note. ^an=12 for each group. *Highest possible score is 6

To analyze the data, the means and standard deviations of the scores given to the compositions written by the subjects in both groups were determined. Then, a t-test

analysis was performed to determine the difference between the means. The figures as can be seen in Table 1 indicated that there was a significant difference between the means of control and experimental groups in the pre-test ($t=3$; $df=22$; $p<.01$). Thus, the two groups were not evenly matched in writing proficiency at the outset of the experiment. As an attempt to partially resolve this difficulty, two sub-groups were formed from the treatment groups, matched on the basis of subject pre-tests. This was done by ignoring the scores of the (two) highest scoring students in the experimental group and the (two) lowest scoring students in the control group. Thus, the sub-groups consisted of ten subjects each. Analysis of these two sub-groups will be presented at the end of this chapter. The following table, Table 2, gives the writing proficiency of the groups evaluated holistically for the post-test.

Table 2

Post-test Holistic Scores and T-test Results

Group ^a	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control	3.5	0.8	3.5	22	.01
Experimental	4.2	0.5			

Note. ^an=12 for each group. *Highest possible score is 6

The post-test scores in Table 2 indicated that the subjects in both of the groups improved their writing abilities after receiving the instruction since there was an increase in the mean scores on the post-test. It was also found that there was a significant

difference between the mean scores of the both group writings ($t=3.5$; $df=22$; $p<.01$).

Table 3 also presents the scores the control group were given on pre-test and post-test.

Table 3

Pre-test and Post-test Holistic Scores and T-test Results for the Control Group

<u>Group^a</u>	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control					
Pre-test	3.0	0.9	1.6	11	ns
Post-test	3.5	0.8			

Note. ^a $n=12$. *Highest possible score is 6

It can be seen in Table 3 that the mean of the scores given to the control group compositions increased to 3.5 on the post-test from 3.0 on the pre-test. The t-analysis, on the other hand, indicated that the difference between the means of the compositions is not significant ($t=1.6$; $df=11$; $p=ns$). Table 4 presents the scores experimental group were given on the pre-test and post-test.

Table 4

Pre-test and Post-test Holistic Scores and T-test Results for the Experimental Group

<u>Group^a</u>	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Experimental					
Pre-test	3.9	0.7	1.5	11	ns
Post-test	4.2	0.5			

Note. ^a $n=12$. *Highest possible score is 6

The mean of the scores given to the experimental group compositions increased to 4.2 on the post-test from 3.9 on the pre-test. The t-analysis, on the other hand, indicated

that the difference between the means of the compositions is not significant ($t=1.5$; $df=11$; $p=ns$).

As mentioned earlier, the compositions written by the subjects in both groups were also evaluated analytically by the same judges. The analytic scoring for the overall writing proficiency and each components were determined according to the criteria given to the judges (Appendix F). The components were grammar, content, organization, and vocabulary. The highest possible score on each component was 6. The the overall writing proficiency was determined by summing the scores given to the components. Table 5 presents the results of the evaluations obtained for the pre-test. After the means and standard deviations were determined, a t-test analysis was performed.

Table 5

Pre-test Analytic Scores and T-test Results

Group ^a	<u>M</u> *	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control	11.7	3.3	2.5	22	.02
Experimental	14.7	2.6			

Note. ^an=12 for each group. *Highest possible score is 24

The t-test performed for determining the difference between the means of the compositions evaluated analytically also showed a significant difference between the mean scores in favor of the experimental group ($t=2.5$; $df=22$; $p<.02$). This indicated that there was a lack of pre-treatment equivalence in the two groups. Table 6 gives the scores obtained for the post-test.

Table 6Post-test Analytic Scores and T-test Results

<u>Group^a</u>	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control	14.6	3.3	1.7	22	.10
Experimental	16.7	2.6			

Note. ^an=12 for each group. *Highest possible score is 24

The scores in Table 6 revealed that after the instruction the students in both groups improved their overall writing proficiency. the results also revealed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the post-test scores ($t=1.7$; $df=22$; $p<.10$) Table 7 presents the scores given to the control group subjects on the pre-test and post-test compositions.

Table 7Pre-test and Post-test Analytic Scores and T-test Results for the Control Group

<u>Group^a</u>	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control					
Pre-test	11.7	3.3	2.9	11	.02
Post-test	14.6	1.4			

Note. ^an= 12. *Highest possible score is 24

It can be seen in Table 7 that the mean of the scores given to the control group compositions increased to 14.6 on the post-test from 11.7 on the pre-test. The t-analysis indicated that the difference between the means of the compositions is significant ($t=2.9$;

df=11; $p < .02$). Table 8 also presents the scores given to the experimental group on the pre-test and post-test compositions.

Table 8

Pre-test and Post-test Holistic Scores and T-test Results for the Experimental Group

<u>Group^a</u>	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Experimental					
Pre-test	14.7	3.3	1.0	11	ns
Post-test	16.7	3.5			

Note. ^an= 12. *Highest possible score is 24

As can be seen in Table 8, the mean of the scores given to the experimental group compositions increased to 16.7 on the post-test from 14.7 on the pre-test. The t-analysis indicated that the difference between the means of the compositions is not significant ($t=1.0$; $df=11$; $p=ns$).

The second research question was related to which group would experience the greater improvement in terms of grammatical accuracy in their writing. To determine this, means and standard deviations of the compositions for the grammar component were determined. After this, a t-test analysis was performed to determine the difference between the means. Table 9 shows the scores obtained for the grammar component from the pre-test.

Table 9

Pre-test Scores and T-test Results for the Grammar Component

Group ^a	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control	3.0	0.9	2.3	22	.05
Experimental	3.7	0.7			

Note. ^an=12 for each group. *Highest possible score is 6

The t-test analysis indicated that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups before the treatment started ($t=2.3$; $df=22$; $p<.05$). Table 10 presents the scores obtained for the grammar component on the post-test.

Table 10

Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Grammar Component.

Group ^a	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control	3.8	0.8	2	22	.05
Experimental	4.2	0.6			

Note. ^an=12 for each group. *Highest possible score is 6

The scores in Table 10 indicated that both groups improved their grammatical accuracy since there was an increase in the means of both groups. It was also found that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the groups on the post-test ($t=2$; $df=22$; $p<.05$). Table 11 presents the scores given to the grammar component of the pre-test and post-test compositions written by the control group.

Table 11

Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Grammar Component of the Control Group Compositions

<u>Group^a</u>	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control					
Pre-test	3.0	0.9	2.6	11	.02
Post-test	3.8	0.8			

Note. ^an=12 for each group. *Highest possible score is 6

It was observed that control group improved the scores given to grammar component to 3.8 on the post-test from 3.0 on the pre-test. The t-analysis indicated that the difference between the means of the compositions is significant ($t=2.6$; $df=11$; $p<.02$). Table 12 presents the scores given to the grammar component of the pre-test and post-test compositions written by the experimental group.

Table 12

Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Grammar Component of the Experimental Group Compositions

<u>Group^a</u>	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Experimental					
Pre-test	3.7	0.7	2.5	11	.02
Post-test	4.2	0.6			

Note. ^an=12 *Highest possible score is 6

It was observed that the experimental group improved the scores given to the grammar component to 4.2 on the post-test from 3.7 on the pre-test. The t-analysis

indicated that the difference between the means of the compositions is significant ($t=2.6$; $df=11$; $p<.02$).

It was also found that the control group had greater improvement than the experimental group in the grammar component. While the control group had a gain score of 0.8 in the mean scores given on the pre and post-test compositions, the experimental group had a gain score of 0.5.

The third research question was related to which group would experience the greater improvement in terms of the content component in their writing. The statistical procedure followed to analyze the data for the content component was the same as those used for the grammar component of the writings.

First, the means and standard deviations for the content component of the compositions were evaluated. Then, a t-test analysis was performed to determine the difference between the means. Table 13 presents the scores obtained for content component of the compositions for the pre-test.

Table 13

Pre-test Scores and T-test Results for the Content Component

Group ^a	<u>M</u> *	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control	2.9	0.8	3.5	22	.01
Experimental	3.6	0.6			

Note. ^an=12 for each group. *Highest possible score is 6

The t-test analysis indicated that there was a significant difference between the means of the control and experimental groups in favor of the experimental group ($t=3.5$; $df=22$; $p<.01$). As for the post-test, the same statistical operations were performed. Table 14 presents the scores obtained for the content component of the writings for the post-test.

Table 14

Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Content Component

Group ^a	M*	s	t	df	p
Control	3.5	0.9	2	22	.05
Experiment.	4.1	0.6			

Note. ^an=12 for each group. *Highest possible score is 6

The scores in Table 14 indicated that both groups improved their content scores since there was an increase in the means of content component of the compositions written by the both groups. It was also found that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the groups ($t=2$; $df=22$; $p<.05$). Table 15 presents the scores given to the content component of the pre-test and post-test compositions written by the control group.

Table 15

Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Content Component of the Control Group Compositions

<u>Group^a</u>	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control					
Pre-test	2.9	0.8	2	11	.05
Post-test	3.5	0.9			

Note. ^an=12 . *Highest possible score is 6

It was observed that the control group improved the scores given to the content component to 3.5 on the post - test from 2.9 on the pre-test. The t-test analysis indicated that the difference between the means of the compositions is significant ($t=2.0$; $df=11$; $p<.05$). Table 16 presents the scores given to content component of the pre-test and post-test compositions written by the experimental group.

Table 16

Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Content Component of the Control Group Compositions

<u>Group^a</u>	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Experimental					
Pre-test	3.6	0.8	1.6	11	ns
Post-test	4.1	0.6			

Note. ^an=12 *Highest possible score is 6

It was observed that the experimental group improved the scores given to the content component to 4.1 on the post-test from 3.6 on the pre-test. The t-analysis

indicated that the difference between the means of the compositions is significant ($t=1.6$; $df=11$; $p=ns$).

It was also found that the control group had greater improvement than the experimental group in the content component. While the control group had a gain score of 0.6 in the mean scores given on the pre and post-test compositions, the experimental group had a gain score of 0.5.

The fourth research question was related to which group would experience a greater improvement in terms of organization of their writing. To determine this, means and standard deviations of the organization component were determined. After this, a t-test analysis was performed to determine the difference between the means. Table 17 shows the scores for the organization component on the pre-test.

Table 17

Pre-test Scores and T-test Results for the Organization Component

Group ^a	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control	2.8	0.9	3.0	22	.01
Experimental	3.7	0.7			

Note. ^a $n=12$ for each group. *Highest possible score is 6

The t-test analysis indicated that there was a significant difference between the means of control and experimental groups ($t=3.0$; $df=22$; $p<.01$). As for the post-test, the same statistical operations were performed. Table 18 presents the scores obtained for the organization component of the writings for the post-test.

Table 18

Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Organization Component

<u>Group^a</u>	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control	3.7	0.8	2.5	22	.02
Experimental	4.2	0.7			

Note. ^an=12 for each group. *Highest possible score is 6

The scores in Table 18 indicated that both groups improved their organization scores of the compositions since there was an increase in the means of the organization component of the compositions written by the both groups. It was also found that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the groups ($t=2.5$; $df=22$; $p<.02$). Table 19 presents the scores given to the organization component of the pre-test and post-test compositions written by the control group.

Table 19

Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Organization Component of the Control Group Compositions

<u>Group^a</u>	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control					
Pre-test	2.8	0.9	3	11	.01
Post-test	3.7	0.7			

Note. ^an=12 . *Highest possible score is 6

It was observed that control group improved the scores given to the organization component to 3.7 on the post-test from 2.8 on the pre-test. The t-test analysis also

indicated that the difference between the means of the compositions is significant ($t=3.0$; $df=11$; $p<.01$). Table 20 presents the scores given to the organization component of the pre-test and post-test compositions written by the experimental group.

Table 20

Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Organization Component of the Experimental Group Compositions

<u>Group^a</u>	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Experimental					
Pre-test	3.7	0.7	2.5	11	.02
Post-test	4.2	0.7			

Note. ^an=12 . *Highest possible score is 6

It was observed in Table 20 that experimental group improved the scores given to the organization component to 4.2 on the post-test from 3.7 on the pre-test. The t-analysis also indicated that the difference between the means of the compositions is significant ($t=2.5$; $df=11$; $p<.02$).

It was also found that the control group had greater improvement than the experimental group in the organization component as well. While the control group had a gain score of 0.9 in the mean scores given on the pre and post-test compositions, the experimental group had a gain score of 0.5.

The fifth research question was related to which group would experience the greater improvement in terms of the vocabulary component of their writing. To determine this, means and standard deviations of the compositions evaluated analytically were

determined. After this, a t-test analysis was performed to determine the difference between the means. Table 21 shows the scores obtained for the vocabulary component on the pre-test results.

Table 21

Pre-test Scores and T-test Results for the Vocabulary Component

Group ^a	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control	2.9	0.7	3.0	22	.01
Experimental	3.5	0.7			

Note. ^an=12 for each group. *Highest possible score is 6

The t-test result indicated that there was a significant difference between the means of vocabulary component of the compositions written by the experimental and control groups on the pre-test ($t=3.0$; $df=22$; $p<.01$). Table 22 presents the scores obtained for the vocabulary component on the post-test.

Table 22

Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Vocabulary Component

Group ^a	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control	3.4	0.7	2	22	.05
Experimental	4.0	0.6			

Note. ^an=12 for each group. *Highest possible score is 6

The scores in Table 22 indicated that both groups improved their vocabulary component grades as there was an increase in the means of the both groups. However, it

was found that the improvement both the control and experimental groups had was the same in the vocabulary component. As can be seen in Table 23 and Table 24, both the control group and the experimental group had a gain score of 0.5 in the vocabulary component. Table 23 presents the scores given to the vocabulary component of the pre-test and post-test compositions written by the control group.

Table 23

Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Vocabulary Component of the Control Group Compositions

<u>Group</u> ^a	<u>M</u> [*]	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control					
Pre-test	2.9	0.7	2.5	11	.02
Post-test	3.4	0.7			

Note. ^an=12. ^{*}Highest possible score is 6

It was observed that the control group improved the scores given to the vocabulary component to 3.4 on the post-test from 2.9 on the pre-test. The t-analysis also indicated that the difference between the means of the compositions is significant ($t=2.5$; $df=11$; $p<.02$). Table 24 presents the scores given to the vocabulary component of the pre-test and post-test compositions written by the experimental group.

Table 24

Pre-test and Post-test Scores and T-test Results for the Vocabulary Component of theExperimental Group Compositions

<u>Group^a</u>	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Experimental					
Pre-test	3.5	0.7	2.5	11	.02
Post-test	4.0	0.6			

Note. ^an=12. *Highest possible score is 6

It was observed in Table 24 that experimental group improved the scores given to the vocabulary component to 4.0 on the post-test from 3.5 on the pre-test. The t-analysis also indicated that the difference between the means of the compositions is significant ($t=2.5$; $df=11$; $p<.02$).

As indicated earlier, two sub - groups were formed to resolve the pre-treatment inequality of the treatment groups at the outset of the study. The pre-test mean scores for the two sub-groups, which consisted of ten subjects each, were equal at the outset of the treatment in writing proficiency. Nevertheless, the post-test mean scores indicated that neither of the two sub-groups made significant improvement since the t-test analysis revealed that there was not a significant difference between the mean scores on the post-test. The t-test analysis of the two sub-groups on both the pre-test and the post-tests are given in the following tables. Table 25, gives the figures obtained for the pre-test compositions evaluated holistically.

Table 25

Pre-test Holistic Scores and T-test Results for the Sub-groups

Group ^a	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control	3.2	0.7	1.6	8	ns
Experimental	3.7	1.0			

Note. ^an=10 for each group. *Highest possible score is 6

The t-test analysis indicated that there was not a significant difference between the means of the pre-test compositions evaluated holistically ($t=1.6$; $df=8$; $p=ns$). Table 26 gives the scores obtained for the post-test compositions evaluated holistically.

Table 26

Post-test Holistic Scores and T-test Results for the Sub-groups

Group ^a	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control	3.8	0.7	0.3	8	ns
Experimental	4.1	0.7			

Note. ^an=10 for each group. *Highest possible score is 6

The t-test analysis indicated that there was not a significant difference between the means of the post-test compositions evaluated holistically ($t=0.3$; $df=8$; $p=ns$). Table 27 gives the scores obtained for the pre-test compositions evaluated analytically.

Table 27

Pre-test Analytic Scores and T-test Results for the Sub-groups

Group ^a	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control	12.4	1.4	0.5	8	ns
Experimental	14.1	3.8			

Note. ^an=12 for each group. *Highest possible score is 24

The t-test analysis indicated that there was not a significant difference between the means of the pre-test compositions evaluated analytically ($t=0.5$; $df=8$; $p=ns$). Table 28 gives the scores obtained for the post-test compositions evaluated analytically.

Table 28

Post-test Analytic Scores and T-test Results for the Sub-groups

Group ^a	<u>M*</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Control	15.3	2.4	0.5	8	ns
Experimental	16.5	3.5			

Note. ^an=12 for each group. *Highest possible score is 24

The t-test analysis indicated that there was not a significant difference between the means of the post-test compositions assessed analytically ($t=0.5$; $df=8$; $p=ns$).

The significance of inter-rater reliability was determined by using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients between the two judges. The results are

presented in Table 29 and Table 30. The first table gives the significance of inter-rater reliability for the pre-test compositions.

Table 29

Inter-rater Reliability for the Pre-test.

Variables	Coefficients	Significance
Analytic scoring	.802	p<.001
Holistic scoring	.833	p<.001

As can be seen in Table 29, there is a significant correlation between the grades given by the raters. Table 30 gives the results for the post-test results.

Table 30

Inter-rater Reliability for the Post-test.

Variables	Coefficients	Significance
Analytic scoring	0.652	p<.001
Holistic scoring	0.763	p<.001

Interpreting the figures in Table 30 revealed that there was a significant correlation between the two raters' evaluation of compositions for post-tests also.

The sixth research question was related to which group would experience greater improvement in their use of the past simple and the past continuous tense of the verbs and make fewer grammatical mistakes on the post-test. Table 31 gives the data related to the

usage of simple past and past continuous form of the verbs for the experimental group and control group subjects on the pre-test compositions

Table 31

Number of Simple Past and Past Continuous Verbs on the Pre-test

Group	Total verbs	Correct	%	Wrong	%
Control	48	30	62.5	18	37.5
Experimental	81	69	85.0	12	15.0

As can be seen in Table 31, the percentage of grammatical errors made by the subjects in the experimental group is 15.0 % while it is 37.5 % for the control group. After the treatment, it was expected that experimental group subjects would make fewer mistakes on the post-test since they had experienced a writing class focused on the correct use of the simple past and past continuous form of the verbs. Table 32 presents the data from the post-test compositions written by the both group subjects.

Table 32

Number of Simple Past and Past Continuous Verbs on the Post-test

Group	Total verbs	Correct	%	Wrong	%
Control	68	48	70.5	20	29.5
Experimental	82	74	90.0	8	10.0

The data on Table 32 indicated that the subjects in both the grammar-focused writing class and the nongrammar-focused writing class made an improvement in terms of their accuracy on the use of the simple past and past continuous form of the verbs. However, it was also found that the subjects in the control group achieved a lower mistake percentage in the use of past form of the verbs than the experimental group subjects although they did not receive grammar instruction in their writing class. While the control group's percentage of wrong verbs was 37.5 % on the pre - test, it fell to 29.5 % on the post-test with a 8 % improvement. Nevertheless, the experimental group's percentage of wrong verbs was 15 % on the pre-test while it fell to 10 % on the post-test with a 5 % improvement.

This chapter has analyzed the data and provided answers to the research questions of this study. The following chapter summarizes and discusses the findings presented and discusses the study's limitations. It contains some pedagogical implications and also suggests implications for further studies.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

Overview of the Study

This study investigated the effects of teaching a writing class with a focus on grammar instruction versus teaching a writing class with a focus on the process approach to writing on the writing abilities of students who learn English as a foreign language in Turkey. The study was conducted at the University of Gaziosmanpasa in Tokat.

The subjects who took part in this study were first year students at the University. The number of the subjects was twenty-four, twelve in an experimental group and twelve in a control group. The subjects in the experimental group came from the Biology Department and Chemistry Department while the subjects in the control group came from the Physics Department and Mathematics Department.

The focus of the study was on the role of grammar instruction in the writing class in the development of writing abilities. The treatment entailed lasted for four weeks. In each week, students attended one session which was forty-five minutes long and produced compositions both in class and at home.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

The first research question was related to whether there was a significant difference in the development of writing ability between the experimental and control groups. The results indicated that this technique was effective in improving the

subjects' writing abilities. However, it was found that the non-grammar writing class that focused on the process approach to writing improved more than the grammar-focused writing class in the improvement of overall writing abilities. The post-test results indicated that the subjects in both of the groups improved their writing abilities after receiving the instruction. It was found that while the subjects in the control group had a mean score of 11.7 out of 16 as measured analytically on the pre-test compositions, they had a mean score of 14.6 on the post-test compositions showing a 2.9 gain after the instruction. Improvement was also observed in the subjects in the experimental group as well. While the mean of the pre-test compositions was determined as 14.7, it was found that the mean score increased to 16.7 with a 2.0 gain on the post-test.

The second research question was related to which group would have greater improvement in the grammar component of writing. The results indicated that there was an improvement in the grammar component for both of the groups on the post-test. However, the control group subjects who took a writing class focused on the process approach had a greater improvement than their peers in the grammar-focused writing class although the improvement was not significant. The improvement control group had might be due to the fact that they received "implicit grammar instruction". Although there was no grammar explanation in the control group, students might have learned the underlying rules for the simple past and past continuous tenses while focusing on how the sentences in the reading passages were structured. On the other hand, it was also true that

the subjects in the experimental group were at a higher level of proficiency than their peers in the control group. So, it was more difficult for them to improve relatively.

The third research question was related to which group would have greater improvement in the content component of writing. The results indicated that there was an improvement in the content component for both of the groups on the post-test. However, the control group subjects who took a writing class focused on the process approach had a greater improvement than their peers in the grammar-focused writing class although the improvement was not significant. The reading passages used in both groups might have given the students some more ideas related to the topic they were writing on.

The fourth research question was related to which group would have greater improvement in the organization component of writing. The results indicated that there was an improvement in the organization component for both of the groups on the post-test. However, the control group subjects who took a writing class focused on the process approach had a greater improvement than their peers in the grammar-focused writing class although the improvement was not significant. The reading passages used in both groups might have helped the students see how ideas are organized and presented in passages.

The fifth research question was related to which group would have greater improvement in the vocabulary component of writing. The results indicated that there was an improvement in the vocabulary component for both of the groups on the post-test. However, there was not a significant difference between the mean scores of the

vocabulary component for both groups on the post-test. That is, neither of the groups had a greater improvement in the vocabulary component. This might be due to the fact that the focus of the writing classes was not on the vocabulary component.

The last research question concern the number of grammatical mistakes related to the use of the past simple and past continuous in both the experimental group and control group student compositions. Since these structures were taught to the experimental group, the results provided a clear answer to the effectiveness of grammar instruction in the writing class in respect to particular grammatical focus structures. It was found that there were fewer grammatical mistakes on the post-test compositions of experimental group subjects than on the pre-test compositions. However, the subjects in the control group showed even greater improvement in the accurate use of the simple past and past continuous verb forms on the post-test.

The most important result to be drawn from this study might be the fact that students improved their writing abilities through writing. The students in this study practiced writing for four weeks, writing a number of compositions both in the class and at home. This practice of writing may have helped them to improve their writing abilities in all respects.

The results of this study also suggest that the process approach in teaching writing may be more effective than teaching writing with a focus on grammar instruction, supporting some studies with similar results (Holden, 1994). These results, on the other hand provide counter evidence to the results of other studies (Toros, 1991).

However, the results of the study do not reveal that grammar explanation in the writing class is totally ineffective. Since the subjects in the experimental group also improved their scores in the overall writing ability and grammar component on the post-test compositions, it may be concluded that grammar instruction in the writing class does not have a negative effect, providing partly counter results to some studies. (Elley et al., 1976 cited in Hillocks, 1986).

The researcher also noticed that students in the control group were more motivated than the students in the experimental group. Students in the control group dealt mainly with improving ideas by receiving feedback on the content of the compositions from both their peers and the researcher with less attention to form. Since the subjects in the control group felt that their ideas were being discussed, they tended to come up with more interesting ideas that improved their second or third drafts of the compositions. On the other hand, the subjects in the experimental group (the grammar-focused writing class) were not so motivated as their peers in the control group (the process writing class) as the attention of the subjects in the experimental group was drawn to the correct use of the grammar structures rather than their ideas.

Limitations of the study

It would be too optimistic to generalize the findings of this study since it was carried out with only twenty-four students. Although there were forty students in both

experimental and control groups, only twelve students in each of these groups attended all the sessions and took the pre-test and the post-test.

As the two groups in the study were intact groups, they could not be randomized in assignment to groups or equivalently balanced in proficiency level at the outset of the experiment. As the pre-test results indicate, the groups, in fact, were not matched in writing ability at the outset of the study. The pre-treatment writing ability of the experimental group was significantly higher than the pre-treatment ability of the control group. This makes interpretation of post-test results extremely difficult.

Although both groups were assumed to be at the same language proficiency level, the pre-test results indicated that at least in writing proficiency they were not equal. This might be a result of placing the students into the language classes without accurately determining their proficiency in the English language, especially their writing proficiency.

In addition, if the subjects who missed the sessions or either of the pre-test and the post-test had all attended the sessions, there might have been more homogenous groups, which would make it possible to determine more accurately the effects of the treatment on the subjects' writing abilities.

However, as indicated in the data analysis chapter, two sub-groups were formed by excluding the scores of the two highest scoring students in the experimental group and the two lowest scoring students in the control group to form a control and experimental group that were equal in the writing proficiency at the outset of the experiment. First, the

mean scores on the pre-test were evaluated both holistically and analytically. Then a t-test analysis was performed to determine whether there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the sub-groups. The results indicated that there was not a significant difference between the mean scores on the pre-test. The t-test analysis performed after the treatment also revealed that there was not a significant difference between the means on the post-test as well.

It was concluded that the grammar- focused writing instruction was not more effective than the process approach to writing in the development of students' writing ability. Although both groups had improvement on the post-test, there was not a significant difference in the mean scores of the groups on the post-test, which indicated that the grammar-focused writing instruction did not make more difference on the writing ability of students than the process approach to writing.

A major limitation might have resulted from the design of the study. The reading passages that were introduced to both groups might have effects in varying degrees on their understanding of how the English sentences are formed. The subjects in the control group might have benefited more than the experimental group subjects not only in getting ideas but also in focusing their attention to the sentence structures presented in context.

Another limitation of this study was its length. It lasted only four weeks, which can be regarded as a very short period of time in which to expect significant difference in the writing ability of students and to obtain significant results.

Another limitation could be the type of the subjects. All students were from the Faculty of Science in their first years. Different results might have been obtained if the study were performed with students from other faculties. It is debatable how accurately the sample subjects, who participated in this study, represent the whole population of students learning English in Turkey.

Implications for Further Study

This study aimed at determining the effects of the grammar-focused writing instruction on the development of writing abilities of students learning English as a foreign language. The findings revealed that reviewing the grammatical points in the classroom helped the subjects make fewer grammatical mistakes in their writing. On the other hand, the results indicated that the process writing approach that was used in the control group led to greater improvement in the scores given to the grammar component on the post-test. Also their mistake percentage in the use of the simple past and past continuous form of the verbs on the post-test was found to be lower than that of the experimental group subjects. However, as indicated in the limitations of the study, the length of the study along with the number and type of the students who participated in this study limit generalization.

In order to be able to get more reliable results from future research studies on the effectiveness of formal grammar instruction, the time period should be longer for this type of study. In addition, the study should be carried out with a larger number of

subjects at different faculties so that it could be a more adequate sample of the university students in Turkey.

In this study the experimental writing class received formal grammar instruction. It might be a concern for further research studies to experiment with different types of grammar instruction, for example, teaching grammar communicatively in the writing class to determine its effects. Since the number of studies on the effectiveness of grammar instruction in the writing class is limited, especially in foreign language settings, it is difficult to regard grammar instruction as useful or harmful. As Noguchi (1991) suggests grammar instruction should not be totally ignored without obtaining results indicating its ineffectiveness.

Although the students in the control group were not focused on grammar structure practice in class, they themselves managed to correct their mistakes either after receiving feedback from their peers in class or while re-writing the drafts at home (see, Appendix J). This finding suggests that further studies should be conducted to find out how other factors, such as different forms of feedback, affect student writing abilities.

Pedagogical Implications

Although the results of this study can be interpreted to indicate that students' writing abilities can be improved through devoting time to formal grammar instruction in the writing class, the results of this study also shows that teaching writing with the process approach helps students to achieve better writing performance with fewer

grammatical errors. On the other hand, as the number of grammatical errors decreased in the post-test compositions of the experimental group subjects, it can be recommended that the writing teachers work with students having troubles with grammar and review some grammatical points in the classroom by making use of formal grammar instruction to help them see the underlying grammatical rules for English sentences.

The reading passages provided students with the opportunity to see how structures are used in context. Not only did these passages give students examples of grammatical usage but also supplied them with ideas to think about. So, teachers of writing might also make greater use of such reading passages as writing stimuli.

As both the grammar-focused group and the process writing-focused group showed improvement in their writing, perhaps a combination of these two approaches should be modeled in Turkish university writing classes. It is also clear that having students practice writing compositions improves their ability to write compositions regardless of writing philosophy. The results suggest that such practice supports development of other skills such as reading and grammar usage as well. The results also indicate that more writing practice should be part of university level language classes.

Since the subjects who took part in this study learn English in an integrated way three hours a week, the time allocated to teach them how to write is very limited. It seems that if an improvement is to be expected not only in writing abilities but also in other language skills, more time should be allocated for the study of a foreign language at the universities where growth in L2 proficiency is expected.

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APPENDIX A

Reading Passage 1

On a London Bus

A strange thing happened to Henry yesterday. He was on a bus and wanted to get off. So he stood up and rang the bell. To make sure the driver heard him he rang it twice, but the bus did not stop, and the conductor came and shouted at him.

The conductor was so annoyed, and spoke so fast, that Henry did not understand a word. The bus stop at the next bus stop and Henry got off. As he got off he heard someone say: "I think he is a foreigner."

When Henry got home, he told his landlady about the incident.

"How many times did you ring the bell?" she asked.

"Twice," said Henry.

"Well, that's the signal for the driver to go on," his landlady explained. "Only the conductor is allowed to ring the bell twice. That's why he got so annoyed."

Henry nodded. "I see," he said.

APPENDIX B

Reading Passage 2

Curriculum Vitae

When someone is applying for a job, they often send a short letter with their *curriculum vitae* attached. Here is the curriculum vitae of Howard Morris:

Name	Howard Morris
Sex	Male
Status	Single
Date of birth	22/7/48
Place of birth	Dulwich, London
Education	
1953-1959	Fairlawn Primary School
1959-1965	Sedgehill Comprehensive School
Examinations	1962- 'O' Level: English Language, English Literature, History, Geography, French, Mathematics. 1963-'A' Level: Mathematics.
1964	Joined Texas Tanker Company, as officer cadet. Left Merchant Navy career owing to failure in eyesight
1966	Worked as management trainee, Cadbury Schweppes Ltd.
1967-68	Spent two years on coffee plantation, Kenya.

1969-1974

Worked for BBC Bristol

1974

transferred to London



APPENDIX C

Reading Passage 3

A Trip to Greenwich

We took the boat from Westminster Pier. It was early and there were not many other passengers; a few Americans, some Scandinavians and an Indian family. It was one of those gray, still, autumn mornings, with a little mist rising from the river.

We arrived at Greenwich just after ten o'clock. We wanted to visit the Cutty Sark at once, but nobody was allowed on board till eleven, so we decided to walk under the Thames to the Isle of Dogs. There was not anybody else in the tunnel. It was cold down there, and our footsteps echoed along the damp, tiled walls. From the other side you get a marvelous view of the Royal Naval College, built on the site of Henry VIII's old Tudor Palace.

In the afternoon, the sun came out, and we went up through the park to the Royal Observatory. By now, there were quite a lot of people about.

After visiting the Observatory, and having a cup of tea, we did not have much time left, but we managed to look round a few of the rooms in the Maritime Museum, before it was time to catch the boat to London. There was just one disappointment. The Royal Naval College was closed to visitors, so we were not able to see the famous painted hall. Next time perhaps!

APPENDIX D

Reading Passage 4

The Little Girl and the Lady With the Big hat

The little girl was sitting on the bus beside her mother. She was wearing a red jumper and a short blue skirt. She was about four years old.

The bus stopped, and some more passengers got on. They did not speak. They sat down in the first empty seats, and it was very quite in the bus.

The last passenger to come on board was very tall. She was carrying an elegant blue umbrella and an expensive crocodile handbag. She was wearing a very large hat.

The little girl stared at the hat. "Mummy," she said loudly, "what a funny hat."

"Shh, dear." said her mother, "do not be so rude."

Someone at the back of the bus giggled.

"But it is a funny hat," said the little girl defiantly.

The owner of the hat turned and gave the little girl a frozen smile.

"Oh dear, I am sorry," said the mother, "children can be so embarrassing."

All the other passengers smiled happily to themselves.

APPENDIX E

Holistic Scoring Criteria Adapted from (Jacobs et al, 1981)

6. This writing contains few grammar errors; the vocabulary and idioms are rarely distinguishable from that of native writer; ideas are presented in an interesting way and well-linked; this writing is highly organized.

5. This writing contains some grammar errors which do not interfere with comprehension; there are occasional inappropriate terms that do not impair the expression of the ideas, it is well-organized and ideas are presented with relevant supporting material.

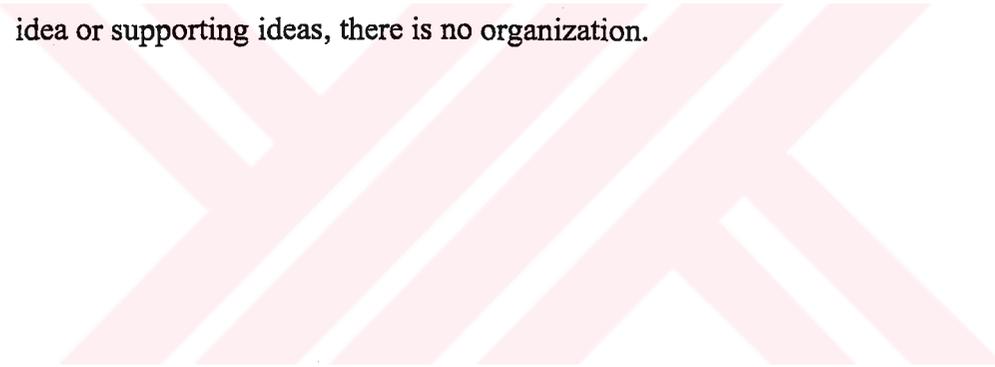
4. This writing contains some grammar errors which sometimes make re-reading necessary for the full comprehension, expression of ideas may be limited because of inadequate vocabulary; there may be some lack of organization which make re-reading necessary for the clarification of ideas; the ideas are presented ,but it may be difficult for the reader to distinguish main ideas from supporting materials.

3. This writing contains grammar errors frequently, so reader needs to spend efforts to interpret the sentences; the vocabulary is so limited and misused that expression of ideas

are clearly hindered, there is little or no connectivity and organization; ideas are presented, but lack clarity, consistency, or support.

2. This writing contains grammar errors that make the reader use his/her own interpretation; the vocabulary is also so limited and misused that the reader has to depend on his/her interpretation, there may be ideas, but there is no connection between them.

1. This writing contains grammar errors that make comprehension impossible, the vocabulary is also too limited to make the writing comprehensible, there is not a main idea or supporting ideas, there is no organization.



APPENDIX F

Analytic Scoring Criteria Adapted from Hughes (1996)

Grammar

- 6. Few noticeable errors of grammar or word order related to the use of the simple past and the past continuous tenses.
- 5. Some errors of grammar or word order related to the use of the simple past and the past continuous tenses. However, these errors do not interfere with comprehension.
- 4. Errors of grammar or word order related to the use of the simple past and the past continuous tenses. These errors are fairly frequent; occasional re-reading is necessary for full comprehension.
- 3. Errors of grammar or word order related to the use of the simple past and the past continuous tenses. The errors are frequent; efforts of interpretation is sometimes required on reader's part.
- 2. Errors of grammar or word order related to the use of the simple past and the past continuous tenses. These errors are very frequent ; reader often has to rely on interpretation.
- 1. Errors of grammar or word order related to the use of the simple past and the past continuous tenses. The errors are so severe as to make comprehension virtually impossible.

Vocabulary

- 6. Use of vocabulary and idiom rarely distinguishable from that of educated native writer.
- 5. Occasionally uses inappropriate terms.
- 4. Uses wrong or inappropriate words fairly frequently; expression of ideas may be limited because of inadequate vocabulary.
- 3. Limited vocabulary and frequent errors clearly hinder expression of ideas.
- 2. Vocabulary so limited and so frequently misused that reader must often rely on own interpretation.
- 1. Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make comprehension virtually impossible.

Organization

- 6. Highly organized; clear progression of ideas well linked; like educated native writer.
- 5. Material well-organized; links could occasionally be clearer but communication not impaired.
- 4. Some lack of organization; re-reading required for clarification of ideas.
- 3. Little or no attempt at connectivity, though reader can deduce some organization.
- 2. Individual ideas can be clear, but very difficult to deduce connection between them.

---1. Lack of organization so severe that communication is seriously impaired.

Content

---6. Ideas are presented in an interesting way, and clearly stated.

---5. Ideas are well presented with relevant supporting material.

---4. Ideas are presented, but it may be difficult for the reader to distinguish main ideas from supporting material.

---3. Ideas are presented , but may lack relevance.

---2. Some ideas are presented , but the reader is not provided with a main idea.

---1. A meaning comes through occasionally, but it is not relevant.

APPENDIX G

A Sample Pre-test Composition

MY HOLIDAY

I spent my last summer holiday in Istanbul. I visited my friends, my grandmother. I read a book and a watched the TV, and I walked the park. I visited Topkapi Sarayi and Dolmabahce Sarayi and Blue Mosque. I walked the beach. I swam in the see. I seen Baris Manco, Mim Kemal Oke. I listened music.

APPENDIX H

A Sample Post-test Composition

MY HOLIDAY

I went to Istanbul. I and my friends visited Blue Mosque. I went to Topkapi, Dolmabahce, Yildiz Sarah. I and my friends walked the Yildiz Park and I saw a sea.

We went to Camlica. We had a picnic last year. We played the volleyball.

I listened the music and I read a lot of books and I wrote the postcards.

We went to the cinema.

NICE HOLIDAY

APPENDIX I

Sample Compositions Written by an Experimental Group Student

First Draft

A strange thing happened to me last year. I had a difficult exam in the school and it was a bad exam so I was very sorry. And also the weather was very bad and it was raining. I run and caught the bus and I got with on with not looking the number of the bus. After ten minutes later I noticed that it's going to different place. I couldn't say anything to the people because I a lot. I sat a chair and I didn't stand up and I also didn't ask anything to the other people. When the bus came to the last bus stop I got off and I got on the true bus.

Second Draft

A strange thing happened to me last year. I had a difficult exam in the school and it was a bad exam so I was very sorry. And also the weather was very bad and it was raining. I ran and caught the bus and I got on the bus, but I didn't look at the number of the bus. After ten minutes later I noticed that it's going to different place. I couldn't say anything to the other people because I was afraid a lot.

I sat on a chair and I didn't stand up. Also I didn't ask anything to the other people. When the bus came to the last bus-stop I got off and I got on the right bus.

APPENDIX J

Sample Compositions Written by a Control Group Student

First Draft

I wait for the bus in the bus stop a morning. I get on a bus. I put the ticket in to the ticket bus.

Second Draft

I got on a bus. I put the ticket in to the ticket box. I met a friend. We stood because very people. Some people got off than we sit down chair. The conductor came and shouted at her. My friend stood up and she got off.

Third Draft

I got on a bus. I put the ticket in to the ticket bus. I met a friend. We stood because there were very crowd in the bus. Some people got off than we sit down chair. The conductor came and shouted at her. Because my friend forgot to put the ticket in to the ticket box. For that reason the conductor came and shouted at her. So my friend put the ticket. When the bus arrived which is her bus stop she got off. I got off bus for going school.