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The Effects of Blogs on Writing Skills in Teaching Turkish as a Second Language

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Abstract

In this research, the effect of blogs, a web 2.0 application, on writing skills and attitudes of level B1 students who learn Turkish as a second language was investigated. Research was designed with a mixed method which included both qualitative and quantitative data. The target population of the research consists of 24 level B1 students that are studying in city center of Istanbul. Assessment Scale of Writing was used in qualitative data collection and, personal information and group interview forms were used in quantitative data collection. Descriptive Analysis, Independent Samples t-test, Dependent Samples T-Test and Shapiro Wilk tests were used to analyze collected data. Quantitative data analysis was performed with SPSS 22.0 software. Research has revealed that blogs have positive impact on the writing skills of students who are learning Turkish as a second language. The writing skills of blogging students are higher than those who take traditional writing education. Blogs have positive influence on students who learn Turkish as a second language and they began to write better than before with the blogging experience.

Keywords

Turkish as a Second Language, Writing Education, Web 2.0, Blogs

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most important basic elements of human communication. Gngr (2011) indicates that language has a dynamic structure like society and the subject of that dynamism is human due to the fact that he/she develops the language. All the words that are associated with words such as labor, time, thought, imagination, today, tomorrow, yesterday, request even presence and absence that surround humans are born, live and die with the language. Therefore, people use language while they communicate and this language shows presence and vitality like humans.

The feature of language as a means of communication and information has brought about many innovations with respect to the opportunities of today's world. Nowadays, individuals have tools that can give immediate feedback in terms of access to

information, transfer of ideas, satisfying their curiosity and access to new information. Especially, web 2.0 technologies have brought about a very different dimension with regard to ensuring communication. All these differences both change our point of view towards language and bring a number of innovations in language teaching as well.

This shift and development in today's world have created many different ways of learning different cultures and languages. To communicate quickly through computer and internet technologies has become extremely important thanks to the communicative feature of language that has become prominent and communicative language learning approach in foreign language teaching that has come into prominence as well. Especially nowadays, the use of web 2.0 tools such as Blog, Wiki, Podcast, Social Networks (Media), Multimedia Sharing have facilitated the features of language in terms of communication and studies have been started in order to develop communication-oriented basic language skills.

Web 2.0 Applications and Education

The internet that was developed by Tim Barnes-Lee in 1989 and started with web pages, and the facilities through the internet have changed lives of many people in the last 20 years. Today, while most of the people over mid ages have learned the internet later, today's young people are born with technology. One of the main advantages of communication is the exchange of information and technology allows this exchange of information as soon as possible. The widespread use of the internet is fostering communication technology day by day while increasing human dependence on technology.

According to the report by Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI) in 2013, the use of computers and the internet in our country is rapidly increasing. Based on the information on the report, in Figure 1, households with internet access in Turkey in 2007-2013, percentage of computer use between 16-74 age groups and percentage of internet use between 16-74 age groups in Turkey are shown.

Web applications are examined in three categories in itself. These are Web 1.0, Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 applications. Web 1.0 tends the individual in a passive position on the internet and just provides him with information. In this period where the internet users were only readers, all controls were in the hands of the people that created websites (Kutup, 2010). Web 2.0 is the stage of the internet that allows human interaction. Web 2.0, social networking sites, and web-based free encyclopedias providing online tools such as communication tools consist of second generation internet-based web services that enable people to share through social networking sites and learning communities (Şendağ, 2008, p. 995).

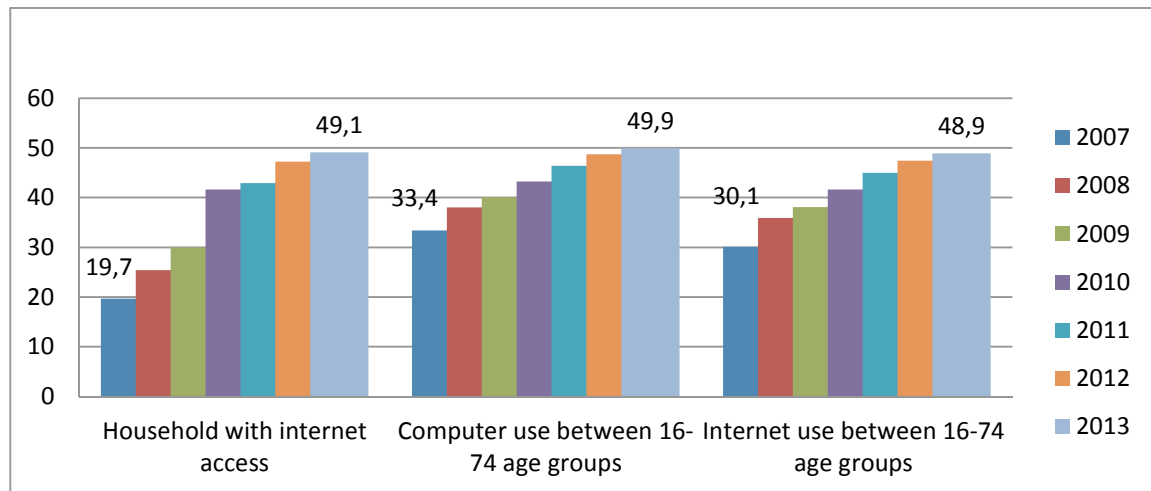


Figure 1. Households' use of information technologies in Turkey (2007-2013)

Web 2.0 applications include design rules for integrated applications that enable important facilities and changes in terms of the use of web (Franklin and Van Harmelen, 2007). Web 2.0 has changed the existing stability of the internet in web 1.0 and provided it with a more mobile environment. Web 2.0 tools include the technology of blogs, wikis, aggregators, social networking sites, online photo galleries and audio/video broadcasting (Albion, 2008). Web 2.0 includes a number of new applications and services created by social tools that give the opportunity of creating a participatory environment and structure. Internet literacy, personal and collaborative active participation, social interaction, integrated content and labeling could be expressed as the main features of web 2.0 applications in internet-based teaching environments. Web 2.0 tools support collective intelligence through collaboration and innovations. They offer opportunities to perform constructivist learning activities in education. By means of those tools, individual differences are at the forefront, meaning is made sense through joining it together and in cooperation (Horzum, 2010, p. 613).

Web 2.0 is an employable application in education particularly because it is suitable for the exchange of information and enables interaction between individuals. The benefits and limitations of the use of web 2.0 applications in education are in the following (Bodur, 2010):

Table 1. The benefits and limitations of Web 2.0 applications in education

Benefits	Limitations
Not too much time and effort is needed to reach the information.	In particular, there is need to have broadband internet connection.
It facilitates the access to information whenever and wherever it is needed. It enables instructive applications and new methods to be used in education thanks to the developing technology and applications	It consists of the total of concepts and technologies that are not defined as enough behind. Thanks to the websites with simple and ordinary content, it directs to updated content with low quality.
It is compatible with the elements of education and dynamic nature of the existing content.	Important content is published by novice users.
There is no need to have high-level of knowledge and skills to use web 2.0 applications.	It can be criticized because it enables to create communities that have no rules.
It offers the opportunity of having extended information and cooperation. It reduces the cost to be spent on education.	It has a low level of security.

Most common applications in Web 2.0 applications are Blog, Wiki, Podcast, Social Networks (Media) and Multimedia Shares. Wiki is an application that allows visitors or users of webpages that are called as Wikipedist to add, edit, delete and modify the content about some issues. Podcasts could be expressed as applications that are done through the web in the framework of a particular purpose in terms of audio and/or video files (Karaman et al., 2008). Social media is an interpersonal application that provides an opportunity of collaboration, interaction and communication and enables people in different places who have common interests, common tastes, skills or similar objectives come together in order to share information. The most widely used social media applications are Facebook and Twitter. Social networks have important features in terms of group interaction, shared spaces for collaboration, social ties and the exchange of information in web-based learning environment (Bartlett-Bragg, 2006).

Multimedia sharing is one of the fastest growing areas in Web 2.0 applications that facilitates content storage, sharing and changing. The most well-known examples are Youtube for video sharing, Flickr and Instagram for photo sharing and Odeo for audio sharing (Bodur, 2010).

Blog

Blogs which are frequently updated are online journals where multimedia content are published in reverse chronological order without any requirement of technical skills. Readers can add comments and are routed to different sources through connections. (Bodur, 2010). A person who wants to be the author of a blog could easily create it from any blog website, could prepare a title and text about any subject and could start writing on it. Created blogs and shares could be shared with desired people. Thanks to the written comments on the blogs, there could be a social relationship between the owner and readers of the blog and that relationship could enable the exchange of information among people who follow it. A wide range of content such as text, pictures, video and photo can be added to blog recordings (Ray & Hocutt, 2006). The features of blog could be explained in that the content has a personal structure, is frequently updated, is in reverse chronological order where the last post is in the first place, has links to different resources, and has free access and archiving (Paquet, 2003).

Blogs could be analyzed in two categories as teacher and student blogs in education. Teacher blogs are mostly used in order to publish information about the courses and monitor students; and students use them to reflect their feelings, thoughts and knowledge (Bodur, 2010).

The educational benefits and possible uses of blogs according to Safran (2007) are shown on the figure below.

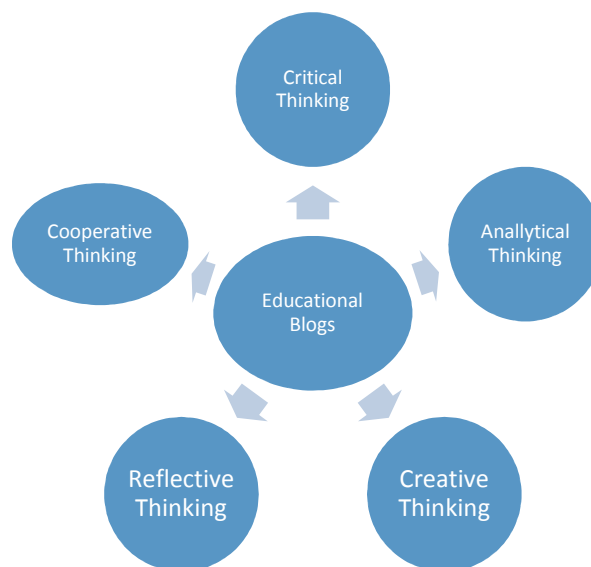


Figure 2. Educational benefits of blogs

Blogs create an environment for students to be able to share the information they have learned and discuss it with their friends. Blogs are important in that they have an active interaction environment, provide lecture notes, announce the assignments, offer feedback for the assignments, enable classroom environment get rid of mediocrity through elements such as e-mail and message/bulletin board, provide a virtual teaching and learning environment where students can always have access to the information at any time and from anywhere (Erişti, Şişman & Yıldırım, 2008).

Writing in Second Language Teaching through Blogs

Writing skill is considered to be one of the most important areas of four main skills that are needed to be gained in language teaching. Second language learners need to be convinced that they will never gain full literacy until they have writing proficiency in a second language (Hughey, 1983). Therefore, writing skills have gained a very important position in second language teaching.

Writing skills can be developed within a process (MOE, 2012). Murray (1987) analyzes writing process in 8 steps as pre-writing (generation of ideas, understanding of different ideas, information gathering, note taking, free writing, brainstorming), planning (ideas organization, mind map, clustering, listing, outlining), the creation of the craft (forming an initial draft of the text with a focus on the development of ideas in details and in planned way), reflection (reading carefully the writing again after a certain time, sometimes reviewing with peers and teachers), peer and teacher evaluation (feedback by different people), reviewing (enhancing the structure of the text, enhancing the classification and quality of ideas), additional research and idea generation (re-operation of the writing process when there are new ideas and added research), final reading and publishing (giving the final shape of the writing). Today, Web 2.0 applications demonstrate that authors follow their texts effectively after the publication. It brings about adding different steps to the writing process.

Blogs could be used in teaching writing that is one of the four basic skills in terms of language teaching because they offer a variety of facilities for each of the necessary stages in teaching writing process. In the “Preparation for Writing” phase that is the first stage of the writing process, students can do research on any subject that they want through the use of his/her blog. Thanks to a variety of applications that can be added to blogs students can make a preparation before writing. Besides, it is known that blogs motivate students for writing through the incentive steps to it in preparation phase. Kitzman (2003) expresses that students are motivated towards writing due to the fact that they know the possibility that their writings could be read by others because blogs create an authentic audience. In addition, to use any new media organ or to take

responsibility in those organs makes the writer of the blogs as the author and audience and this contributes to the student's language development.

Blogs also enable individuals to determine the target audience that is another step of the preparation phase. The author of the blog can add anyone as readers or writers and the author himself can identify an average audience through sharing the writings about limited and certain issues.

If an individual starts writing on blogs, he/she can store it in draft at his/her pleasure so that he/she can only see it before publishing. He/she can see it how it looks on the page as a viewer and can make changes on the writing at any time. Considering the importance of re-writing and revision in the writing process, the benefits of blogs for writing can be better understood.

Blogs offer opportunities both for the teacher and the student for the phases of writing in terms of "Writing through Editing" and "Correction". Students can create their own blogs and teachers can also see students' writings as drafts when they assign their students as authors and can indicate the mistakes for them. The student that is aware of his/her mistakes or deficiencies can rearrange his/her writing.

Finally, blogs can also be benefited for the stages of "Publication and Presentation". While the student can share his/her writings with his/her parents, friends and teachers in traditional systems, he/she can reach many people that have common interests with him/herself from abroad or domestic thanks to blogs. Ward (2004) indicates that blogs are like magazines that are published continuously and regularly and contribute to students' writing skills due to the instant and interactive audience that they have.

METHOD

"Mixed method" that is composed of both qualitative and quantitative methods was used for data collection, data analysis and data interpretation. Greene, Caracella and Graham (1989) define mixed method as a method that is formed by combining at least a qualitative and a quantitative method. The researcher can use mixed method in order to reach more detailed information through using different research methods, techniques and approaches to be used in the study (Johnson & Onwuengbuzie, 2004).

In the study, it is necessary to take advantage of the quantitative data as it is aimed to identify the effects of blogs on students' writings. Within this purpose, a quasi-experimental design that is one of the research methods of quantitative research was used. Besides, focus group discussions that are among qualitative data collection techniques were used in order to determine students' perceptions and attitudes towards blogs.

Table 2. Research Chart

Group	Pre Measures	Treatment	Last Measures
Experimental Group	1.Composition (Written Expression) Rating Scale	1.Writing class in teaching Turkish as a second language 2. B1 Level Writing Topics 3. Blog	1. Composition (Written Expression) Rating Scale 2.Focus Group Discussion
Control Group	1.Composition (Written Expression) Rating Scale	1.Writing class in teaching Turkish as a second language	1. Composition (Written Expression) Rating Scale

In this study, experimental and control groups were assigned randomly. While the experimental group was instructed through blogs for 6 weeks, the control group was not applied any specific treatment apart from traditional teaching writing. Pre-test and post-test studies of both groups were evaluated based on Composition (Writing) Rating Scale. Then experimental group students' attitude towards blogs was analyzed through a focus group discussion about "The Use of Blogs in Education".

Participants of the Research Study

The participants of the study were 12 students that are studying at TÖMER and have been learning Turkish as a second language in B1, Fatih University, Istanbul in the 2013-2014 academic year for 6 week-treatment (16.12.2013-17.01.2014) in order to measure the impact of blogs on writing skills. Criterion sampling was preferred in terms of the selection of classes. The criteria were determined in that students learn Turkish as a second language, are in B1 and above and are voluntary. Demographics of 12 students of the experimental group who participated in the study were collected through the Personal Information Form.

Having analyzed the information of the experimental group based on the Personal Information Form, it is understood that students come from 8 different countries. However, 8 students of the experimental group that is composed of 4 male and 4 female students know at least two foreign languages. Considering the information based on the Personal Information Form collected from the control group, it is understood that students come from 7 different countries. However, the number of boys and girls are equal. There are 6 students in both groups. 8 students of the control group know two foreign languages.

Data Collection Tool

The quantitative data of the study were collected through “Composition (Writing) Rating Scale” and the Personal Information Form. Qualitative data were revealed through focus group discussions performed with the experimental group.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was carried out through the transfer of pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental and control groups into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Personal Computers (SPSS) in order to reveal whether there is a statistically significant difference. Firstly, in order to analyze the data collected through pre-test and post-test scores, they were controlled if they are distributed normally. Kolmogrov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilk tests are used in order to analyze whether the data are distributed normally (Kalaycı, 2006; Büyüköztürk, 2013). When the number is less than 30, Shapiro Wilk test and when it is higher than 30, Kolmogrov-Smirnov test can be used (Kalaycı, 2006). Within this purpose, due to the fact that the number is less than 30, Shapiro Wilk test results were used in order to determine whether the data are distributed normally. Parametric methods were preferred as the data offered a normal distribution. Independent Samples T-test was used in order to reveal statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups. Independent Samples T-test is an analysis method in order to reveal significant difference between two independent samples mean scores (Büyüköztürk, 2013). Paired Samples T-test was carried out in order to reveal statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental group. Paired Samples T-test is an analysis method that is used in order to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between two paired samples mean scores (Büyüköztürk, 2013). Results were evaluated at a significance level of 0.05.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Focus group discussion that is among qualitative research types was used in the study. The data collected through focus group discussion were analyzed on “Descriptive Content Analysis” approach. According to this approach, the data are summarized and interpreted based on pre-determined Theoretical Framework or themes (Sözbilir, t.y.). Experimental group students’ perceptions about “The Use of Blogs in Education” were analyzed under the themes of pre-treatment, treatment and post-treatment.

FINDINGS AND EXPLANATION

Findings in Quantitative Research Data

Findings regarding quantitative research studies were analyzed in terms of the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental and control groups:

Difference between the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups. Findings that indicate whether the pre-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups are distributed normally were revealed in Table 3.

Table 3. Homogeneity Level of Experimental and Control Groups' Pre-Tests

Groups	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	N	p	S	n	p
Experimental	.142	12	.200*	.971	12	.917*
Control	.194	12	.200*	.943	12	.542*

$p^* > 0.05$

Considering the Table 3; due to the fact that the data collected by the participants of the experimental and control groups are fewer than 30; they are analyzed based on Shapiro-Wilk test table. Analyzing the Shapiro-Wilk test table, it is seen that p significance level is higher than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, an Independent Samples T-test was carried out in order to reveal whether there is statistically significant difference between the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups. Independent Samples T-test analysis results were indicated in Table 4:

Table 4. Independent Samples T Test Analysis

Groups	N	X	S	df	T	p
Experimental Groups	12	63.66	4.88	22	.281	.784
Control Groups	12	62.58	10.90			

$p > 0.05$

Based on the Independent Samples T-test shown on Table 4, it is seen that p ($p = .784$) significance level is higher than 0.5. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that there is no statistically significant difference between the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups.

Difference between the Post-Test Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

The data that indicate whether the post-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups are distributed normally are shown on Table 5:

Table 5. Homogeneity Level of Experimental and Control Groups' Post-Tests

Groups	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	n	p	Statistic	n	p
Experimental	.181	12	.200*	.940	12	.496*
Control	.192	12	.200*	.897	12	.143*

p*>0.05

Analyzing the normality table as indicated above; the interpretation is done through Shapiro-Wilk test as the data collected from the experimental and control groups are fewer than 30. Shapiro-Wilk test table indicates that p significance levels (p>0.05) are higher than 0.05. Therefore, an Independent Samples T-test was carried out in order to reveal whether there is statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. Independent Samples T-test analysis results were shown on Table 6:

Table 6. Independent Samples T Test Analysis

Groups	N	X	S	df	T	p
Experimental Groups	12	84.52	5.27	22	6.189	.000
Control Groups	12	65.83	9.03			

p<0.05

Analyzing the Independent Samples T-test analysis results shown on Table 6, it is seen that p (p=.000) significance level is under.05. Therefore, there is a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups.

Difference between the Pre-test and Post-test Scores of the Experimental Group

The data that indicate whether the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group are distributed normally were shown on Table 7:

Table 7. Homogeneity Level of Experimental Groups' Post-Tests

Tests	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	n	P	Statistic	n	p
Pre-test	.142	12	.200*	.971	12	.917*
Post-test	.147	12	.200*	.965	12	.856*

p* > 0.05

Analyzing the normality results shown on Table 7; interpretation is performed through Shapiro-Wilk test table due to the fact that the data collected from the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group are fewer than 30. Considering the Shapiro-Wilk test, it is seen that p significance level ($p > 0.05$) is higher than 0.05. Therefore, an Independent Samples T-test was used in order to analyze whether there is statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group. Independent Samples T-test analysis results are indicated on the Table 8:

Table 8. Paired Samples T-test Analysis

Tests	N	X	S	df	t	p
Pre-tests	12	63.66	4.88	11	-15.816	.000
Post-tests	12	86.25	4.76			

p < 0.05

Analyzing Independent Samples T-test analysis results indicated on the Table 8 that p significance level ($p = .000$) is lower than .05. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental group.

Findings and Interpretation in Qualitative Data

Pre-Treatment

As a result of the answers given to the questions asked to the students, it was revealed that many students did not know much about blogs before the study, some of them just knew what there are used for and they used them very little. Especially, students expressed that they had never used blogs in the field of education before. Some of the answers given by the students regarding their perceptions and attitude towards blogs before the treatment were given below:

"Before writing on blog we can only write on it, then the other people can see it" (S1)

“I knew blogs before but I did not have my own one. While doing research there are articles on the blogs, therefore they are useful but I get bored when I write on the blog. Therefore, I did not have my own blog.” (S5)

“I used it very little. I had a blog before but I used it very little, I did not give much importance to it.”(S6)

While-Treatment

The experimental group students expressed that blogs are very useful after they started to use blogs in an active way in their writing classes. Students stated that they are writing longer and more meaningful texts day by day thanks to the opportunities that blogs offer. They stated that they did not write so well before the use of blogs, they got motivated thanks to the opportunity of following the other students' writings on the blogs and they were very useful in that their friends and teachers could write comments on their writings and correct when there are mistakes.

According to students who use blogs, the most important advantages of blogs are to see the other students' writings, the feedback that the teacher gives them for each week, others' comments on the writings of the owner of the blog, students can see their own mistakes and writing studies can be stored in the form of the draft. The answers given by the students regarding the benefits of blogs were indicated as in the following:

“I think it has improved a lot. I was really afraid of writing. However, now, after 8 weeks, I can write without any fear, therefore it improved a lot. Not only from here but I can also see the writings of my friends from other countries and I also learned new words as well” (S2)

“I think that they are very useful, too. Firstly, I did not write too much. Then when I saw your corrections, I started to write much more, I reviewed the corrections and I learned my mistakes. I saw my friends' writings. It was very useful for me and I liked it very much” (S8)

“I think our writings have improved a lot after we wrote on the blog. We learned new words, it is a problem for me because I know a lot of words but I did not know how to use them and it was good. I learned a lot; we came closer when everyone wrote about him/herself” (S11).

According to the students, blogs develop writing skills. They think that the most important aspects of blogs are to comment on the articles, feedback and corrections given by the teacher to them, to be able to see the other students' writings, the possibility of privacy and the opportunity of seeing their own mistakes. Some of the students' perceptions of blogs are given below:

“It's all important but the most important thing is to correct because then you can learn grammar. Interpretation is also important, if I read one, I can write comment and if there is a mistake on my comment, someone else can correct it so that we can learn new things” (S4).

“To write and your corrections. In order to write I can learn a lot of things such as grammar and vocabulary. After the corrections, I think my writings are so nice but when you write I see my mistakes” (S7)

Students focus especially too much on feedback and correction in terms of the blog treatment process. Students express that they firstly think that their writings which they share on blogs are correct but after teacher’s correction they realize their mistakes. In addition, students stated that seeing other students’ writings and finding the mistakes on their writings and writing comments to them on that mistakes help them improve themselves. Some of the students’ ideas about this issue were given below:

“Of course, that of friends are important but as they are not Turkish there are not so much. My mistakes are like habits, I know like that, but when I see the corrections I understood that it was not like that and changed it” (S7)

“Of course your corrections are good but I think that of friends are much better. They can make mistakes, too; they can think wrongly. After your correction, I think that you are certainly right so I do not care about, of course I do not learn anything but when the friends make comments I think about whether he/she thought right and wrote. Therefore, I think it is more useful” (S10)

Students have also faced some problems during the treatment process while using the blog. Some students stated that they had problems at the beginning due to the fact that they did not know how to use blogs. However, students stated that they had much difficulty writing due to the fact that the keyboard did not belong to one from their own alphabet. Students consider that it is useless to have a new page and to lose the old one while writing comments on the shared articles. In addition, students express that it is a limitation as there is always a need to have internet connection and a device in order to access the internet. Some of the students’ ideas about this issue were just given in the following:

“I use the computer and the internet a lot. Therefore, there is no problem. However, there is no Turkish keyboard, thus, it is difficult.” (S5)

“While writing comments it goes to another page, this is a problem if it is just like Facebook we can write more comments” (S6)

“Sometimes there is no internet connection, then, you wait and you are late. It is too slow” (S7)

Post Treatment

Students state that blogs improve their writing skills and in the next period they state that they will use blogs in order to share different writings. However, they point to a friend group in order to continue the blog. This reinforces the idea that blogs contribute to students’ socialization and cooperative learning. Some of the students’ opinions on this issue are given below:

“It is not for myself, but if it is done together, I use it” (S8)

“I want to keep this group, if I find something good I write but I will not use it for myself (S10).”

DISCUSSION

One of the skills that are needed to gain is writing in teaching Turkish as a second language. In the studies carried out so far; it was indicated that foreign students that learn Turkish as a second language should gain writing skills and the difficulties in terms of the improvement of writing skills were suggested in different research studies (see Büyükkiz, 2011; Tok, 2012; Selvikavak, 2006; Aygün, 1997; İter Genç, 2003; Tiryaki, 2013). In this study, the aim was to analyze the impact of the use of blogs on the improvement of writing skills of the students that have been learning Turkish as a second language. Blogs applications have turned students' printed writings into a more qualified one and changed foreign students' attitude towards writing in a positive way.

After the 2000s, major advances in computer and internet environments have been reflected on education. Many research studies have been conducted in order to analyze how this interaction will contribute to the education especially to the foreign language teaching (see: Genç, 2006; Pinkman, 2005; Tiryakioğlu and Erzurum, 2011; Lin, Groom and Ying Lin, 2012). As a result of this study, individuals who write through blogs create more qualified texts than the individuals who write without blogs. In a study, Vurdien (2013) reveals that students improve certain writing tasks, writing skills and points to the impact of feedback on teaching English as a second language. The data of this study are similar in terms of the improvement of students' texts regarding grammar, form and content. In the treatment, the writing studies done through blogs, were based on process-based approach. In many resources that include applied foreign language writing teaching, it was seen that process-based approach was used (see: Blanchard and Root, 2003; Folse and Pugh, 2010). These studies regarding English reveal that process-based approach enables learners to create more qualified sentences, more comprehensive and effective paragraphs. In this study, a process-based approach was used in teaching Turkish as a foreign language and positive results were obtained. Students' shared writings through blogs were examined both in the form of draft and by the researcher after being published and students were given feedback. Not only the researcher but also the other students who participated in the study have contributed to their friends' text quality by writing comments on the shared texts.

Goodfellow, Strauss & Puxley (2012) state that thanks to web 2.0 technologies, the position between the teachers and the students in terms of writing process has changed and teachers' position has turned into a more functional one. This study reveals that

students gain several writing skills through blogs outside of the classroom and teachers' position has changed through web 2.0 technologies. In addition, at the end of the research, students' perceptions of blogs suggest that blogs develop writing skills and motivate students to writing. Studies have shown that web 2.0 settings have improved students' attitude towards writing in a positive way (see Lovell & Halmer, 2013).

Kitchakaren (2012) reveals that students develop positive attitude towards writing through the use of blogs. The data of this study are also in line with other studies in that foreign language learners' attitude towards writing has improved through blogs. Seeing each other's writings on the blogs and writing comments on these studies have led them to write more accurate and better texts. Students have expressed that due to the fact that the teacher uses red to indicate the corrections in terms of the writings on blogs and as they do not want to see too much red on their pages, they have controlled their writing for several times. In addition, being given the feedback in time and as quickly as possible was seen to be effective in student learning.

CONCLUSION

In the study that was conducted to analyze the impact of the use of blogs on writing skills in terms of teaching Turkish as a second language, it was revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between the pre-test scores of the experimental group that performed blog applications and the control group that was instructed through traditional writing teaching. In both groups' writings, several mistakes such as title, page layout, language and expression, spelling and punctuation, sentence dips and incorrect word usage were identified.

Analyzing the post-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups after six-week treatment, it was revealed that there was a statistically significant difference on the behalf of the experimental group. During the treatment process, it was revealed that the experimental group students had difficulty preparing and sharing writing studies at the initial phase. During the process, students were observed to be more eager day by day and tried to write longer and more complex sentences than the previous week.

After the treatment, as a result of the post-test mean scores of both groups there was an increase and decrease in terms of the scores of the control group. However, although it was a little there was an increase on the general average scores of the class. Nevertheless, all of the students in the control group had higher scores than their pre-test scores and class average scores pointed to an increase on behalf of the control group. As a result of the study, due to the fact that there was a high difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group, it was revealed that blogs

contributed to writing skills of students that have been learning Turkish as a second language.

Analyzing the post-test scores of the control group, it was revealed that there was not much increase when compared to their pre-test scores. Through the finding, it was revealed that students' motivation was low in traditional writing classrooms and traditional writing teaching is not as effective as blogs in terms of the improvement of students' writing skills. Analyzing the post-test writing studies of the control group, it was seen that students did not care much about punctuation, title selection and language expression elements.

The control group students made efforts not to repeat the mistakes that they made before thanks to the feedback and corrections that they had throughout the writing process through blogs. The control group students stated that due to the fact that they were given different writing topics each week and they received feedback and correction by their teachers and instructors, they were more motivated for the class.

As a result of the focus group discussion, it was revealed that students' writing skills have improved and their interest on the courses have developed. In addition, control group students have stated that the most important advantages of blogs are to be able to write comment on other students' writings, continuous feedback and corrections given by the teacher, to be able to see other students' studies and to let only the students of that class see the writings through making adjustments on blogs.

After the focus group discussions that were performed with the experimental group students, it was revealed that students did not know how to use blogs before. Instead of this, students stated that it is easy to use blogs. The answers regarding the problems experienced by the students while using blogs indicated that the students had problems using the keyboard while writing and there was always a need for internet connection. It was revealed that some of the students had problems due to the lack of access to the internet and some of them had difficulty writing in Latin letters because they use a different alphabet in their native language.

SUGGESTIONS

Through the findings of the study regarding the use of blogs on the improvement of writing skills in teaching Turkish as a second language, these suggestions have been made:

- A writing activity can be done on blogs in Turkish as a Second Language classes once a week and texts can be evaluated in classrooms.
- The people who will benefit from this study can make more fun with the blog page through adding several shares such as text, pictures, video and music

- Due to the fact that blogs increase writing motivation, a basic level of blog can be created for the students and their improvement can be followed.
- Learners of Turkish can come together at a platform through creating an international student blog.

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