THE FLIPPED WRITING CLASSROOM IN TURKISH EFL CONTEXT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON A NEW MODEL

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ABSTRACT

Flipped learning, one of the most popular and conspicuous instructional models of recent time, can be considered as a pedagogical approach in which the typical lecture and homework elements of a course are reversed. Flipped learning transforms classrooms into interactive and dynamic places where the teacher guides the students and facilitates their learning. The current study explores the impact of flipped instruction on students' foreign language writing skill which is often perceived as boring, complex and difficult by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The study compares flipped and traditional face-to-face writing classes on the basis of writing performances. Employing a pre- and post-test true experimental design with a control group, the study is based on a mixed-method research. The experimental group consisting of 23 English Language Teaching (ELT) students attending preparatory class were instructed for fifteen weeks through Flipped Writing Class Model while the control group comprising 20 ELT preparatory class students followed traditional face-to-face lecture-based writing class. Independent and paired samples t-tests were carried out for the analyses of the data gathered through the pre- and post-tests. The results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of their writing performances based on the employed rubric. It was found that the students in the experimental group outperformed the students in the control group after the treatment process. The results of the study also revealed that the great majority of the students in the experimental group held positive attitudes towards Flipped Writing Class Model.

Keywords: **Flipped classroom, flipped learning, foreign language writing.**

INTRODUCTION

Being one of the productive skills, writing in a foreign/second language is attached great importance as learners are expected to reach an adequate proficiency level in written communication. Within this context, contemporary language learning and teaching methods encourage communication, therefore writing skill needs to be practiced in language classes as much as possible. For this reason, research on second language writing has gained recognition as a new field of research in recent years (Matsuda & De Pew, 2002; Silva & Brice, 2004). While research on second language writing has showed an increase, quantity of research on foreign language writing is still limited. However, in the last few years, research on foreign language writing has started to gain importance and has found a place in the literature (Ekmekci, 2014). The reason for this is that writing in English as a foreign language (EFL) context is assumed to be more difficult than writing in English as a second language (ESL) context. The distinguishing factors between EFL and ESL writing context are explained as the ESL and EFL learning environments, contrasting characteristics of each group of learners, strong emphasis on English language writing and research in the ESL context, and different teaching approaches in ESL and EFL instruction (Reichelt, Lefkowitz, Rinnert, & Schultz, 2012, cited in Ekmekci,

2014, p.1). Apart from the hardship in writing associated with the EFL context, the other problem rising in foreign language writing classes may be related to students' negative attitudes towards writing. Sharples (1993) indicated that the nature and complexity of writing in a foreign language context may demotivate the students, lead them to discouragement, and result in negative attitudes. Development of positive attitudes towards writing is an integral part of writing development (as cited in Ekmekci, 2014, p. 2).

Considering the above-mentioned disadvantages foreign language writing teachers may encounter in classes where students have limited opportunities to practice the target language, teachers should be encouraged to revise their styles of instruction to minimize difficulties and try to create more enjoyable, motivating, and self-reliant classes. Within this context, it is recommended that foreign language teachers integrate technology into the classroom (Purcell, Buchanan & Friedrich, 2013). As asserted by OECD report (2015), educators and learners should be provided with learning environments which support 21st-century skills to be successful in tomorrow's world. In this sense, integration of todays' students' Information and Communication (ICT) skills into learning process will probably yield better results in terms of language learning and production.

Being aware of the need to minimize the disadvantages in foreign language writing classes, foreign language teachers and researchers have been looking for new ways of providing writing instruction to make students better writers and improve their writing skills. Some researchers focused on students' perceptions and attitudes of foreign language writing instruction. For instance, upon analyzing 50 EFL students' composition, Rushidi (2012) concluded that writing is not attached so much importance by the students as speaking is, but different genres of writing can be used to help students improve their writing skills. Consequently, writing was no longer considered an intimidating process. McCarthey and Garcia (2005) stated that students' writing practices and attitudes toward writing were influenced by home backgrounds and classroom contexts. Kobayashi and Rinnert's (2002) findings on students' perceptions of first language literacy instruction and its implication for second language writing highlighted the L1 and L2 writing relations. The writers' aim was to clarify the gap between L1 instruction and its effects on L2 performances (as cited in Ekmekci, 2014, p. 6).

With regard to the new ways of instruction, several researchers (Arslan & Kizil, 2010; Cumming & Riazi, 2000; Disli, 2012; Hashemnezhad & Zangalani, 2012; Mirlohi, 2012; Pooser, 2004; Sun, 2010, cited in Ekmekci, 2014) have identified different methods of writing instruction to make writing courses more enjoyable, easier, interesting and motivating. The techniques they identified included processing instruction, launching web sites specifically for writing instruction, using blogging software, online writing, and employing computer-assisted writing activities. There were an adequate number of studies employing technology in writing classes, but the flipped writing class model has not been emphasized in the literature. For this reason, the current study introduces a relatively new method in EFL writing classes and tries to uncover potential benefits of flipped instruction by comparing it with the traditional face-to-face instruction.

FLIPPED LEARNING

Flipped learning is a relatively new instructional method which emphasizes effective use of class time by changing the traditional tasks of teachers and students inside and outside the classroom. In flipped learning, students' roles as passive lecture listeners change to active participants in classroom activities (Baepler, Walker & Driessen, 2014; Davies, Dean & Ball, 2013; O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015). They are expected to watch pre-recorded lecture videos or study notes the teacher provided them at home before coming to class. They can review videos at their own pace and pause to take notes or review an important point. In the classroom, students engage in active learning by studying in groups or

individually. The teacher is there to provide individualized help for troubleshoot and give feedback when needed. Students have a chance for additional practicing and support. The teacher's presence ensures that the students will be guided and helped whenever they are confused.

This method is called Flipped as it takes the presentation or lecture part which is traditionally done in the classroom and has placed that as pre-class work. In the flipped model, what is traditionally homework is done in the class where students can get immediate feedback and support as they try to apply what they have learned (Anderson, 2012). Internet connection may be a problem for some students. In order to overcome such problems, when teachers create the information to be used outside of class, they can easily put it on a CD for students to take home or students can download it to their memory cards directly. This will allow the students to watch the videos and follow the materials via their smart phones, tablets, or computers. A flipped classroom is actually one way of employing blended learning to facilitate how students can access information and get the maximum benefit by being fully involved in the learning process (Anderson, 2012, as cited in Ekmekci, 2014, p. 56-57).

Actual implementation of flipped learning dates back to 2007 when two chemistry teachers in Woodland Park, Colorado, Jonathon Bergmann and Aaron Sams began recording videos and screen casting in order to compensate for the lessons their students missed because of competitions and other events. They created videos of their lectures and posted them online for their Chemistry and Advanced Placement Chemistry classes during 2007-2008 school year. The instructors required the students to take notes on the videos and come to class with one thoughtful question to ask and share. After the teachers flipped their classroom, they reported that students began interacting more in the class and time could be used more efficiently and flexibly. They found that this new technique allowed them to spend much more time with students and to provide them with immediate feedback when needed.

The flipped classroom is one of the blended learning approaches which has been recently recognized as an alternative instructional strategy. It is described by Educause (2012) as

> ***'..... a pedagogical model in which the typical lecture and homework elements of a course are reversed. Short video lectures are viewed by students at home before the class session, while in-class time is devoted to exercises, projects, or discussions. The video lecture is often seen as the key ingredient in the flipped approach, such lectures being either created by the instructor and posted online or selected from an online repository' (p. 1).***

A pre-recorded lecture could be a podcast, other audio format, or a video. However, flipped learning is generally identified as including video lectures that can be accessed and viewed easily anywhere and anytime, which proves the ubiquitous nature of flipped learning. Bergman and Sams (2012) state that teacher-created videos that students watch are not the crucial point in flipped classrooms. Flipped learning is not about how to use videos in lessons, but about how to best use in-class-time with students. The ideas behind a flipped classroom are based on such concepts as active learning and participation, student involvement, blended course design, and course podcasting. The flipped classroom is a kind of workshop in which students can ask questions about lecture content, evaluate their skills, and interact with each other through hands-on activities. The role of instructors in flipped classrooms is to guide and advise students during the class hour (Educause, 2012).

Table 1. Comparison of Class Time in Traditional versus Flipped Classroom

Traditional Classroom		Flipped Classroom	
Activity	***Time***	***Activity***	***Time***
Warm-up activity	5 min.	Warm-up activity	5 min.
Go over previous night's homework	20 min.	Q&A time on video	10 min.
Lecture new content	30-45 min.	Guided and independent practice and/or lab activity	75 min.
Guided and independent practice and/or lab activity	20-35 min.		

According to Bergman and Sams (2012, p. 15), in the traditional model, students having completed their homework at home come to the class with a set of questions in their minds. After the beginning warm-up, teachers have to allot almost 20 minutes to deal with their homework related questions. At least 30 or 45 minutes is spent presenting the new content, and only 20 or 35 minutes is left for guided and independent practice. On the other hand, in the flipped classroom, after a 5- minute warm-up activity, because students having watched the related video-lecture at home, they can ask their questions about the new content and the teacher has about 10 minutes to answer questions. The remaining 75 minutes is allocated to guided and independent practice and/or lab activity. As evidenced by the table, flipped classroom provides students with more time to practice using extensive hands-on or problem-solving activities and exercises.

White (2012, as cited in Ekmekci, 2014, p. 58) provides an example of a flipped math class by focusing on the main differences between standard and flipped classrooms and what students are expected to do at home and at school.

Table 2. A Comparison of Standard and Flipped Math Class (White, 2012)

	At school	At home
Standard classroom	Student listens to teacher introduce new math topic	Student goes home and tries to do homework, often unsuccessfully and without the opportunity to get questions answered in a timely manner.
	At home	**At school**
Flipped classroom	Student watches brief video explanation of new topic online, or reads new material to be discussed in class the next day.	Student works on "homework" problems, with teacher answering questions or providing clarifying follow-up as necessary.

(Source: http://hybridclassroom.com/blog/?p=819)

As is seen in the table, expectations from the students about what to do at home and at school are reversed in the flipped class. In the flipped learning model, students get more chances to practice and do follow-up activities in-class-time after watching the videos created by the teacher. This leads to active learning, the creation of a student-centered, autonomous learning environment and provides opportunity for increased student and the teacher interaction.

Teachers in the flipped classrooms are defined as efficient, reflective, and masters at relationships. They are efficient because they can use time effectively. Much of the time is

devoted to classroom practice, thus increasing collaboration between students. They are reflective as they constantly monitor themselves and this fosters their teaching skills in terms of content and pedagogy. Students' success is accordingly affected positively. Teachers are also defined as masters at relationships since flipped learning enables them to build close interaction between students and parents (McCammon, 2013, as cited in Ekmekci, 2014, p. 67).

Relevant Studies

Studies on flipped classroom are limited, but studies on flipped language learning classrooms are much more limited. Very few studies investigate the impact of flipped learning on students' achievements and attitudes in foreign language classes. Basal (2012) introduced the implementation of a flipped classroom in English Language classes and offered some suggestions. After applying the flipped model in 2012-2013 fall semester in Foreign Languages Education Department of Yildiz Technical University in the "Advanced Reading and Writing I" course, he concluded that the attitudes of the majority of the students towards using a flipped learning model were positive. The researcher used students' excerpts of reflections to support his conclusion.

In another study similar to Basal's, Nicolosi (2012, as cited in Ekmekci, 2014, p. 73) focused on grammar teaching through flipped classroom techniques. The researcher emphasized the misunderstandings of flipped classroom by explaining that flipped classrooms are not all about watching videos at home and doing homework in class, but it involves a dramatic mentality change both in the delivery of instructional and in the students' learning process. Upon implementing flipped grammar lessons, the researcher revealed that the flipped method gave her a chance to become more aware of students' metacognitive abilities. She also added that the flipped model provided the students with teacher support when needed.

Likewise, Hung (2015) investigated the impacts of flipping the classroom on English language learners' academic performance, participation levels, and learning attitudes. Developing three different formats for flipped teaching, the researcher found that the structured and semi-structured flipped lessons enable learners to get better outcomes, to develop better attitudes, and to devote more effort to the learning process. More recently, Bauer-Ramazani, Graney, Marshall & Sabieh (2016) attempted to define and describe the flipped learning and investigated the possibilities to promote language acquisition in the context of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). They also reported the possible benefits and challenges of the new method.

Perez and Riveros (2014) reported on the challenges and successes teachers and learners experienced during two semesters in a Colombian higher education institution where flipped classrooms were used. The findings of the study revealed that both students and teachers adapted to new environments and tools, optimized available materials, and developed resourcefulness. Students' success was attributed to self-efficacy, self-regulation, personalized tutoring, and constant interaction with tutors. In another study, Huang and Hong (2015) investigated the effects of flipped English classroom on students' ICT and reading comprehension. The results indicated that students' ICT and reading comprehension skills improved significantly subsequent to flipped learning treatment process.

METHOD

This study is a mixed methods research in which the researcher applies both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. The quantitative model used in this study is a pre- and post-test true experimental design with a control group. The reason for choosing true experimental design is that there is random assignment of the subjects in the study. As for the qualitative model used in this study, the researcher makes use of semi-structured interview for obtaining necessary data about the efficiency of Flipped Writing Classroom model and the attitudes of the experimental group towards the new model.

Participants

The population of the study consists of students attending English Language Teaching (ELT) Preparatory Class at School of Foreign Languages, Ondokuz Mayis University in the fall semester of the 2013 – 2014 academic year. The sample of the study is composed of two groups attending the ELT Preparatory Class. One of these classes is assigned as the experimental group randomly and the other one constitutes the control group. The average level of the students is B1 (intermediate) in accordance with the descriptions of Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR). Experimental group consists of 23 students. 20 females and three males constitute this group. Control group is composed of 20 students, 16 of whom are females while four of whom are males. 17 students in the experimental students are graduates of Anatolian High School, while the remaining six are of Anatolian Teacher Training High School. Likewise, in the control group, seven students are graduates of Anatolian Teacher Training High School, while ten students are of Anatolian High Schools. Only one student reports that she graduated from a General High School, while two students graduated from a High School abroad.

Data Collection Process

As data collection instruments, scores on the argumentative paragraph rubric and responses on the semi-structured interview were used in the study. Disli's (2012) argumentative essay rubric was modified and adapted by the researcher. The adapted rubric consists of six dimensions; a) organization and structure, b) relevance and content, c) lexical range/word choice, d) grammar/sentence structure, e) mechanics, and f) overall section which evaluates the whole paragraph. The components of the rubric were determined according to the argumentative paragraph checklist students used for peer feedback and ideas emphasized in teacher-created videos. Cronbach's Alpha of the rubric in pre-test was calculated as, 863 *(N: 43), and, 954 (N: 43)* in post-test, which were acceptable values for implementation. To ensure the reliability and *face validity* of the rubric employed, two experts who were PhD candidates attending ELT PhD program in Gazi University and Hacettepe University were consulted and the components and items in the rubric were revised over time in accordance with the feedback obtained.

As the pre-test of the study, subjects in the experimental and control group were asked to write an argumentative paragraph about a topic they would choose from the three topics provided by the researcher. Subsequent to fifteen weeks' treatment through Flipped Writing Class Model, students were asked to write an argumentative paragraph again about the same topics provided in the pre-test. That constituted the post-test of the study. In the study, the preferred interview type was a semi-structured format and interviewees were encouraged to comment on open-ended pre-prepared guiding questions. Within this context, seven pre-prepared guiding questions were posed to the students in the experimental group after the treatment of Flipped Writing Class. The follow-up interview responses were recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

Treatment Process and Data Analysis

The students in the experimental group were introduced the Course Management System (CMS), Edmodo, which enabled them to follow the course requirements and to see the shared links by the teacher. The experimental group consisting of 23 ELT prep students were instructed for fifteen weeks (one semester) through Flipped Writing Class Model in which the typical lecture and homework elements of a course were reversed. The students viewed the teacher-created videos at home as homework and in-class time was devoted to exercises and paragraph writing practices. The control group consisting of 20 ELT prep students were instructed through a traditional lecture-based writing class. The same syllabus which was aligned with the pre-selected course book was followed by both groups. The writing lessons of both groups were offered by the researcher himself. At the end of the fifteen weeks of instruction, both groups were given the same post-test to determine the difference between and with-in the groups. The paragraphs written by the students in each group in the post-test were evaluated by three raters on the basis of the argumentative paragraph rubric.

The scores given by three raters using the argumentative paragraph rubric for each student were calculated by averaging the points and entered in Microsoft Excel and then transferred to the SPSS 20.0 software. In order to determine the significance level of pre-tests and post-tests between the experimental and control groups, *independent samples t-test* was employed (between-groups statistics). *Paired samples t-tests* were also utilized to analyze within-group data (within-group statistics). As Dornyei (2007) points out, *independent samples t-test* is used to compare the results of two independent groups whereas Paired samples t-test is used to compare two sets of results from the same group.

As for the qualitative data analysis, strategies like categorizing, coding, and interpreting were used. Qualitative data which were gathered through semi-structured interview were first recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The transcribed data were categorized in accordance with the content of the interviewees' responses. For more detailed information about the participants, data collection, analysis, and treatment process, please see Ekmekci (2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings and Discussion about Pre- and Post-Test Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups' Students

Prior to the flipped writing class treatment process, it was required to make sure that the experimental and control groups did not differ significantly in terms of writing proficiency. In order to ensure this, the same pre-test was administered to both groups in the first week of the fall semester. The scores were analyzed through independent samples t-test in SPSS 20.0 software. The below table presents the statistical analysis of the pre-test:

Table 3. Comparison of the Experimental and Control Groups' Pre-Test Results

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Experimental	23	42,02	6,57	41	-,680	,500
Control	20	43,40	6,61			

*p>,05

The analysis of the results of the pre-test indicates that the significance level is 0,500 (p>0,05). This result means there is not a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups with regard to proficiency in writing. That was an expected result since the level of both groups was accepted as B1 by the school administration. It is noted that the mean score of the control group is slightly higher compared to the score of the experimental group. After the treatment process which lasted for fifteen weeks, the same questions in the pre-test were addressed to the students in the experimental and control group as the post-test of the study and they were evaluated through argumentative paragraph rubric scored by three raters. The average post-test scores were analyzed through independent samples t-test. The following table presents the results of the post-test:

Table 4. Comparison of the Experimental and Control Groups' Post-Test Results

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Experimental	23	71,49	6,39	41	6,01	,000
Control	20	58,30	7,99			

*p<,05

As shown in the above table, the significance level is ,000 (p<0,05), which means that there is a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the students in the experimental and control groups. It means that students exposed to the flipped learning environment outperformed the students in the traditional writing class in terms of writing proficiency.

Pre- and post-test scores of the experimental group were statistically analyzed through paired samples t-test to ensure the efficacy of flipped writing class model on writing proficiency. The relevant table is presented below:

Table 5. Comparison of the Experimental Group's Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

Experimental	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Pre-Test	23	42,02	6,57	22	-21,083	,000
Post-Test	23	71,49	6,46			

*p<,05

As the table above makes it clear, the significance level is ,000 (p<0,05) which means that there is a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-tests of the experimental group. This indicates a remarkable progress in writing proficiencies of experimental group's students.

It was required to analyze the control group's pre- and post-test scores in order to determine their achievement in the traditional lecture-based writing class. With this aim, within-group analysis of pre-and post-test scores of control group was carried out through paired samples t-test. The related table is given below:

Table 6. Comparison of the Control Group's Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

Control	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Pre-Test	20	43,40	6,61	19	-8,126	,000
Post-Test	20	58,30	7,99			

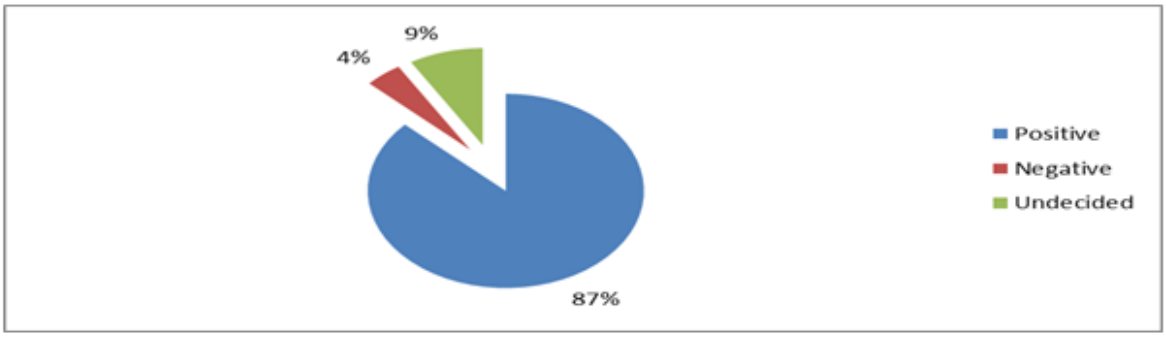
*p<,05

As indicated in the table above, there is a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-test scores of the students in the control group. The significance level is ,000 (p<0,05). This means that the traditional writing class has also a considerable effect on students' writing proficiency. This progress verifies the fact that traditional writing class had influence on students' writing performances; however, this influence was not as strong as in the experimental group's scores.

Findings and Discussion about the Semi-structured Interview

In the semi-structured interview, the students were posed the question 'Did you like using CMS (Edmodo)?' so as to learn their attitude towards CMS. The responses were categorized as positive, negative, and undecided after the content analysis. The relevant graph is presented below:

Graph 1. Students' Responses about their Satisfaction with CMS (Edmodo)

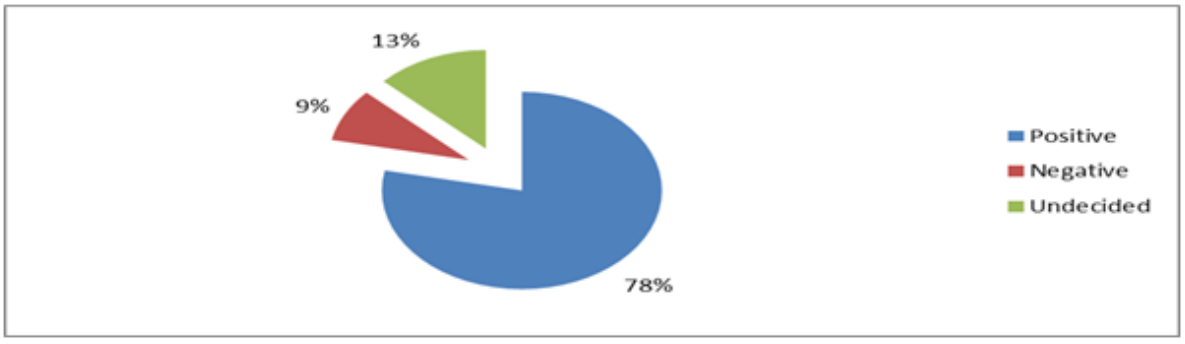


As the above graph indicates, the great majority (87%) of the students stated that they enjoyed using CMS. Only 4% of the students were unsatisfied with CMS. Some of the students' responses are as follows:

Student A: "Yes, I it was like Facebook. Reading my friends' comments about the videos was enjoyable."
Student B: "Yes, the teacher shared a lot of useful links in Edmodo. We were able to download all materials easily."
Student C: "Yes, I liked it. Thanks to Edmodo, I knew what the next lesson would be about beforehand."
Student D: "I'm not sure. There may be better system to follow the course"
Student E: "Yes, I downloaded Android application of Edmodo on my smartphone. I was able to follow Edmodo everywhere."

Concerning the students' attitudes towards the video lectures, the researcher included the question 'Did you enjoy the videos uploaded in YouTube?' in the semi-structured interview. The answers in the interview were categorized as positive, negative, and undecided. The following graph indicates the results:

Graph 2. Students' Responses about their Satisfaction with Video Lectures



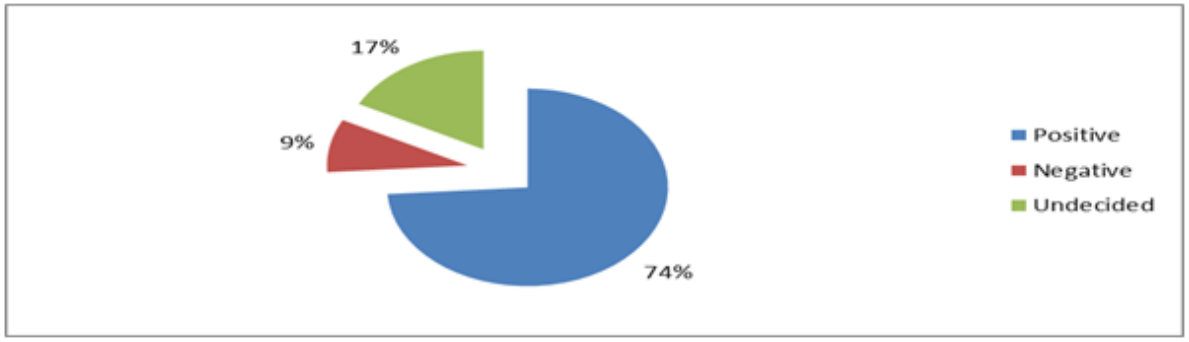
As it is clearly seen in the graph above, 78% of the students reported that they enjoyed the video lectures while 9% of them stated that they did not enjoy. Furthermore, 13% of the students reported that they were not sure about it. Some of the answers of the students are as follows:

Student F: "Yes, I really liked the videos in YouTube. They were very informative and enjoyable"
Student G: "Yes, they motivated me to write."
Student H: "Yes, watching my teacher at home was really interesting."
Student I: "Not really, I was bored when watching the videos."
Student J: "Yes, but they may be a little bit shorter."

These findings, by and large, verify the fact that the great majority of the students in the experimental group are in favor of the flipped writing class.

In the semi-structured interview, the researcher addressed the questions "Do you think you have learnt how to write better in Flipped Writing Class?" and "What are the pros and cons of Flipped Writing Class?" For the first question, the responses of the students were categorized as positive, negative, and undecided. The relevant graph is presented below:

Graph 3. Students' Responses about the Efficiency of Flipped Writing Class

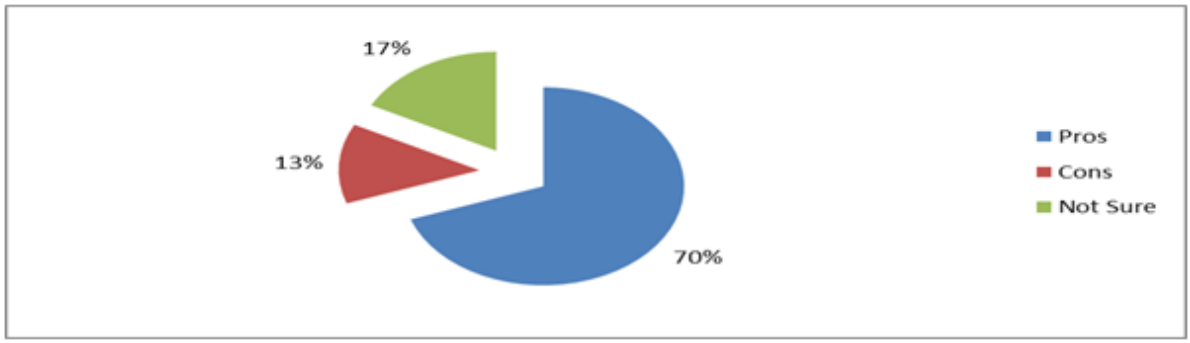


As demonstrated in the above graph, 74% of the students reported that they learnt how to write better in flipped writing class. Only 9% of the students held negative opinion about flipped writing class model. Some sample responses are presented below:

Student K: "I think I have learnt better as the videos are detailed."
Student L: "Yes, I learnt better, but it was useless while writing descriptive paragraph."
Student M: "I learnt how to write better thanks to flipped writing class. When I watched the videos, I remembered the detail more."
Student N: "Yes, I do. Watching the videos again and again is beneficial for us."
Student O: "I'm not sure about if it improved my writing or not"

In order to get a further idea about flipped writing class, the researcher addressed the second question which was related to pros and cons of learning. The responses were categorized on the basis of dominance of pros or cons. The below graph indicates the details:

Graph 4. Students' Responses on the basis of Pros and Cons of Flipped Writing Class



The above graph makes it evident that responses of 70% of the students were pros-dominant while 13% were cons-dominant. Furthermore, 17% were not sure about it. These results reveal that flipped writing class has more advantages than the disadvantages in the eyes of the students. Some of the responses are as follows:

Student P: "Pros: we have more time to practice in the class. I feel my writing skill is improved with flipped class. Cons: I can't say there is a con."
Student Q: "Pros: more active, based on students, up to date. Cons: sometimes boring"

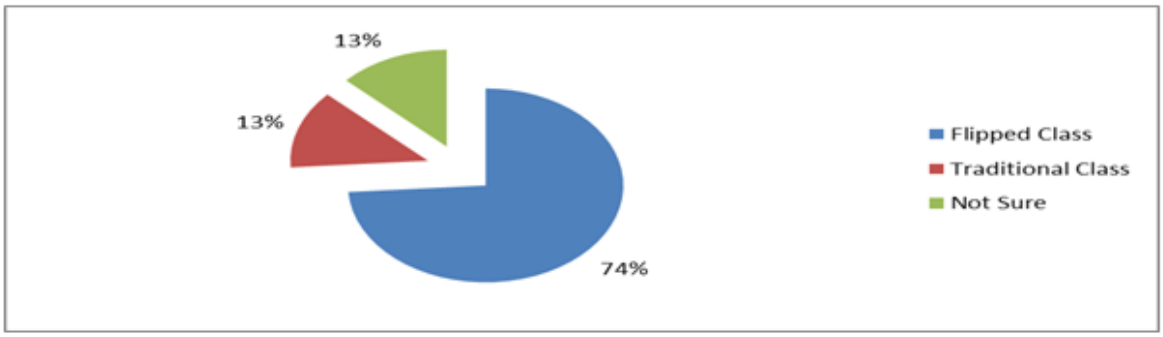
Student R: "Pros: it is beneficial. Students are active. It is enjoyable. Cons: It takes a lot of time to prepare for the lesson."

Student S: "Pros: You can watch the videos whenever you want. Cons: No cons."

Student T: "Pros: It seems to be beneficial. Cons: Slow internet connection. Videos are too boring. It takes time."

The other question posed to the students was *"If you had a chance, would you prefer Traditional or Flipped Writing Class?"* in the follow-up interview. The responses of the students were categorized on the basis of students' preferences as Flipped Class, Traditional Class, and Not Sure. The relevant graph is presented below:

Graph 5. Students' Responses about their Preferences of Flipped versus Traditional Class



As shown in the graph above, 74% of the students reported that they would prefer the flipped class to the traditional one. 13% were in favor of the traditional class while 13% were not sure about it. Some sample responses are as follows:

Student U: "If I had a chance, I would prefer the flipped class, because it is more enjoyable and funny"

Student V: "I would definitely prefer flipped class., because I can watch my teacher via my smartphone. I can watch the teacher even on the tramway while coming to the school. It is very beneficial."

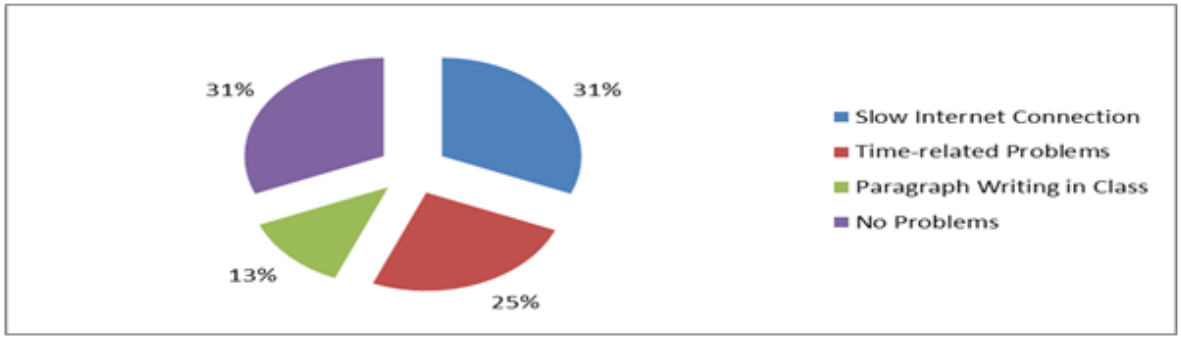
Student W: "I would prefer the traditional class. Face to face learning is better."

Student X: "I can't decide. I think both of them are useful."

Student A: "I think I would prefer the flipped one, because I could watch the lesson anytime I want."

In the semi-structured interview, the researcher also asked the students two more questions "Were there any problems you encountered during Flipped Writing Class? What are they?" and "Do you recommend any changes in the Flipped Writing Class model to improve learning?" The reason why these questions were posed to the students is that Flipped Writing Class is not without problems as in almost all learning environments. It is believed that if the problems are detected and eliminated as much as possible, the efficacy of any learning and teaching method can be fostered. The core source for determining the problems in a new learning environment is without doubt the students who have received the treatment. For these reasons, the first question asked students whether there were any problems they faced in Flipped Writing Class was responded by the students in the follow-up interview. The responses of the students were categorized as slow internet connection, time-related problems, paragraph writing in class, no problems. The percentage of each category is presented in the graph below:

Graph 6. Students' Responses with regard to Problems Encountered in the Flipped Class

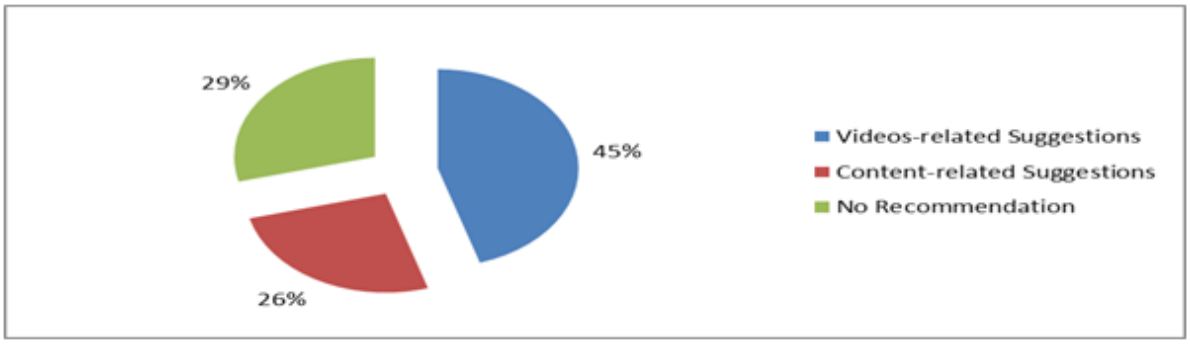


As the graph above makes it clear, 31% of the students reported that slow internet connection was one of the problems in Flipped Writing Class. In fact, some precautions against this problem were taken by the researcher at the beginning the semester. Students were recommended to download or copy the videos before the lesson; however, only a few students came to the researcher's office to get them. In addition, some students tried to open the videos via the internet connection provided by their GSM operators. Since the videos were high-definition in quality, some students may not have opened them. Furthermore, 25% of the students stated that watching video lectures took much time. This problem may be eliminated by shortening the duration of the video lectures or decreasing the number of videos. However, considering the time allotted to lectures in traditional lecture-based classrooms, the duration of the video lectures is relatively shorter.

As for the problem about paragraph writing in the class, 13% of the students reported that writing the paragraphs in the classroom made them nervous and prevented them from focusing on the words choice. However, when the close interaction between the teacher and the students themselves and the pros of providing individual conferences are considered, these problems seem to be recoverable. Lastly, 31% of the students reported that they did not encounter any problems during the treatment process, which is a plus for the research.

The second question about the suggestions of the students was responded in the semi-structured interview as well and the answers were categorized as videos-related suggestions, content-related suggestions, and no recommendation. The relevant graph is presented below:

Graph 7. Students' Responses about their Suggestions for Flipped Writing Class



As is evident in the graph above, 45% of the students provided suggestions about the videos. Some reported that the videos should be shorter while some suggested the videos should be funnier. Three students reported that videos may be created by native speakers or at least some videos may include native speaker lecture sections. Likewise, four students suggested the videos to be less in number. It can be inferred from the

suggestions of the students that especially native speaker-related recommendations can be integrated into the video lectures as a separate section.

As for the content-related suggestions, 26% of the students suggested that more sample paragraphs can be analyzed in the video lectures. In addition, they stated that too many writing practices sometimes cause boredom in the class. Lastly, 29% of the students had no suggestions for the Flipped Writing Class. For more detailed information on the quantitative and qualitative findings, please see Ekmekci (2014).

CONCLUSION

In the context of this study, the analyses of the findings prove that Flipped Writing Class Model improves students' writing proficiency more than the traditional lecture-based writing instruction. First of all, it can be concluded that employing flipped learning in writing classes is an effective way of instruction for improving writing skills of EFL students. Both quantitative and qualitative data confirm that Flipped Writing Class Model improves students' writing proficiency. When both groups' mean post-test scores are compared, it can be inferred that contribution of Flipped Writing Class Model to writing performances is greater than that of the traditional lecture-based model.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the study is that Flipped Writing Class Model is in line with the tenets of constructivist perspective in that it supports and encourages independent and collaborative learning. Since the students are expected to write their paragraphs and do the exercises inside the class, they need to interact with both the teacher and themselves. Particularly the pillars of social constructivism overlap the classroom applications of the Flipped Writing Class Model. Social constructivism puts a special emphasis on collaborative learning in which students learn from their peers and teachers. As in the case in the context of this research, in-class time is completely devoted to student to student and student to teacher interaction. This study has also proved that learning is personalized through Flipped Writing Class Model. It has been observed during the treatment process that almost each student has their own pace of learning and this new model has provided them to explore their needs and styles. Moreover, the study confirms that Flipped Writing Class Model provides more flexible learning environment, anytime or anywhere learning, for learners' needs. The study indicates that the students in the flipped class have had the chance of learning not only in the borders of the classroom but also everywhere the required technology has allowed.

The qualitative results especially prove that Flipped Writing Class Model is more enjoyable than traditional lecture-based writing classes. The results of the attitudinal questionnaire confirm a great deal of enjoyment in favor of flipped classroom. This does not mean that traditional classes are always boring and not interesting, but the results clearly indicate that flipped class model motivates the students more in terms of their eagerness to write paragraphs. Negative attitudes cited in the literature towards writing have been also found to be changed via Flipped Writing Class Model to a great extent.

The other conclusion that can be drawn from the study is that learner autonomy is supported in Flipped Writing Class Model as well. The reason for this can be attributed to students' taking on responsibilities for their own learning. In the context of the present study, each student has been assumed responsibilities for watching the video-lectures as homework. It is believed that this can help them to be more autonomous learners.

As for the advantages concerning the feedback, the study indicates that the students could get more immediate feedback together with individual conferences, oral teacher feedback, and written comments thanks to Flipped Writing Class Model. As the philosophy behind the flipped classroom makes it clear, flipped learning is not just the recording of video-lectures. It is more than that. In-class time can be used more effectively and profitably by dealing with each student individually. The students have had the

opportunity of receiving individual feedback by means of individual conferences, oral and written feedback. In brief, flipped model has been proved to provide more peer, individual, and teacher feedback.

The fifteen weeks treatment process makes it evident that Flipped Writing Class Model is totally student-centered. The role of the teacher is a guide or facilitator rather than an authority. Students determine the pace of the lesson. In addition, the flipped model provides active learning environment since the videos can free the teachers and leave the class time for engaging and hand-on activities. In the context of this study, it has been observed that almost all of the students have been active during the class activities working in groups, helping each other, and interacting with the researcher. This active classroom environment has been even moved to outside the class via CMS where the students have had the opportunity of synchronous interaction between themselves and the researcher.

The study has also yielded similar results with most of the current studies and research in the literature. The positive attitudinal findings about flipped learning by several researchers (Wilson, 2013; Johnson, 2013; Basal, 2012; Smith, 2013; Bergman & Sams, 2013) overlap the findings of the current study in that the students hold positive attitudes towards flipped learning environments. Likewise, Davies, Dean, and Ball's (2013) findings about the students' satisfaction with flipped learning have also revealed similar results in favor of flipped learning with the findings in the study. As for the achievement dimension, the study is in line with the findings of Mason, Shuman, and Cook (2013); Schwanki (2013); Baranovic (2013); and Bergman and Sams (2013) in that flipped learning increases the students' success to a certain extent.

The study is limited to two groups of students attending the ELT preparatory classes offered by a state university in Turkey. It is also limited to one semester of treatment process for Flipped Writing Class. In addition, the treatment process is limited to the randomly-assigned experimental group in EFL context in Turkey.

To sum up, Flipped Writing Class Model has proved to improve students' writing proficiency and had a positive impact on students with regard to foreign language writing skill. Further research can be conducted to determine the efficacy of the flipped model in improving reading skill or reading and writing skills together. It is believed that the new model will contribute much to foreign language writing classes if applied delicately.

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