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# **Online Peer Feedback and Learner Autonomy in English as a Foreign Language Writing Classes**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **ONLINE PEER FEEDBACK AND LEARNER AUTONOMY IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITING CLASSES**

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Various studies have been done in the fields of learner autonomy and feedback in English as second/foreign language (L2) classrooms. Research on feedback has put forward that although there is a student tendency to favour teacher feedback; positive effects of peer feedback have also been suggested in L2 writing lessons. Arguments regarding autonomy justify that learner autonomy is positively correlated with the active involvement of the learners in learning processes. Based upon the arguments about peer feedback and autonomy and inspired by the use of technology in language classrooms, hypotheses have been formulated to investigate the relationship between peer feedback and learner autonomy in the L2 writing classrooms on an online platform. Using a quant-qual design and a variety of sources including the students work on the online forum, two questionnaires and an interview, data was collected from 14 students taking English as a foreign language writing lessons and the teacher of the course in a period of five weeks. The results proved the existence of positive effects of peer feedback on the learner autonomy, as well as a slight positive effect of its being an online activity.

**Keywords:** Autonomy, Learner Autonomy, Peer Feedback, Online Peer Feedback, Online Forum

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0. PRESENTATION**

In this chapter, the background to the study, the aim of the study and the method of the study will be presented.

#### **1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Autonomy is my main interest. I feel confident to say that it is the key to solve all problems we encounter both as a student and as a teacher in classes. Autonomous learners are qualified learners who know how to benefit best from their learning situations. For this reason, as being an English Language teacher as well, I have always sought for the ways to foster autonomy in my students. I presented them with many different kinds of activities during the lessons and I observed them. In the end, I realised that they were more creative, more productive, more confident and more responsible when they were working in groups. They were creative, because there was not a teacher in their group whose idea was immediately accepted as the best. Therefore, they valued each others' ideas equally and they chose how to develop their task together. As a result of this, they became more confident. Furthermore, they were more responsible in group work when taking actions, because they were aware of the fact that the success of the group depended on all of the members of the groups. Besides this, there were other factors like their self-perceptions and interpersonal relationships. Each member wanted to stand out in their groups; therefore, they created their own competing atmosphere. However, it is not immediately easy to say that these kinds of

activities helped them to be autonomous learners. Likewise, even if it helped them to be autonomous, it cannot be said to what degree these activities helped.

Yet, there is a considerable amount of studies done on learner-centered activities and autonomy. Many researchers have contributed to our understanding of the effectiveness of learner-centered activities, and they concluded that ‘learners’ active and independent involvement in their own learning (autonomy) increases motivation to learn and consequently increases learning effectiveness’ (Dickinson, 1995).

Feedback is regarded as one of the group work activities when it involves learner groups exchanging feedback in their groups guided by teacher (peer feedback). And it captures my attention, because it is one of the few types of group work activities which require students to take different roles in the same activity, in explanation, they enjoy giving feedback and at the same time they receive feedback, while teacher organizes the learning situation and guides students as to give effective feedback and benefit from received feedback. For its being multi-directional group work activity, a plenty of research have been conducted to understand how to apply it best in classrooms. As for autonomy, there is an even greater amount of studies to understand what it is, how important it is and how to foster it.

However, it is not common to find studies which investigate the relationship between writing classroom activities and learner autonomy; consequently, it is far more difficult to find specific writing classroom activities like peer feedback and autonomy discussed in the same study. Likewise, scales which measure the development of autonomy in classrooms are rare.

In my research, I came across two important studies which are at the same time relevant to my research in this field. One is a project called *OMALL (Online Measure of Autonomy in Language Learning)* which investigates learner autonomy in language learners

who are in, or about to start, tertiary education<sup>1</sup>. The second one is *Development of a Self-Rating Scale of Self-Directed Learning* (Williamson, 2007) which reports on the development of a self-directed learning scale<sup>2</sup> and future possible benefits of using it as a diagnostic test to enhance requisite skills for learners to be lifelong learners.

To sum up, autonomy is important in effective learning. Fostering autonomy depends on the amount of students' involvement and commitment in the learning process and can be promoted by learner-centered activities. When conducted in learner groups, both giving and receiving feedback is regarded as a learner-centered activity in second/foreign language (L2) writing lessons. If it can be proved positively, the relationship between student-centered activities and autonomy may help us design better courses for learners.

## **1.2. THE AIM OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to find out any relationship between online peer feedback and learner autonomy, if there is any, in English as a foreign language (EFL) writing lessons. With the help of findings, improved lessons plans can be designed to help learners be autonomous.

## **1.3. METHOD**

In order to carry out the study, first of all, literature regarding learner autonomy and feedback will be reviewed. Afterwards, the first questionnaire (Diagnostic Questionnaire) will be conducted to understand the background of the learners. The learning activity; peer feedback will be implemented on an online forum and the second questionnaire (Online Peer

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<sup>1</sup> The study is still being conducted; however, the questionnaire is available at:  
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/research/groups/ellta/circal/omall/>

<sup>2</sup> In the article *Self-directed learning scale* is used as a synonym for autonomous learning.

Feedback Questionnaire) will be applied to detect any autonomous behaviours in the subjects. Following, the data will be gathered from the questionnaires, the work on the online forum and the teacher of the course. Finally, the data will be analysed and interpreted.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.0. INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the literature on autonomy will be reviewed. Under the term autonomy, autonomous learners and the importance of autonomy in L2 and L2 writing classrooms will be examined. Then the literature on feedback will be covered. Examining the teacher and the peer feedback, the importance of peer feedback in L2 and L2 writing classrooms will be discussed. Finally, the relationship between peer feedback and learner autonomy will be explored.

#### **2.1. CHANGING TREND IN EDUCATION**

The aim of education is to help individuals in learning knowledge and reshaping it in the most appropriate way to improve their lives. Heraclitus pointed out approximately 2500 years ago that ‘Nothing endures but change’<sup>3</sup>. Life is changing and so are the ways to reach knowledge. Nowadays, education is not limited to school buildings depending on a teacher as the source of information and receiving it in periods of time. Instead, people may continue their learning in their chosen place without any time limitation.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Heraclitus>

Unlike the past, when books were available only in stationeries and libraries, today, besides those places knowledge is available almost everywhere with the help of new media technologies i.e. computers, laptops, mobile phones etc. and internet. In the comfort of home, people can wander between the shelves of online libraries, read books, attend online educational courses or just satisfy their curiosity through online search engines in minutes. However, this new age of sharing knowledge not just brings desired information; on the contrary, most of the time, it is inevitable to avoid being exposed to information which is ‘useless and undesirable’ referred as ‘information pollution’ by Wikipedia<sup>4</sup>. Online search engines on internet show thousands of pages up with the searched vocabulary/phrase, and amongst those pages there are plenty of undesirable and unnecessary information which may distract people from their aim and even mislead them. Therefore, it is important for people to be able to determine what they actually need and in which ways they may obtain it.

The relatively new term ‘Lifelong Learning’ serves right for this non-bordered education. The in-depth description of lifelong learning is ‘all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective’<sup>5</sup>. In the application, individuals are counselled during their education to find their own interests and learning strategies, so that in their future life, they can decide for themselves and continue their own learning. This awareness of what to insert into their life and what to eliminate can be realized by helping individuals become autonomous learners.

In brief, technology has changed the way we reach information and this change emphasised autonomous learning more than ever. Lifelong learning is a continuous progress

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<sup>4</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information\\_pollution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_pollution)

<sup>5</sup> Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning Reality. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities. (COM (2001) 678 Final)

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2001:0678:FIN:EN:PDF>

of a bunch of learning activities and one way of promoting lifelong learning is to help people become autonomous.

## **2.2. AUTONOMY IN L2 EDUCATION**

Autonomy showed up as a field to be researched in studies in the 70s, first spotted in the *Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project*, established in 1971 (Benson 2001; cited in Balçıkanlı, 2006). Deeper understanding of what autonomy is and what its function is in education allowed many scholarships to benefit from new insights in the field of L2 education. With the appearance of new motives to learn languages due to the changing needs of the world at around that time, traditional methods to teach and learn L2 were revised. Communication, contextualising the target language, needs analysis and emotional state of learners are only a bunch of the new terms that have entered into the terminology during this new era of L2 education.

In this new understanding of L2 education, it was inevitable for the roles of the teacher and the learner to change in the classroom. 'Teaching an L2' gave its place to 'learning an L2'. Scholars submitted plenty of research on how L2 is learnt. They tried to understand how the data is processed in the brains of the learners, and besides other elements, they discovered the importance of motivation on the process of learning, ultimately giving way to studies concerning learner autonomy. In this concept, the learner came into prominence in educational environments. In order to involve learners actively in the learning processes learner-centered educational materials and activities started to be developed. Teachers became grounds, and learners became figures in classrooms. In other words, similar to the figure-ground organisation by Gestalt, learners became outstanding figures as active elements in learning, while teachers remained in the surrounding area to facilitate learning. The aim of the teachers was to promote autonomy in learners, so that they would be independent learners who knew how to learn.

### **2.2.1. WHAT IS LEARNER AUTONOMY?**

‘It is difficult to define concepts like ‘autonomy’ and ‘independent learning’ states Gardner (1999), and explains why in three reasons. According to the author, the first reason is that different writers have different definitions of the terms, secondly, these concepts are still being debated, therefore new definitions are still being generated and finally, they ‘have developed independently in different geographical areas’ (Gardner,1999), thus, they are described in different terms which are often similar in meaning.

However, in the literature of autonomy, one definition stands out with its frequency of citation (Dickinson, 1995; Littlewood, 1996; Gardner, 1999; Cotterall, 2000; Sert, 2006; Reinders, 2011). Holec (1981; cited in Gardner, 1999) defines learner autonomy as ‘the ability to take charge of one’s own learning’. Then he explains it as ‘to take charge of one’s own learning is to have, and hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning’ (Holec 1981; cited in Benson, 2001:48).

In order to understand learner autonomy better, autonomous learners should be explored, too. According to Little (2003), they ‘understand the purpose of their learning programme, explicitly accept responsibility for their learning, share in the setting of learning goals, take initiatives in planning and executing learning activities, and regularly review their learning and evaluate its effectiveness’ (cited online). Moreover, they are motivated intrinsically; the golden key for learning. In classrooms, these self-determined learners take actions in their learning and they are the only people who are responsible for these actions. They are able to evaluate the tools and the strategies at the end of their learning and accordingly they improve the poor ones, while they maintain the ones that worked for them in their problem solving.

Thus far, autonomy and autonomous learners have been mentioned. As for the content of autonomous learning, Benson (2001:49) argues that ‘in autonomous learning ... the content of the learning should be freely determined by the learners.’ They should choose what will

serve them to reach their goals. For example, in a reading lesson in an L2 classroom, they may decide on an interesting topic to read and reflect on it to maintain their motivation or on a scientific text to learn specific vocabularies. All in all, it is clear that autonomous learning covers a wide range of other concepts in education, from setting the objectives to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the activities as well as the learning itself.

Yet, in the explanations above it may be understood that learners are totally isolated in their learning. On the contrary, autonomous learners are guided by their teachers like any learner would be. The difference is in their being aware of their motives to learn and their freedom of choice in their own learning situations which may include educational materials and activities, learning styles and strategies, and even the environment in which education will take place. Little (1990; cited in De Florio-Hanzen, 2006) draws a comprehensive frame around what autonomy is not by saying ‘Autonomy is not a synonym for self-instruction; in other words, autonomy is not limited to learning without a teacher. In the classroom context, autonomy does not entail an abdication of responsibility on the part of the teacher; it is not a matter of letting the learners get on with things as best as they can. On the other hand, autonomy is not something that teachers do to learners; that is, it is not another teaching method.’

### **2.2.2. THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNER AUTONOMY IN L2 CLASSES**

Autonomy is of great importance in any field of life. But, it gains more importance when it comes to education as it forms future adults. When we talk about education in general, we talk about formal education rather than private courses giving private lessons to individuals. It is not surprising that we hear students who are attending formal education of a country usually complain about almost anything regarding school as they are present there compulsorily. Nevertheless, they can find motives to learn school subjects like maths, history, physics, music etc., because they ease their daily life. They show immediate benefits for learners. However, L2 lessons are different than these subjects, particularly if we think of a settlement where the target language is foreign rather than second. They do not provide immediate help to learners. For this reason, it is important to explain why learners are learning

an L2. In this way, they may be aware of their reasons to learn it. This idea may sound 'perfect', but, language is itself different from any other subject. In other words, people learn for a wide variety of reasons such as to communicate, to be intellectual, or simply because they have to pass examinations. In a classroom consisting of at least 15 learners, it is difficult to motivate them by supplying them all with the same motives. Therefore, learners should be aware of their own reasons to learn L2 to maintain their interest to the mentioned course. Then they are able to set their own goals and struggle to reach those goals with proper guidance from their teachers and they become autonomous. This will bring success, because they will be able to keep their motivation which will be discussed later. That is why autonomy in L2 classes is important.

Another aspect we may extract from the descriptions of autonomy and autonomous learners that stresses the importance of autonomy in L2 classes is that autonomous learners have the capacity to take actions in their learning and carry the responsibilities of their actions. Thus, besides other professions, it captures the attention of many scholars in the field of L2 learning and teaching (e.g. Holec, 1981; Cotterall, 1995; Littlewood, 1996; Thanasoulas, 2000). According to Littlewood (1996), this popularity is not surprising, because the concept is closely related with the active involvement of learners, learner-centered methods, and independent learners in learning and using the target language, which are primary educational worries of teachers.

The above mentioned three components which are the active involvement of learners, learner-centered methods and independent learners in both learning and using the language are the basics of a constructivist approach in teaching methodology. In constructivism individuals are expected to experience the subjects to be learnt by themselves. From their experiences, they are supposed to draw consequences and develop new syntheses amongst their old knowledge and these new conclusions.

According to Sherman and Kurshan (2005), 'constructivism is based on the conception that we learn by relating new experiences to our prior knowledge; we construct new understandings based on what we already know'. That is, knowledge has a cumulative

feature with bonds holding together the old and the new information allowing the creation of new knowledge. In the educational environment, this approach requires learners to play an active role in their learning situations to gain experiences and deduce conclusions from these experiences to use in and, add on, their future learning situations. To reach the objectives in a class in which constructivist approach is applied the teachers are expected to insert learner-centered activities in their lessons to allow their students involve themselves in the learning activities first hand. In a classroom environment like this, we can talk about autonomy, because learners would be able to make their own decisions about their very personal strategies on how to be successful in their learning by experience and failure. Due to the fact that learners would discover their own capacities and strategies, the quality of their learning increases. For this reason, autonomy is an important element of an L2 classroom.

Moreover, when learners are autonomous, they are internally motivated. That is, they do not need any external stimulation to help them remain focused on their goals. Due to this fact, motivation; particularly internal motivation, is an important prerequisite for learning. Dörnyei (1994) gives importance on it by stating the following in the first sentence of his article: ‘Motivation is one of the main determinants of second/foreign (L2) language learning achievement’. And he elaborates this sentence in another work of his in 1998: ‘Motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2<sup>6</sup> and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process.’ Therefore, motivation is important in the earlier stages of learning as it makes learners be enthusiastic and ready to take in knowledge as well as in later stages to maintain the same performance throughout learning. As for the description of the motivated individual, Dörnyei (2003) suggests ‘The motivated individual expends effort, is persistent and attentive to the task at hand, has goals, desires and aspirations, enjoys the activity, experiences reinforcement from success and disappointment from failure, makes attributions concerning success and or failure, is aroused, and makes use of strategies to aid in achieving goals’. The description is actually the description of the ideal learner who creates the best education atmosphere for efficient learning to take place. However, even though they have the same objectives to reach in the same environment (i.e. classroom), learners are all individuals. For this reason, the same stimulation from external sources such as teacher,

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<sup>6</sup> L2 refers to second/foreign language.

computer, course book, examination, family, job etc. would not have the same affect on all learners. In order to keep their attention and interest on the course until the end, they need to be aware of their own reasons to be present there. Therefore, educators should search for ways to help them realise what they are doing and why they are doing it, so that they can trigger autonomy in learners by helping them to be motivated internally. In this way, every learner would be able to detect his/her own needs and accordingly tailor the necessary conditions for his/her learning by himself/herself . Moreover, because they are the determiners in their learning, they do not get disappointed from their mistakes and they know how to appreciate their success while testing different strategies to reach their objectives.

To sum up, learner autonomy is a crucial contributor to success in L2 classes. When the learners are autonomous, they take the responsibility of their own learning. They are motivated in the initial period of learning and they are able to keep their motivation throughout the learning processes which brings about quality learning.

### **2.3. FEEDBACK**

Feedback appears in many domains from work to school and we constantly receive and produce it either intentionally or unawares. The definition of it in the Webster's New World Dictionary (2001) is that it is 'a process in which the factors that produce a result are themselves modified, corrected, strengthened, etc. by that result'. It has three functions which are praise, criticism and suggestion (Hyland and Hyland, 2001). People may receive appreciation on their work or they may be criticised and in both situations they may be given suggestions for further development of their work. In other words, according to the feedback received, we improve the quality of our product and/or appreciate it. Similarly, we may ourselves be the ones giving feedback to the products of other people.

Furthermore, feedback is a significant component of a successful L2 classroom. Besides other descriptions, 'in the purely instructional sense, feedback can be said to describe any communication or procedure given to inform a learner of the accuracy of a response,

usually to an instructional question' (Mory, 2004:745). With the help of feedback the producer of a piece of L2 can be informed how well s/he has produced. Accordingly, s/he realises which of the parts are already successful and which parts are to be improved. In this way, learners have the opportunity to revise their product by paying attention to the comments of different individuals rather than only their own.

Feedback may appear in various forms like oral and written, hot (immediate) and cold (delayed), corrective and appreciative or peer and teacher. Moreover, it can be used in different skills lessons, i.e. writing, reading, listening and speaking. For example, while a hot and oral comment would work better in speaking lessons, a cold and written one would be preferred in writing lessons. It can be used in any learning situation no matter what the subject is.

In conclusion, feedback supplies another point of view to a product. In education, it informs learners how well they do in their studies, and it can take various forms.

### **2.3.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF FEEDBACK IN L2 CLASSES**

In the past, the final works of learners were the criteria for the success of learners. If they produced a good assignment; a product, they were regarded as successful students. However, with a deeper understanding of L2 learning and teaching in recent years, it has been understood that it is also essential to evaluate the processes and give feedback on these processes. Owing to this view, now we have tools like *European Language Portfolio*, which aims to give L2 learners the chance of reflecting upon their own learning and receiving feedback from their teachers. In this way, learners become aware of their own learning and teachers can supply learners with feedback which helps them revise their work and improve it if necessary.

### 2.3.2. THE IMPORTANCE OF FEEDBACK IN L2 WRITING CLASSES

Writing is one of the two productive skills in language learning. Unlike the other productive skill speaking, its production requires more elaborated use of language. This feature of writing makes it tedious for learners of an L2. Therefore, the need to implement learning activities which can facilitate learning in writing classrooms becomes more of an issue.

During the classes of productive skills, learners usually have difficulties. For many different reasons such as being shy, not confident in his/her knowledge etc., learners prefer to remain passive. On the contrary, in these classes students are expected to generate meaningful sentences and chunks to convey their ideas. The production of these sentences requires good control over vocabulary and phonology, and grammar accuracy<sup>7</sup>, and this requires accretion of language to some extent. For this reason, it is not a surprise that they are challenging skills.

However, when it comes to writing, it is harder to grasp than speaking by students. It is more elaborated than speaking. For example, during speaking activities, they are able to give the message they want by intonation. A student can ask whether something has been completed or not by forming a positive sentence like 'Finished'. To do this, s/he needs only to pitch up his/her voice in the last syllable. However, a written production requires the question form 'Have you finished?' or at least a question mark at the end of the sentence: 'Finished?' Otherwise the reader would not be able to understand the function of the sentence in the text. Regarding the rules of writing, it should not be a surprise for us that writing is harder than speaking.

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<sup>7</sup> National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (2004). The Productive Skills Speaking and Writing. Integrate Ireland Language and Training  
[http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/curriculum/inclusion/productive\\_skills.pdf](http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/curriculum/inclusion/productive_skills.pdf)

In their study at one of the U.S universities Zhu and Flaitz (2005) found that ‘faculty members unanimously perceived productive skills, particularly writing, to be the most challenging for international students’. In the same study Zhu and Flaitz (2005) mention a faculty member who “claimed that the extremely motivated students had ‘no trouble keeping up with the rest of the class on readings, class discussions, and projects’; however, ‘the most difficulty is in their written assignments, such as papers’”. This finding is what I used to encounter in my writing classes as well. Students were good at brainstorming activities and had a plenty of interesting and creative ideas to write, but, even though they could form sentences, they could not put their sentences together in a comprehensive and coherent way.

Lastly, writing activities<sup>8</sup> are carried out mostly individually, while speaking involves at least 2 learners or a learner and a teacher. This individuality brings other difficulties alongside. Take as an example an L2 classroom in which the main objective is to correct mistakes. When there is a mistake in the written product, it cannot be realised immediately by the writer even during the revising step, because s/he is a learner of L2. S/he needs to have somebody to read it to understand if s/he is able to convey what s/he really wants and this can only be done through either teacher or peer feedback.

In English as an L2 writing lessons, feedback is ‘input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision’ (Keh, 1990). It is clear from the description that the writer of a text receives comments from an external source and accordingly revises his/her text. This constitutes the main importance of feedback in writing lessons. In traditional classes learners receive instructions; however, they need assistance as well. The role of the teacher is not only to correct the final texts, but also to give guidance during on-writing activities. In this way, learners have a better understanding of their mistakes and, they can do remedial exercises. What is more, if they are appreciated on what they do well in their written works by their teacher or any other supplier of the feedback, they gain self-confidence as well.

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<sup>8</sup> Here, my intention is academic writing in writing lessons, not instant messages and the like.

Like it is given by teachers, feedback can be given by learners' peers as well. In L2 writing classes, the level of students' progress differs as time passes, no matter how equal they were when they started the course. The reason for this is that every individual has his/her own way of learning; in other words, our minds cannot process the same information from the same source of information in the same way. Because of this difference, their speed and quality of learning differs, too. Likewise, if they are asked, their comments on their peers' texts will be different. Some may pay attention to grammatical accuracy, while others may be interested in meaning. By taking into account the reviews by their peers, the writers' attentions can be focused on the parts that they have not noticed before, which would help them revise these points again adding to their coherence and comprehension of their texts.

In brief, the productive skill writing requires more attention to the proper use of language than the other productive skill speaking. Instead of receiving corrected papers from their teacher, students need assistance also on-writing activities. With the help of feedback received from teachers and/or peers during the process of writing, students can compose quality texts in L2.

### **2.3.3. PEER FEEDBACK VERSUS TEACHER FEEDBACK IN THE ENGLISH AS AN L2 WRITING CLASSES**

Peer and teacher feedback and their effectiveness on learning have been one of the main topics discussed by L2 researchers. Many have tried to understand how peer and/or teacher feedback shapes learning, while others have tried to answer which one is superior in terms of efficacy to the other. However, the findings of this research could not prove an exact superiority of one over the other.

Paulus (1999) answered his research question 'How do peer and teacher feedback affect student revisions in a multiple- draft, process-approach writing classroom?' as 'both peer and teacher feedback contributed to the revision process, with teacher feedback influencing more changes and being prioritized more by students'. Similarly, Connor and

Asenavage (1994; cited in Miao, Badger and Zhen 2006) found that teacher feedback is more effective when compared with peer feedback.

However, Keh (1990) suggests that besides other advantages mentioned in the article, her 'students felt the peer feedback was useful in gaining a conscious awareness that they were writing for more than just the teacher.' Likewise, Arndt (1993:101) found that the majority of the students engaged in what the article calls 'team writing' enjoyed it and 'all the members of the team have a vested interest in the production of the text from its inception to its completion, with a joint responsibility for the overall quality of the writing.'

Lastly, Chaudron (1984:10; cited in Tsui and Ng 2000) found that neither of them<sup>9</sup> helped L2 learners to improve in their revisions.

All in all, it can be said that there is no constancy in the answer to the question: Which is superior? Teacher or peer feedback? Without regarding the recentness of the research, scholars found various results about their supremacy to one other. However, there is a general tendency that teacher feedback found favour with learners. Finally, we can safely arrive at the conclusion made by Zhang (1995) who in his review of 11 empirical studies mentions that 'peer feedback, as claimed by its advocates, is perceived as beneficial; on the other, teacher feedback is generally seen as far more credible and appealing than peer feedback to ESL<sup>10</sup> writing'.

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<sup>9</sup> Neither teacher nor peer feedback.

<sup>10</sup> By ESL, the author refers to English as a second language.

## **2.4. LEARNER AUTONOMY AND PEER FEEDBACK**

It was argued before that the base of constructivist approach is to make new meanings and understandings of knowledge out of linking the newly gained knowledge with the already present ones. Like blocks of a house, learners build their complete knowledge by bringing together their old and new information. And for knowledge to be lasting, learners should take part actively in learning process. They should, in other words, take part in every stage of their learning, starting from the stage of choosing the content according to their needs to the stage of evaluation.

Closely related with the idea of learner engagement in activities, Grabinger and Dunlap (1995) regard student-centered learning environments as having a great influence on intentional learning and lifelong learning skills which ‘include the abilities to construct higher-order questions to guide learning, reflect on consequences and implications of actions, and monitor and modify personal cognitive activity.’ Moreover, they argue that ‘students cannot actively construct and evolve their knowledge structures without taking responsibility and initiative for their learning’ (Grabinger and Dunlap, 1995). Therefore, the direction of the arrow which represents information changes its traditional form from a straight line of ‘teacher to student’ to a circle starting and ending on the student stopping by different sources of information on the way to develop itself by accumulating and experiencing more information. In this model, learners are totally active in the whole process and responsible for their own choice of ways to learn. Here, the teacher is the presenter of possible ways to reach knowledge. Other characteristics of a constructivist teacher are those that s/he ‘is able to overcome the traditional authoritative, all-knowing ideal type of a teacher. He or she is presented as a guidance provider, an educator who empowers his or her students and increases their motivation and ability to learn and develop through questioning and objection.’ (Aviram, 2000).

Learners in such learner-centered classrooms have more opportunities to develop autonomy than the traditional ones. They are able to actively attend to the activities and utter their thoughts, concerns, doubts, and worries freely on the topics being learnt. While doing

this, because the teacher is not the ‘all-knowing ideal type of a teacher’ (Aviram, 2000) and s/he is the facilitator of the environment in which student centred activities take place, learners discuss ideas with appreciation and respect for each others’ opinions and produce new meanings with their classmates. This helps them to give importance to their peers’ ideas and teaches them how they can make use of their discussions and comments for their own improvements. That is, this kind of education helps learners to foster self-esteem allowing them to be autonomous.

Herein lies the importance of peer feedback in L2 classrooms. It is a well known fact that peer feedback has many advantages in classes. In their study, Ertmer, Richardson, Belland, Carmin, Conolly, Coulthard, Lei and Mong (2007) argue that peer feedback positively impacted the quality of the students’ discussion postings, who were giving and receiving peer feedback in their research, in online environment. Moreover, the students identified specific benefits of peer feedback ‘including recognition of their ideas, access to multiple perspectives, and receiving greater quantity of feedback than would have been received from the instructor alone’ (Ertmer et. al., 2007) as well as their enjoyment of anonymous feedback. Other than these immediate benefits, the students reported how they improved the quality of feedback they gave (Ertmer et. al., 2007). Therefore, it is not wrong to say that giving and receiving peer feedback has the advantage of two way learning, in that learners help their peers by commenting on their work, in a sense that they ‘teach’ and ‘learn’ from the comments that their peers provide as well as their own comments. According to Dunlap and Grabinger (2003; cited in Ertmer et. al., 2007 and Dunlap, 2005) ‘the process of reviewing someone else’s work can help learners reflect on and articulate their own views and ideas, ultimately improving their own work’

I feel comfortable in confirming this idea. Needless to say depending on my own experiences (because all teachers would agree with me), students cannot comment on the issues that they themselves do not know. Because of the previously discussed causes, all the learners cannot focus on everything being taught in classrooms with the same attention. Therefore, differences amongst their knowledge and quality are inevitable. For example, it is impossible for a teacher of English as L2 writing lesson not to teach punctuation. Likewise, even though lectured before, it is also impossible for him/her not to correct some punctuation

mistakes on some of assignments of learners, even though they would have all attended the same lesson.

Some mistakes are inevitable outcomes of learning, in other words, they require practice to be improved. However, the rest is the result of unnoticed parts of the lessons which emerges in two situations: The first is that teacher does not make them noticeable to the learners, therefore, they cannot notice and learn them or the second situation which occurs when the learners are in a state of mind what I call as 'momentary absence'. That is, a sudden travel of mind from the focused thing to simply anything avoiding the input in the very initial way into the mind. In other words, during the lessons, personal studies or any situation in which learning occurs, although we seem like we are concentrated on the subject to be learnt, sometimes, our mind thinks of something else lessening the attention paid to the essentials of the subject for several reasons like being bored, distracted or thinking about responsibilities that we have, etc. Thus, it receives the input partially or sometimes cannot even receive the input. That missed input may remain unnoticed until it is learnt in another circumstance by chance. I say chance, because a learning situation depends on many factors to emerge again. To illustrate this, we can talk about an L2 writing lesson. Despite the fact that learners attend all the lessons, it is still possible to see that some of them discover what has already been learnt during the classes in a remedial lesson, in an extra activity/exercise they do on their own or even on their corrected papers. In other words, if they did not attend that remedial lesson or did not do that extra exercise or did not receive feedback on their paper, the structure would be still missing in these learners' minds. Here the factors are conducting that remedial lesson, doing exercise and receiving feedback, but the chance is the preference of the learners to attend that lesson, do the exercise and the correction of that structure on the paper. For this reason, implementing peer feedback in classes can raise the chances of acquiring unnoticed information, because all the learners take the same course from the same teacher and it is easier for them to realise the missing/mistaken parts as their assignment would be on the topic learnt. In this way, learners become more attentive in their lessons helping them to be autonomous. In other words, if applied effectively, peer feedback operates as a tool to reach learner autonomy.

Similar results may be seen in different studies as well. For example Richardson, Ertmer, Lehman and Newby (2007) points out in their research that learners perceived peer feedback to be influential on their learning ‘at a higher level, such as their critical thinking skills’. When we consider the description of critical thinking by Siegel (1988; cited in Cuypers, 2004) we see the connections between it and autonomy better:

*If we accept critical thinking as a fundamental educational ideal, we explicitly acknowledge the desirability of the attainment by students of self-sufficiency and autonomy... The critical thinker must be autonomous—that is, free to act and judge independently of external constraint, on the basis of her own reasoned appraisal of the matter at hand (Siegel, 1988:54).*

To sum up, although it is still open to question, peer feedback has certain advantages for learners in L2 writing lessons. If approached properly, these advantages can help learners to be autonomous as well.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0. INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, background to the research, the context of the research, the research design, the method and materials applied in the research and finally data collection instruments and analysis will be covered.

#### **3.1. BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH**

Having read related articles, findings, researches and books on peer feedback and autonomy, I came to the conclusion that writing lessons were the most appropriate learning situation for my research. During writing lessons, students learn a productive skill and the teacher is the presenter of possible writing styles. The students are free in their expressions on their papers and they have the control of their own work while the teacher is responsible for demonstrating possible writing patterns to the students as a guide.

Moreover, I consider the best field for my research to be peer feedback in writing classes in which learners can give and receive feedback from each other. It is a group work activity and the learners can take different roles at the same time, in other words, they can be the ones giving feedback, and in turn they can be the ones receiving feedback. And the teacher is still in the role of the guide. In this way, all the learners are involved in the activity and their learning is assured by the teacher.

Another reason why peer feedback in writing classes is chosen to observe autonomous behaviours in learners is the fact that autonomy is not a natural trait. In explanation, because we do not have it inborn, external support is needed to foster it. Benson (2001:59) argues that ‘As young children, we take control over the learning of our mother tongue, but as learning becomes more complex and is channelled through the institution of the school, we appear to give up much of our autonomy’. Wei (2008) quotes Benson’s (2001) thoughts as ‘In order to carry out effectively self-directed learning, learners would need to develop skills related to self-management, self- monitoring and self-assessment. So, in classroom, students should be explicitly trained their metacognitive awareness, which will help them to become more aware of themselves as language learner, more proficient in the use of a broad range of strategies that can be utilized throughout the learning process.’ In peer feedback activities, teachers are guides and counsellors; however, also learners guide each other partly by their feedbacks. And this kind of learning can provide the support needed to foster autonomy.

Furthermore, no matter how many corrections or changes are done, writing never finishes. The more people read a piece of written work, the more new comments and even new understandings are produced depending on their own schemas. Even when the writer reads his/her work in different periods of time, s/he tends to mark points to be changed. These changes are not necessarily mistakes; they may be improvements in terms of both coherence and cohesion. Because the primary aim of writing is to convey ideas to other people, it is always better to take comments from as many as possible people. In this way, the meaning that the writer wants to convey is guaranteed.

*The teaching of writing... is founded on the assumption that students learn well by reading and writing with each other, responding to each other’s drafts, negotiating revisions, discussing ideas, sharing perspectives, and finding some level of trust as collaborators in their mutual development. Teaching in such context is interpersonal and interactive, necessitating small class size and a positive relationship between the teacher and the student (Anson, 1999; cited in Mehlenbacher, Miller, Covington and Larsen, 2000).*

As Anson reports above, teaching writing involves more the student commitment than that of the teacher. They should have the chance to brainstorm altogether to learn what is relevant and what is irrelevant; read each others' drafts and reflect on them to learn to think critically. However, it requires small class sizes to have the chance to say what they think and establish positive relationships between not only teacher and student but also student and student. Moreover, in the writing classrooms there is another element that I find more challenging than the others: Time. The most well organized lesson plan will fail when time is not managed well. And writing takes time. First of all, it is a productive skill lesson and students need time to create ideas. Then they have to write these ideas in the appropriate way that they learn during the classes. Unfortunately, most of the time, even if students finish their final written works in time, there is no space for correction or hot feedback for all the papers at the end of the lesson. Therefore, students hand in their writings to either their teachers or classmates to receive them commented on the next lesson.

The above mentioned phenomenon about writing gave me the idea of using an online interactive forum instead of student groups to foster peer feedback in writing classes. Today, with the unbeatable speed of technology, the world is shrinking. Information exchange has gained another dimension. The newest knowledge from the farthest distance can be reached in less than a minute, bringing together the need for a revision of the current educational systems. With the entrance of computers and internet into the education world, a new era in teaching and learning has opened. They have created alternative ways and solutions in teaching and education. It is impossible to say that language education can only be done in classrooms within school complexes in today's world, where the borders of countries are GOOGLE. That is, a learner of an L2 can reach native speakers of that L2 without moving anywhere, but only using a proper Web 2.0 site<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, being greatly interested in technology and its applications in educational environments, I launched a forum for students to give and receive feedback in EFL writing lessons.

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<sup>11</sup>For more information about Web 2.0 sites: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web\\_2.0](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0)

Although special attention from teachers to principles like homogeneity of groups' dynamics, time limit etc is needed, forming students groups in classrooms is still regarded as one of the most effective learning activities. The number of the students in one group is ideally at most 5, and this number may be regarded as enough to give and receive feedback as much as possible by the group members in writing lessons. However, it usually turns out that the students in groups in writing lessons, especially EFL writing lessons, come across with problems such as time and competence to reflect effectively on every single paper of the members. Moreover, because students interact face to face, there may be limitations in the expressions of their ideas because of personal differences. That is, while extrovert students would say everything they think of, less confident students might prefer to remain silent for fear of saying something wrong.

Yet, on an online forum, students can post their assignments and read each others', while they are also able to reflect and comment on their written works and their classmates' wherever they have internet connection. In this way, Anson's (1999; cited in Mehlenbacher and et. al., 2000) teaching of writing assumptions can be fulfilled in all aspects mentioned. Besides this, I can eliminate the time limit in the classroom and the other limitation of group work which is the limit of the number of the students who reflect on one paper. In explanation, while one written work may receive a limited number of comments in group work in classrooms, with the help of the online forum, students' written works can be read by the whole class, adding more opportunities to receive more feedback.

### **3.2 CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH**

In Turkey, students take a state examination to gain a place at state universities. First, they need to demonstrate enough competence in the school subjects (maths, history, biology, physics, chemistry, Turkish, geography, foreign language/s) they study according to their departments at high school to pass the minimum passing score. If they are successful enough to pass it, they are ranked according to their marks. After that they make a preference list of

30 universities (according to the *University Preference Manual in 2012*<sup>12</sup>) and they are placed in one of their preferred university on the basis of their scores and the total number of applications to the universities.

Every university has their own rules as to the preparatory classes/schools. There is need to clarify that preparatory classes here refer to the courses in which students study the English Language. However, in some universities, there is the option to choose other languages to study as well. For some departments preparatory classes or proficiency certificates of the attended university are compulsory while for some others they are optional or do not even exist. The period of the courses ranges between three months' intensive courses and one whole academic year. During the classes, students are taught at least one foreign language which is mainly English. When students enrol in the university, they take a proficiency examination in the target language and according to their results; they either get their proficiency certificates or get placed in classes according to their levels. At the end of the course, students take another proficiency examination and the same procedure is applied with one more option: Summer courses. They are optional intensive replicas of preparatory classes. Students may attend these summer courses and get another chance to take the proficiency examination.

### **3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The aim of this study was to clarify the features of the relationship between peer feedback and learner autonomy, if there is any. The nature of this study required a quant-qual experimental design. In line with the arguments regarding learner autonomy and peer feedback, this study sought answers to one main research question:

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<sup>12</sup> <http://dokuman.osym.gov.tr/pdfdokuman/2012/OSYS/2012OSYSKONTKILAVUZ.pdf>

- Does peer feedback in English as foreign language writing lessons contribute to learner autonomy?

However, the design was online. Therefore, in order to understand the function of computer and internet involvement in the research, a sub-research question was formed, too:

- Does online peer feedback activity in English as foreign language writing lessons have an effect on the development of learner autonomy?

Finally, it was hypothesised that giving and receiving peer feedback promotes learner autonomy in English as a foreign language writing lessons.

Fourteen students who study at preparatory school have been chosen as the subjects of this study. The background of the students was measured through conducting the Diagnostic Questionnaire. Then they were trained on how to give feedback on essays that they were going to study. After that an online forum was created and the students were invited to join. On the forum, the students wrote essays at the same time they gave feedback to the posted essays. This implementation process lasted for five weeks. It will be mentioned as the project from now on. At the end of the project, the Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire was administered. The data from both of the questionnaires, the students' work on the forum and the course teacher's reflections analysed by SPSS 16.0 and descriptive analysis methods. The study took place in the summer school term of the academic year 2011-2012 at one of the universities in Turkey.

### **3.3.1. THE SUBJECTS**

This study was conducted with 14 students of English as a foreign language writing lessons. They were attending a preparatory school at one of the universities in Turkey during

the summer period of the academic year 2011-2012. Students had already attended a whole year preparatory school; however, they were not successful in the proficiency examination. For this reason, they attended summer courses voluntarily. Their level was A2 according to *Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)* and they were students attending EFL writing lessons.

### **3.3.2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT**

The whole research implementation lasted for five weeks. During the project, students attended their lessons regularly. In the first two weeks, they revised general sentence and paragraph structures, topic sentences, topics and controlling ideas, supportive sentences, concluding sentences, introductory paragraphs, body paragraphs and concluding paragraphs.

In the third week, students started to learn three types of essay: opinion, argumentative and cause and effect essays. In the course of their lessons, they were lectured on the target type of essay, did brainstorming activities and outlined what they were going to write. Later on, depending on the students' differences which were, in that case, speed and writing skills, they wrote their first drafts in the classroom. However, they were instructed that they should complete their essays later and post on the forum and if there were essays already posted on the forum, they were welcomed to comment on them.

In the process of the first two weeks the students were instructed on how to give feedback to each other and supplied with the Peer Feedback Checklist (Appendix 1) created by me. I prepared the Peer Feedback Checklist myself to avoid unnecessary items like 'Is the text legible?', because the texts would not be handwritten. Before they started to post essays and give feedback, the students were given a copy of the Peer Feedback Checklist and all the items were gone through to make them clear to the students. Then the teacher projected one sample essay on the wall and they altogether examined the essay by discussing the items on the Peer Feedback Checklist. This activity helped the students understand the purpose of peer feedback as well as how they could benefit from it. With the help of training, the quality of

feedback was guaranteed, in other words, students noticed what to focus on and improve as well as what to categorise as acceptable when they were giving feedback. In this way, ‘a well planned implementation process’ was realized ‘for peer feedback to play its proper role in the writing instruction’ (Jacobs et. al., 1998:314; cited in Soares, 2007). Furthermore, the students were told to take the comments that their friends would write about their essays on the forum into consideration, revise their essay and hand in their improved final drafts to their teacher in the following lesson. Besides this, the students were told to choose their own writing topics from the ones that the teacher presented or be inspired by anything they could think of such as news and daily life. Finally, they were shown websites from which they could read and examine model essays (Appendix 2).

In order to create the online forum for writing, I, first of all, carried out some research on online forums to understand which would best serve my aims. In the end I decided on the web site ‘<http://www.myfreeforum.org/index.php>’. It is a website which allows having a forum for free with unlimited size for data reserve. On the website, there is the ‘Create a Free Forum’ button and when clicked on, it directs people to a registration page where all that is needed is an e-mail account to create your forum.

After I chose a name for my forum (i.e. hns), with the help of the administration panel, I created the sub-forums which are weeks and the categories which are opinion, argumentative, and cause and effect essays. Then I collected students’ e-mails to invite them to join the forum. The students received an e-mail with a link to the forum I had created and by clicking on the link they were able to access to the forum web site where they could register themselves as members with their invitation<sup>13</sup>.

However, to maintain anonymity on the forum before they registered, I wrote letters A to Z on pieces of papers and folded them. Then, I asked the students to choose one, so that every student had one letter which referred to him/her on the forum, but no one knew which

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<sup>13</sup>Forum can be visited at: <http://hns.myfreeforum.org/>

letter referred to whom. When the students reached the forum registration page, they registered themselves with the letters they already had as their user names and they chose a personal passwords. My aim in doing so was first of all to prevent prejudices. No matter what their level was, students were to feel free to post their essays and comment without thinking that they were commenting on an essay of a hardworking or a poor student. Other than that, I aimed to avoid dominant students in the classroom to be dominant also on the forum. Moreover, as Arnaiz and Huntley (2011) suggest, anonymity is an important element in reducing anxiety. In this way, they would feel comfortable which would make them feel positive about the new learning situation.

In the following step, students were instructed to post at least one essay that they were going to write under the suitable sub-forum and category. To guarantee this, we drew another lot with papers on which the weeks (week 1, week 2, week 3) were written. In this way, all students had at least one week to post their essays. However, they were also told that they were free to write and post as many essays as they wanted regardless of their week. Moreover, they were instructed that they could write as many comments as they wanted on the cohesion as well as the coherence of the essays of their friends either in English or in Turkish. I let them choose the language they wanted to use, because I wanted them to reflect fully what they had in their minds about the essays.

### **3.3.3. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

The data was collected from students in two ways; one was two different questionnaires applied before and after the project and the second was their work on the forum. Moreover, the teacher of the course was asked to reflect her opinions and observations about the project.

Firstly, students were given the Diagnostic Questionnaire (Appendix 3) to understand their background skills in online environments and their attitudes towards EFL writing lessons

besides with their autonomy readiness. The questionnaire was composed of 14 multiple choice questions and 1 open ended statement.

In the course of the three week period the students posted their essays on the forum and they gave/received feedback from each other as well (Appendix 4). The written works of the students and their responses on the forum was analysed descriptively.

At the end of the project, students were given the Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire (Appendix 5) to observe any relationship between learner autonomy and online peer feedback. In the questionnaire 22 five-point Likert-type items were utilised besides with 3 open ended statements.

Finally, an interview with the course teacher was organized. It helped in commenting on the benefits and limitations of the project.

For the multiple choice answers in the Diagnostic Questionnaire, numeral values were appointed to represent the levels (Appendix 6). The same process was applied for the Likert-type items in the Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire (Appendix 7). The statistical program SPSS 16.0 was used to analyse the questionnaires, while descriptive methods were applied to analyse the open ended items and the data obtained from the forum.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS, RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.0. INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the analysis of the questionnaires will be presented and each item in the questionnaire will be interpreted with reference to the whole questionnaire. The work of the students on the forum and the course teacher's reflection will be analysed and commented on as well. Finally, a sum interpretation of the analysed whole data will be supplied.

#### **4.1. ANALYSIS OF THE DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONNAIRE**

The subjects of the research were given the Diagnostic Questionnaire to supply background information to highlight the factors and variables in the group.

##### **4.1.1. ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY**

###### **4.1.1.1. PART A**

In the Diagnostic Questionnaire there were 15 items in total. Except for one item, all the rest were multiple choice questions. All the 14 students answered the items in the questionnaire. The general results which can be deduced from the questionnaire is that most of the students (80%) had personal computers and they could connect to internet, almost all of

the students (93%) thought that they were unsuccessful in EFL writing and a great deal of them (71%) did not like English.

It is clearly seen from Table 1 that more than 80 % of the students had a personal computer/ laptop/ tablet computer etc. and they all had the chance of connecting to internet, as I expected, by high frequency of 'always' and 'often'. None of the students marked other points 'sometimes', 'rarely' or 'never'. This is meaningful for my research, because although two of the students did not have computer and the like, they could all connect to internet with the mean at 4.43 (between never (1) and always (5)), which means that they would have been able to check the online forum actively.

**Table 1: Diagnostic Questionnaire Frequency**

QUESTION 1					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	2	14,3	14,3	14,3
	yes	12	85,7	85,7	100,0
	Total	14	100,0	100,0	

QUESTION 2					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	often	8	57,1	57,1	57,1
	always	6	42,9	42,9	100,0
	Total	14	100,0	100,0	

Statistics			
		QUESTION 1	QUESTION 2
N	Valid	14	14
	Missing	0	0
Mean		1,86	4,43
Median		2,00	4,00
Mode		2	4
Sum		26	62

The third question was designed to understand if the students used internet for educational purposes and all the students answered this question by choosing 'yes'. As for the fourth question, only two students out of 14 indicated they were members of at least one forum on the internet; however, both of these students answered the sub-question 'if yes, are you an active member?' as 'neutral'. This data helped me to understand that they needed an informative meeting about forums on the internet, why and how they are used. Therefore, during the first two week period, students were given a presentation about forums as well.

For question 5, the students favoured the answer ‘manually’ by 78.57 %, while the rest 21.43 % marked ‘both on computer and manually’. This was interesting when considering the first question. In Table 2 below, it can be seen that there is a weak relationship between students’ having a computer/laptop/tablet computer etc. and the preparation of their written assignments (Pearson’s  $r < 1$ ;  $0.213 < 1$ ). In other words, although most of the students had computers, they preferred writing their assignments manually. This was interesting, because during the project, the students had to write their assignments on computer and the like to be able to post it to the forum which was a new experience for them. This kind of activity gave them chance to evaluate which of the two writing strategies (i.e. writing on the computer or writing manually) was more suitable for them.

**Table 2: Diagnostic Questionnaire Correlations**

Correlations			
		QUESTION 1	QUESTION 5
QUESTION 1	Pearson Correlation		1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,213
	N	14	14
QUESTION 5	Pearson Correlation	,213	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,464	
	N	14	14

Question 6 investigated whether the students thought that teacher was the only source of information in the English Language lessons and all of the students’ responses agreed on ‘no’. This means they were aware of other ways to reach information and probably they were already using them.

In my research it is also important to understand what the attitudes of students are towards the EFL writing lessons as it is the ground upon which I am going to build my project. It is a well known fact that positive feeling is an important factor in motivating

learners. As Du (2009) points out the learners with positive attitudes tend to learn L2 easily and with rapid progress. Therefore, I added the seventh question to my questionnaire to see if the students liked EFL writing lessons or not. As it can be seen in Table 3, while 71% of the students chose ‘no’, the rest chose the option ‘neutral’ and none of the students chose the option ‘yes’. From the data, it is clear that students did not like the EFL writing lessons with the mode at 1, referring the answer ‘no’ and only a few of them were indecisive about it.

**Table 3: Diagnostic Questionnaire Question 7 Statistics**

Statistics					
QUESTION 7					
N	Valid			14	
	Missing			0	
Mean		,71			
Median			1,00		
Mode			1		
Sum				10	
QUESTION 7					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	neutral	4	28,6	28,6	28,6
	no	10	71,4	71,4	100,0
	Total	14	100,0	100,0	

For the same reason of the seventh question, I designed question 8 and asked the students if they felt confident in EFL writing lessons. 85.7 % of the students answered as ‘no’ and the rest 14.3 % answered as ‘neutral’ without any ‘yes’ option being chosen. This is important, because none of the students was confident in writing, which probably affected their attitudes and even their success in the EFL writing lessons.

As with questions 7 and 8, the majority of the students answered 'no' to question 9, which asked whether they were successful in EFL writing. Out of 14 students, 13 of them marked 'no', while the remaining student chose 'neutral' and no one in the classroom thought that they were successful in EFL writing. From this result, I deduced that they were not aware of even their smallest success in the classroom. In other words, there were two students who were indecisive about their confidence (question 8), and there were four students who were also not sure whether they liked EFL writing lessons or not (question 7). If these students were 'neutral' in their choices, they must have achieved even a small success in their previous EFL writing lessons. Therefore, I expected to find more students who thought they were successful or at least neutral about their success than only one.

The tenth question was designed to see the level of students' tolerance to criticism. Without any other option being chosen, all the students answered that they were open minded to positive and/or negative criticism. As for question 11, it was about students' participation on an online education forum/s. My aim in this question was to understand if the students had experienced it with or without their teachers before, and all the students answered 'no', which provided me with subjects for my research with relatively similar backgrounds.

The rest of the questions which were 12, 13 and 14 were designed to understand the students' readiness for autonomous learning. Question 12 asked the students if they wanted to choose their course materials, when given the chance. 42.9 % of the students chose 'no' as their answer and the rest divided equally into two between answers 'neutral' and 'yes' at the rate 28.6 %. From this distribution, I deduced that more than half of the students had ideas about their course and what they wanted to learn from their course; however, probably because they had never done this before, they were doubtful.

Question 13 investigated whether the students were aware of their own learning strategies; and answers favoured 'yes' at the rate 78.57 % and the rest 21.43 % preferred 'neutral', without any 'no' being chosen. This was interesting, because the percentages showed that the majority of the students were aware of their own learning strategies, which was what I would try to observe during and after the project. Furthermore, this result was also

meaningful in that although to a lesser extent, I had students with similar backgrounds in the classroom.

Lastly, I wanted to understand if students were aware of their weaknesses or strengths in different language skills. Therefore, I asked the students to choose the skill lesson which they thought they did best in the question 14. Not surprisingly, all of the students marked the receptive skill 'reading' as their answer. However, it means that at least they had their own criteria to compare amongst the skills to eliminate others and decide on one, which is actually a metacognitive ability.

#### **4.1.1.2. PART B**

The only one open statement item in the questionnaire was the item 15. It asked the students to define why they wanted to improve their English. My objective in composing this item was that I wanted to see if the students had set goals to reach at the end of their learning, in this way, I would be able to comment on their awareness of their aims as well as their motivation. All the students responded to item 15. However, during the analysis process, I saw that their main aim was to find a good job with the help of their English (6 students). The other goals that the students presented were that they wanted to pass the proficiency examination (7 students), and only one student wrote that s/he wanted to communicate with people. As is clear from the answers, the students' goals were all extraneous except for one student. They felt the responsibility of improving their English; however, this was not what they wanted. Nonetheless, from the result of this item, it can be understood that even though they were not motivated intrinsically, at least they had their goals in their minds.

Briefly, in the Diagnostic Questionnaire I asked questions under three main categories; students' computer use background, their attitudes towards EFL writing and their autonomy readiness. The results show that although the students needed information about online forums, they had the necessary equipment and facility to carry out the project. Despite the fact that they chose to attend summer courses voluntarily, their attitude towards EFL writing was

negative and probably for this reason, their confidence and perceived success were low. Finally, it was found that although they were doubtful in some points, it cannot be concluded that they do not have any autonomous learning characteristics.

## **4.2. ANALYSIS OF THE ONLINE PEER FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE**

It has been already stated that the main concern of this study is the relationship between online peer feedback and learner autonomy. In order to detect this relationship, if there is any, and understand its features, the characteristics of learner autonomy were turned into items in the Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire with references to the online peer feedback project.

### **4.2.1. ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY**

#### **4.2.1.1. PART A**

The Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire consists of 25 items in total, 22 of which were incorporated into five-point Likert-type items ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree with each statement. The remaining 3 items were open ended statements to be completed by the students with their own thoughts. All of the 14 students in the class answered the items in the questionnaire; however, there were missing answers. The Likert items in the Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire (OPFQ) were designed in terms of four main categories which are derived from the literature on autonomy and its characteristics. They can be seen in the Table 4 below with their referent items in the questionnaire. However, during the analysis and commentary process, item 1 proved to be arguable. It was analysed and commented on to give insights about students' responsibility during the project; however, it does not serve the aim of the research as much as the other items in the questionnaire. Items 2, 4, 15 and 19, which cannot be seen in the Table 4, are general items

about learner strategies and their attitudes. Finally, items 5, 11, 14 and 21 have deliberate specific attributions to reveal the online aspect of the project.

**Table 4: OPFQ Item Categories**

Categories of the Items	Ordinal Numbers of the Items in the Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire
Students' awareness of their own learning:	3, 7, 8, 9, 12, 17
Students' taking responsibility of their' own learning	1, 14, 20
Students' active involvement in learning activities	5, 6, 13, 18
Students' evaluation of their own learning strategies	10, 11, 16, 22

#### **4.2.1.1.1. CATEGORY A, FACTOR ANALYSIS**

Factor analysis of the subjects' responses to the questionnaire was calculated on SPSS 16.0 to identify possible effects of peer feedback and its being an online project on learner autonomy.

For Category A, factor analysis was computed and it can be seen in Table 5. From the table, it is clear that this category measures the desired information at the rate of 80.6 %, which can supply satisfying results. The components in the table are the groups of the items put together by the programme according to their correspondence to the same factor. That is, although there are six items under the category of students' awareness of their own learning, they can be grouped under three other topics: Component 1 (items 7 and 9); component 2 (items 3 and 12) and finally component 3 (items 8 and 17). Components for each category will be discussed in more detail later.

**Table 5: Factor Analysis 1**

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2,152	35,864	35,864	2,152	35,864	35,864	1,771	29,512	29,512
2	1,651	27,515	63,379	1,651	27,515	63,379	1,708	28,468	57,981
3	1,038	17,293	80,672	1,038	17,293	80,672	1,361	22,691	80,672
4	,725	12,091	92,762						
5	,332	5,541	98,303						
6	,102	1,697	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component		
	1	2	3
QUESTION 3	,231	,867	-,006
QUESTION 7	,810	,081	,381
QUESTION 8	,296	,428	-,708
QUESTION 9	,959	,059	-,184
QUESTION 12	-,096	,871	-,103
QUESTION 17	,211	,059	,819

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

**4.2.1.1.2. CATEGORY A, RESULTS AND COMMENTARY**

Being aware of one’s own learning is a crucial character of being autonomous. In an educational context, these kinds of learners know why they are fulfilling a certain task and what they expect from that task. They are able to take decisions about the means which will get them what they aimed. These vary from teacher to course, from educational materials to even environment in which education takes place. Moreover, these learners take actions

independently as they already know their needs. To sum up, they know how they learn. The students' responses to the following items 3, 7, 8, 9, 12, 17 will be analysed to reveal whether the students were aware of their learning during the project.

*(Item 3: I benefited from the discussions of my classmates, while I was writing my own essays.)*

Item 3 was designed to see if the students had gained any insights from their friends as to revise their own essays, in other words, their own learning. As seen in Table 6 below, 42.9 % of the students preferred 'agree', while the rest 57.1 % marked 'strongly agree' with the mean at 4.57. It means that without any exception, all the students made use of each others' comments as well as essays on the forum to create their own written tasks. Moreover, the inexistence of any negative answer to this item means that they maintained this kind of 'learning from each other activity' during the whole project. Therefore, it can be said that they were conscious about their learning. They observed their friends' essays/comments and made use of what they thought could be beneficial for them. It is a cognitive process which requires learners to decide what information to choose critically. In this way, they become aware of their needs as well as how they can reach them. As a result, the online peer feedback project can be said to have had positive effects on learners' awareness on their learning methods; in other words on one of the most important aspect of autonomy.

**Table 6: OPFQ Item 3**

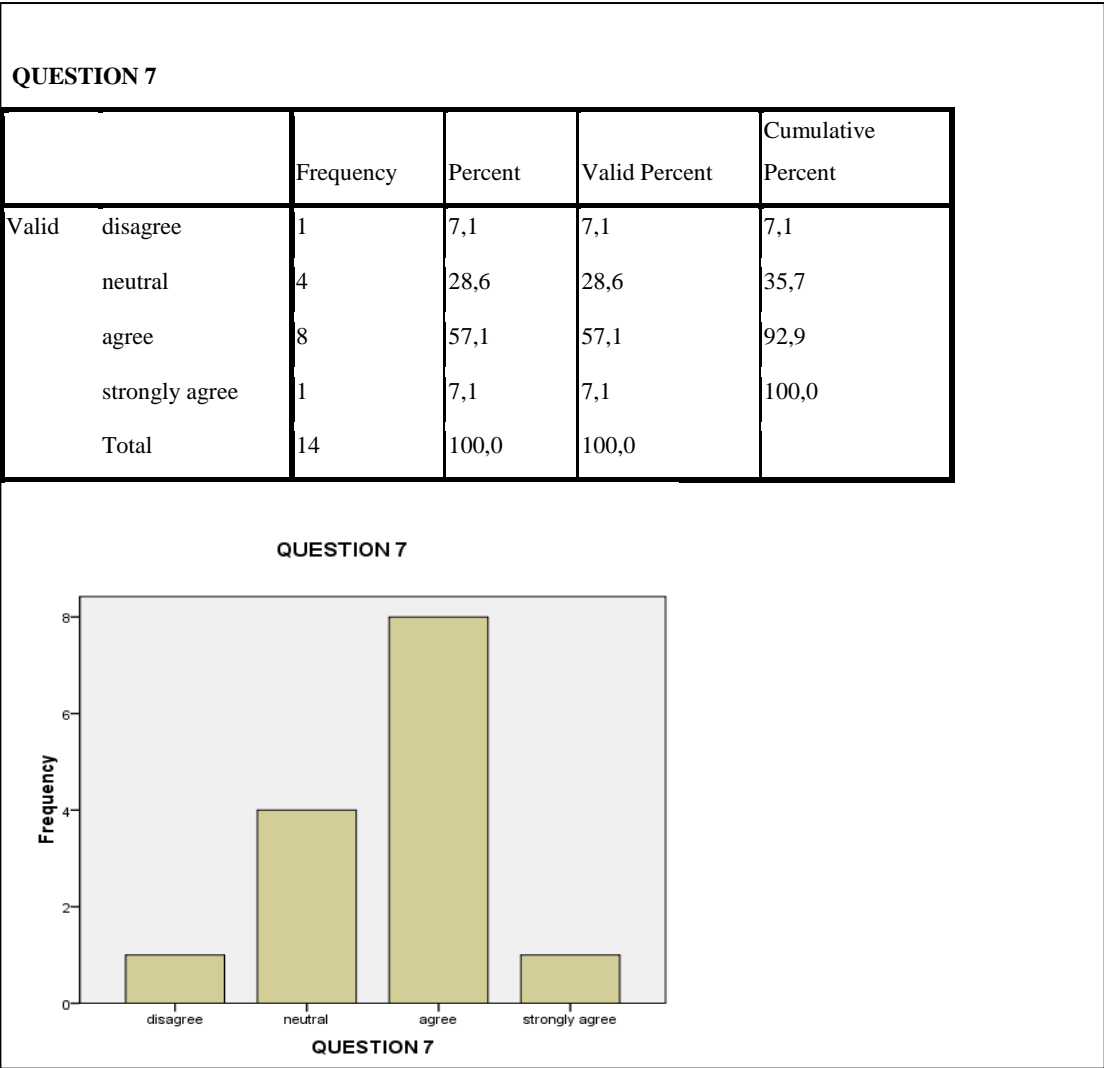
Statistics					
QUESTION 3					
N	Valid	14			
	Missing	0			
Mean		4,57			
Median		5,00			
Mode		5			
Variance		,264			
Sum		64			
QUESTION 3					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	agree	6	42,9	42,9	42,9
	strongly agree	8	57,1	57,1	100,0
	Total	14	100,0	100,0	

*(Item 7: Now I know what I need to improve my writing in English.)*

Item 7 had a time reference ‘now’ to the students’ state of post-project views. It was inserted into the item deliberately with the aim of allowing the students to think about their learning in the course of the project and evaluate it. In this way, I would be able to comment on whether they had realised their weaknesses in EFL writing from the project or not. As a matter of fact, the students stated that they understood what they needed to improve their writing in English at the rate 57.1 % ‘agree’ and 7.1 % ‘strongly agree’ (Table 7). It means that most of the students noticed their poor points during the project most likely by comparing their own essays with other students’; bearing their friends’ feedbacks to either their own or their friends’ essays in mind or even just by reading what their friends wrote. Therefore, it can be said that the students were aware of what they were studying and learning. However, because the sample in this study is limited to 14 students, finding the answer ‘neutral’ with frequency at 4 (between strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (5)) and 1 student saying

‘disagree’ (Table 7) is of great importance. Probably, these students were confused with the new learning experience, in other words, they were dependent on their teacher to receive feedback on their papers; so that they could see what they needed to improve or they had already known what they needed to improve their writing in English. Moreover, it may even be said that these students did not rely on their friends’ feedbacks. Nevertheless, it is pleasing to see ‘neutral’ students outnumber the students who ‘disagree’ with the statement at the end of the project. From the results, we can conclude that there is a relationship between peer feedback and learner autonomy, and the relationship can be claimed to be a positive one, as more than the half of the students stated ‘now they know’ in which ways they can improve themselves in writing in English.

**Table 7: OPFQ Item 7**



*(Item 8: I felt that I learnt despite not being taught by the teacher on the forum.)*

Item 8 was inspired by the fact that although there was the teacher in the role of the guide during the project, neither on the online forum nor in the peer feedback processes was she present. Therefore, the students were independent. With this item, I wanted them to think back and state if they had learnt anything, when the teacher was not around. The result of analysis of this item in Table 8 shows that they did (35.7 % plus 42.9 %). Furthermore, although the median is at 4 referring to ‘agree’; the mean is 4.21 which can be interpreted as the students did not mark ‘agree’ accidentally, but marked ‘strongly agree’ intentionally. Thus, it can be inferred that the students realised that they could learn with the guidance of the teacher, but without dependence on the teacher. Therefore, with this new discovery, the students added one more learning method to their already existent ones. And from this result, I can deduce that they realised how they learnt.

**Table 8: OPFQ Item 8**

QUESTION 8				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid neutral	3	21,4	21,4	21,4
agree	5	35,7	35,7	57,1
strongly agree	6	42,9	42,9	100,0
Total	14	100,0	100,0	

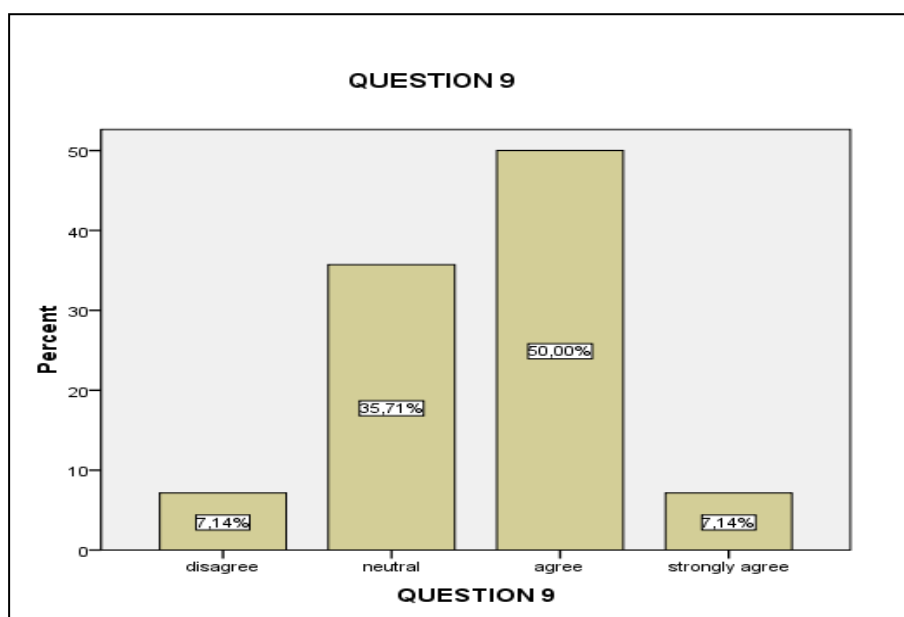
  

Statistics		
QUESTION 8		
N	Valid	14
	Missing	0
Mean		4,21
Median		4,00

*(Item 9: Now I can choose the methods of learning writing that suits me best.)*

Item 9 asked the students to grade their awareness of learning methods during the project. The online peer feedback project was a new method for learning writing for them as they stated in the Diagnostic Questionnaire. My aim in this item was to observe if the students could make comparisons between how they had learnt till the project and how they learnt through by the project on how to write in English. Then they would be able to make reasoning amongst the methods and realise how they learn better. In the responses, the percentages of the students who chose 'agree' and 'strongly agree' surpassed the other level points (sum: 57.1 %, Table 9). It means that at the end of the project, maybe even when they were filling the questionnaire, the students thought about their new experience and realised in which method their learning was quality for them. In the end, I can safely say that no matter whether they maintained their traditional writing courses as their preferences or not, which is understood from the general view of the results that it was unfavoured, now, they have the capacity to choose their own learning methods. That is, the project helped them to foster autonomy development in learners.

**Table 9: OPFQ Item 9**



(Item 12: *My friends' comments helped me to see my weak points in writing in English.*)

Item 12 was designed to remind the students about their points to be improved in their writings during the project and observe if they found peer feedback helpful or not in improving those points. The frequency in Table 10 clearly shows that more than half of the students found it helpful (42.9 % of 'agree' and 35.7 % of 'strongly agree'). When answering these Likert-type items there is a slight difference between 'agreement' and 'strongly agreement' and this slight difference sometimes allows the researchers comment on the phenomenon better. This item is a good example of this. From the number of the students (5 students), we can understand that 35.7 % of the students really benefited in detecting their weaknesses from this project. And the fact of their realisation of their problematic parts might have been the source of their motivation in maintaining their interest in the project, because in this way, they would have worked on these parts to present better writing tasks. For this reason, I feel confident to say that more than one third of the students were conscious about their learning. As for the rest of the class, almost half of the students agreed that they benefited from peer feedback in that they saw where to improve their writing. In explanation, they *themselves* realised their own mistakes by reading other students' comments. The percentage of the students who chose the options 'agree' and 'strongly agree' (78.6 %) is significant, because now it can be inferred that more than half of the students gained a degree of autonomy.

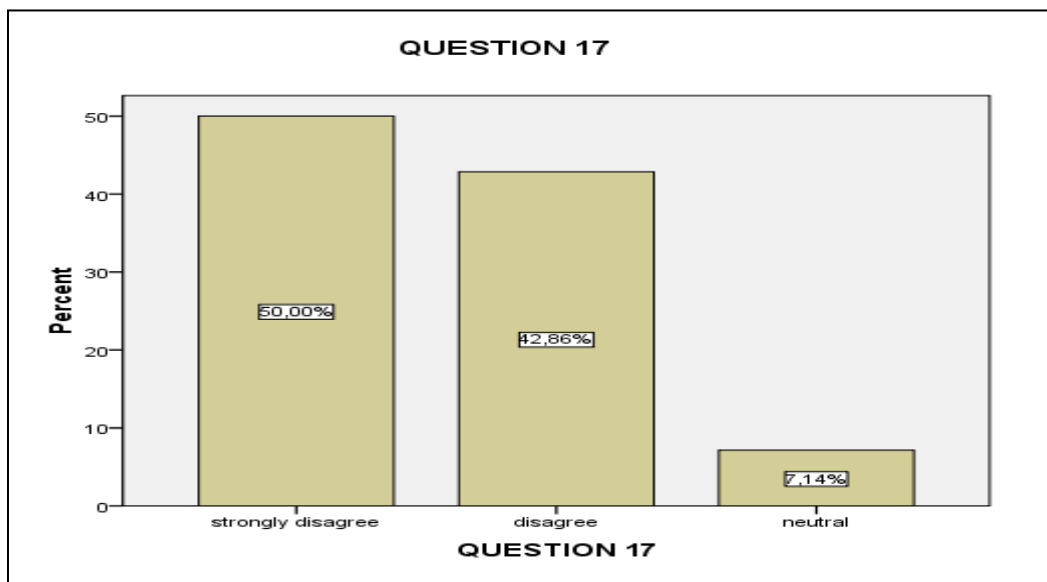
**Table 10: OPFQ Item 12**

QUESTION 12				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid neutral	3	21,4	21,4	21,4
agree	6	42,9	42,9	64,3
strongly agree	5	35,7	35,7	100,0
Total	14	100,0	100,0	

*(Item 17: I don't rely on my friends' feedbacks.)*

The last item in this category, 17 searched for an explanation on how reliable the students perceived their friends' feedbacks. In Table 11, it is obvious that almost all of the students thought their friends' feedbacks were reliable. However, there was one student who created the 7.14 % of the whole class by choosing 'neutral'. It may be said that this one student was a dependent student and most probably s/he was doubtful about the quality of the feedback, because the source of feedback was his/her friends rather than the teacher. Nevertheless, the general impact that can be inferred from the result of this item is that the students generally trusted their friends' feedbacks and this can be interpreted as they took these comments into consideration in their learning in the new learning environment. In other words, we can say that they were aware of the peer feedback activity as a reliable way of learning.

**Table 11: OPFQ Item 17**



Finally, we can comment on the item clusters. Factor analysis shows that there were items which could be grouped under the same components according to the responses. The group of items 7 and 9 tells us that the students are now capable of seeing their poor points

and they are able to choose the best learning methods to improve them. The other group of items 3 and 12 tells us that the peer feedback activity helped the students to improve the quality of their own essays. The last group of items 8 and 17 makes us understand that the students relied on their friends' feedback and they learnt when their teacher was not present. To sum up, it was observed that there is a relationship between online peer feedback and learner autonomy. Although the degree cannot be measured, it can be mentioned that the quality of the relationship is positive.

#### **4.2.1.1.3. CATEGORY B, FACTOR ANALYSIS**

The same procedure to analyse factors was applied to Category B. Table 12 below shows that this category measures the phenomenon at the rate of 87.3 %. And there is one main component under this category which is composed of items 1 and 20; however, item 14 will be analysed under this category as well.

**Table 12: Factor Analysis 2**

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1,391	46,374	46,374	1,391	46,374	46,374	1,356	45,197	45,197
2	1,229	40,980	87,354	1,229	40,980	87,354	1,265	42,157	87,354
3	,379	12,646	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component	
	1	2
QUESTION 1	,892	-,281
QUESTION 14	-,098	,939
QUESTION 20	,742	,552

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
 a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

**4.2.1.1.4. CATEGORY B, RESULTS AND COMMENTARY**

Since the very early pages of this study, various definitions of autonomy have been given. A careful, critical eye would easily recognise one vocabulary and its synonyms repeated in almost all the descriptions of it: Responsibility. Responsibility of the learner in his/her learning is the core of autonomy. Responsible learners can take actions for themselves to reach their goals and tolerate their results no matter how successful it ends. They are responsible of their learning, because they are the decision makers and they accept the results of their actions. They are able to appreciate their success and learn from their failure as well.

Moreover, because these learners are responsible for their own learning, they are intrinsically motivated. The students' responses to the items 1, 14 and 20 will be analysed to understand whether the students took responsibilities of their learning during the project.

*(Item 1: I decided writing topics of my assignments on my own.)*

Item 1 asked the students to grade to what extent they agreed with their freedom of deciding topics to write their essays about. During the project, the students were supplied with only three possible topics to write about by the teacher and they were instructed to choose one of those topics or find their own topics from internet, daily issues, etc. My aim in doing so was to avoid possible complaints from students like not being able to generate ideas, not having enough knowledge about the topic given by the teacher to write and the like. With the exception of one student who marked 'agree', the rest 13 students responded to this item as 'strongly agree'. From the results, it is clear that students were totally free in their choices and they were aware of it. And because it was their own decision, they were responsible of their action. In other words, they were responsible of bringing out an essay with their preferred topic and preferred supportive ideas. And they did not have anyone to blame for their success or failure in developing their topics. Therefore, it can be said that they took responsibility in their learning during the project which is an important aspect of autonomous learning. However, this item cannot provide reliable deductions about the relationship between peer feedback and autonomy as mentioned before. The responsibility was triggered by the teacher. In explanation, she did not ask the students to choose one specific topic to write their essays; rather, she presented them two options: They could choose one from the possible topics or they could find one themselves. Nonetheless, in both situations, the students *had to* take action. Therefore we cannot mention that the students became responsible on their own. However, the results can be a guide/source for the teachers who would like to imitate the project/research in their classes.

*(Item 14: I visited the forum even if I needen't have done.\**

*\*Necessity may refer to posting essays or commenting about posts/essays on the forum. )*

Item 14 was elaborated to see the number of the students as well as their agreement range on the decisions that are taken individually and independently. With this objective in mind, I asked whether the students went online on the forum, even if they need not have done. However, it was necessary to clarify ‘the necessity’ in this item, therefore, a note explaining that the necessity might have referred to post essays; comment on posts/essays was added at the bottom of the questionnaire. The responses of the students scattered around the mean at 4.07 (between strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (5)) with the frequency of ‘strongly agree’ at 6 (Table 13). With the percentages of the students who responded positively, in explanation ‘agree’ with 35.7 % and ‘strongly agree’ with 42.9 %, we can understand that more than half of the students visited the forum voluntarily. 14.3 % of them remained in the middle of the two extreme ranges, while 7.1 % claimed never had done. From the analysed data, we can infer that most of the students took responsibility in their learning and visited the forum even when they did not need to. Furthermore, we can deduce that these students checked the forum, most probably because they thought it was useful for their study and it can be seen as an indicator of internal motivation as no one asked/forced them to visit it. In brief, it can be said that the online peer feedback activity helped the students be aware of their needs in writing and in accordance they took actions responsibly to meet those needs on the forum. Therefore, a positive effect of the online peer feedback activity on learner autonomy can be mentioned as a result of the study.

**Table 13: OPFQ Item 14**

Statistics					
QUESTION 14					
N	Valid	14			
	Missing	0			
Mean	4,07				
Median	4,00				
QUESTION 14					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	1	7,1	7,1	7,1
	neutral	2	14,3	14,3	21,4
	agree	5	35,7	35,7	57,1
	strongly agree	6	42,9	42,9	100,0
	Total	14	100,0	100,0	

*(Item 20: I felt bad, when I couldn't give feedback.)*

The final item in this category, item 20 was added to the questionnaire to discover whether the students felt bad when they could not give feedback to their friends' essays. They were the individuals building that learning on the forum, that is, no matter if they knew or not, they were sharing and carrying certain responsibilities in their online community. However, I was interested in the students who were aware of this; therefore I added this item to my questionnaire. Surprisingly enough, the mean can be seen in Table 14 at 3.86 (between strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (5)). Moreover, the most frequent response was 'agree' with 57.1 %, and 14.3 % of the students preferred 'strongly agree'. In explanation, although we can say that the students felt responsible to give feedback to their friends, we cannot underestimate the students who chose 'neutral' at the rate 28.6 %. By looking at the figures, especially taking the inexistence of any negative answers other than 'neutral' into consideration, we can mention about the positive effects of the project on learner autonomy;

however, when compared with the general responses to the other items in the questionnaire, we cannot say that the online peer feedback activity affected the students' responsibility aspect of autonomy as much as it did with other categories.

**Table 14: OPFQ Item 20**

Statistics				
QUESTION 20				
N	Valid			14
	Missing			0
Mean			3,86	
Median			4,00	

QUESTION 20					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	neutral	4	28,6	28,6	28,6
	agree	8	57,1	57,1	85,7
	strongly agree	2	14,3	14,3	100,0
	Total	14	100,0	100,0	

As for the item components, they inform us that the students were responsible during the project to take actions; however, at the same time, from the results, it is highly probable that this responsibility was triggered by external sources. Item 14 can be said to be the one to yield the positive effects of the project on autonomy; however, as a conclusion we cannot mention a clear effect of the online peer feedback activity on the taking responsibility in learning aspect of learner autonomy.

#### 4.2.1.1.5. CATEGORY C, FACTOR ANALYSIS

As for the students' active involvement in learning activities, Category C, factor analysis was computed in the same way. Like the other categories, also Category C has a high rate of measurement at 85.9 % (Table 15). Moreover, the item clusters 5 and 18, 6 and 13 constitute the components.

**Table 15: Factor Analysis 3**

<b>Total Variance Explained</b>									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2,113	52,827	52,827	2,113	52,827	52,827	1,763	44,069	44,069
2	1,323	33,081	85,908	1,323	33,081	85,908	1,674	41,840	85,908
3	,338	8,451	94,359						
4	,226	5,641	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component	
	1	2
QUESTION 5	,228	,882
QUESTION 6	,909	,226
QUESTION 13	,940	-,005
QUESTION 18	-,011	,919

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

#### **4.2.1.1.6. CATEGORY C, RESULTS AND COMMENTARY**

Another significant feature of autonomous learners is that they volunteer to take active parts in learning activities. These active people try participating in various learning situations and activities to experience them at first hand. In this way they construct lasting knowledge. Moreover, they are able to decide to maintain or terminate applying certain types of activities in their learning by judging the quality of the newly learnt information and the benefits of the activity in their learning. Category C was created to find out whether the students actively took part in the online feedback activity during the project. Items 5, 6, 13, 18 will be analysed to serve this aim.

*(Item 5: Posting essays on the forum was time consuming.)*

Item 5 was designed to understand if the students found posting essays on the forum in order to allow all their classmates to read and give feedback time consuming or not. Considering especially the results of the third item in the Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire, to which all the students responded as the activity was beneficial for them, the results of the item 5 is not surprising. In Table 16 it is seen that 50 % of the students marked 'strongly disagree' and 28.6 % of them did the same with 'disagree'. 78.6 % is a great number to obtain positive views from the students who tried a totally new activity in their education. Moreover, this number, especially the students who marked 'strongly disagree', tells us that students really benefited from the activity and they had the capacity to evaluate it making difference between 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. To sum up, it can be said that although 21.4 % of the students could not decide, the rest of the students can be said to have participated actively in the project by sharing their views and essays as they thought it was not a waste of time. Therefore, a positive effect of the online peer feedback activity on active learner involvement can be mentioned, which is a fundamental element of autonomous learning.

**Table 16: OPFQ Item 5**

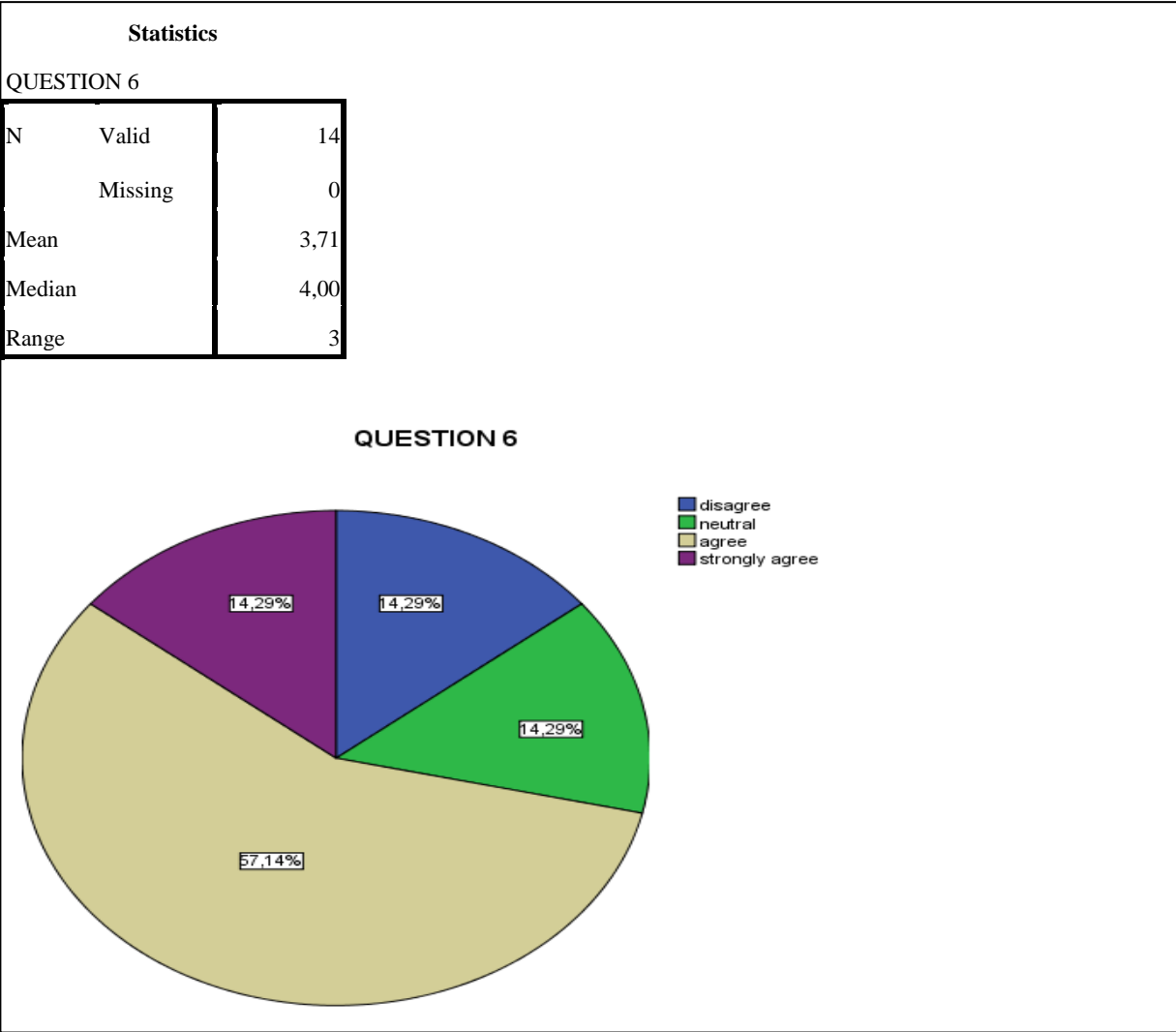
QUESTION 5				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	7	50,0	50,0
	disagree	4	28,6	78,6
	neutral	3	21,4	100,0
	Total	14	100,0	

*(Item 6: I gave feedback to all of the posted essays on the forum.)*

Item 6 was designed to understand if the students gave feedback to all of the essays posted on the forum. The objective of this item was to show whether the students actively followed the discussions on the forum, checked the new essays to comment on or they remained silent observers and never went online. Because of the characteristic of the item, it is impossible to comment on the latter, though. The students' responses to item 6 show that they had various frequencies of giving feedback. In Table 17, we can see all the ranges except for 'strongly disagree'. Although the median is at 4 referring 'agree', the mean is at 3.71 (between strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (5)). When we consider that none of the students marked 'strongly agree', the mean and median become more meaningful. In other words, although half of the students (57.4 %) said they gave feedback to all of the essays, the general impression of the responses is that they did not give feedback to every single one essay. Thus, it cannot be said that all the students participated the activity equally. As a result, although we can mention the positive effect of the project on learner autonomy, because slightly more than the half of the students stated they gave feedback to all of the essays, we cannot observe it as strongly as we can do with most of the other items in the questionnaire. Nevertheless, one final remark should be made on the fact that students' preferences of not giving feedback do not mean that they did not go online to check the forum. In other words,

this cannot be observed because of the feature of the item. Therefore, the comment should be discussed by bearing this fact in mind.

**Table 17: OPFQ Item 6**



*(Item 13: I felt more comfortable in writing for my classmates than for my teacher.)*

Item 13 asked the students to compare their comfort between their friends and teacher as their audience and grade one of the ranges from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’. Except for one, all the students stated their views and besides at the mean at 4.62 (between strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (5)) (Table 18). From this item it can be inferred that

students were more comfortable when they were writing for their friends to read. Probably, it helped them to express what they wanted to say freely, because they were their friends and their conditions and levels were similar in the same classroom. Moreover, this data shows that except for one student who is missing and the students who marked ‘neutral’ (14.3 %), the rest of the class (78.5 %) can be said to have been active in their learning due to the fact that they were comfortable.

**Table 18: OPFQ Item 13**

Statistics					
QUESTION 13					
N	Valid	13			
	Missing	1			
Mean	4,62				
Median	5,00				
QUESTION 13					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	neutral	2	14,3	15,4	15,4
	agree	1	7,1	7,7	23,1
	strongly agree	10	71,4	76,9	100,0
	Total	13	92,9	100,0	
Missing	System	1	7,1		
Total		14	100,0		

*(Item 18: I got frustrated when my friends corrected my essay.)*

The last item in this category was item 18. It was one of the two items in this questionnaire (the other was 20) to make use of emotions to understand the students’ opinions

about the project. Item 18 was integrated into the Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire intentionally to see if any changes in the students' tolerance towards different views occurred. As already analysed in the Diagnostic Questionnaire, the result of question 10 showed that all the students were tolerant to positive or negative criticism. Again with one missing response, the valid percentages in Table 19 show that there is not a meaningful change in the students' tolerance towards their friends' corrections on their essays, which could be regarded as a negative criticism by them. Therefore, it can be said that even before the project, students already had the open-mindedness prerequisite of autonomy. Moreover, their being positive towards the activity eliminates one barrier which otherwise could hinder them being involved in the activity. Therefore, the online peer feedback activity can be claimed to be a supporter of learner autonomy.

**Table 19: OPFQ Item 18**

Statistics					
QUESTION 18					
N	Valid		13		
	Missing		1		
Mean			1,23		
Median			1,00		
Range			1		
QUESTION 18					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	10	71,4	76,9	76,9
	disagree	3	21,4	23,1	100,0
	Total	13	92,9	100,0	
Missing	System	1	7,1		
Total		14	100,0		

Lastly, the item clusters make us understand that although the students did not give feedback to all of the essays on the forum, at the same time, they did not think that it was a waste of time. Furthermore, students felt comfortable in writing to their friends and they did not get angry when they received corrective feedbacks. All in all, from the general analysis of the category, it can be argued that the online peer feedback supports students' active participating into the activity, allowing them to make one step further in autonomous learning.

#### **4.2.1.1.7. CATEGORY D, FACTOR ANALYSIS**

Finally, factor analysis for Category D was computed, too. As is clearly seen in Table 20, it measures the situation at the rate 82.9 %. Furthermore, it is seen that there are two main clusters of items which are components 1 (items 11 and 22) and 2 (items 10 and 16).

**Table 20: Factor Analysis 4**

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2,284	57,103	57,103	2,284	57,103	57,103	1,869	46,726	46,726
2	1,033	25,821	82,924	1,033	25,821	82,924	1,448	36,198	82,924
3	,587	14,683	97,608						
4	,096	2,392	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component	
	1	2
QUESTION 10	-,968	-,096
QUESTION 11	,098	,845
QUESTION 16	,938	,263
QUESTION 22	,206	,809

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
 a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

**4.2.1.1.8. CATEGORY D, RESULTS AND COMMENTARY**

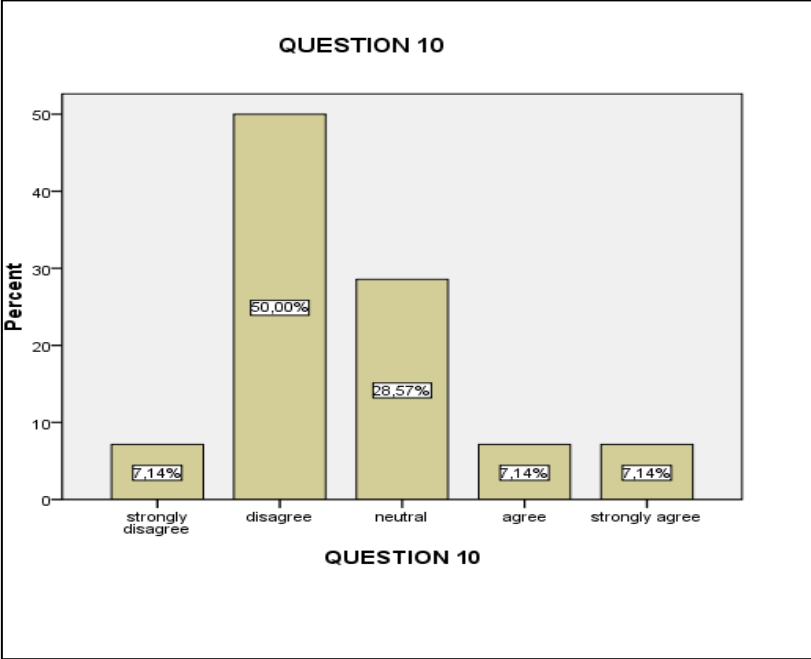
Strategy use is another important characteristic of autonomous learners. Strategies are useful for to solve problems that learners encounter during their education. They may be learnt or created by individuals. In the definition of autonomous learners it is usually stated that autonomous learners are aware of their strategies and able to evaluate them. They can replace these strategies flexibly, when they do not apply to their needs to perform a task.

Items 10, 11, 16 and 22 will be analysed to find out if the students were able to evaluate their strategies during the project.

*(Item 10: I didn't change my writing strategy during the project.)*

Item 10 asked if the students had changed their writing strategies during the project. As mentioned many times before, online peer feedback activity was a new experience for them. For this reason they must have come across moments in which their traditional strategies did not work. Obviously, in Table 21 it is seen that what I reasoned while I was preparing this item was true. 57.1 % of the students (50% 'disagree' plus 7.1 % 'strongly disagree') stated that they changed their writing strategies during the project and 28.5 % preferred not to comment on it. Therefore, probably these students applied other learning strategies or they might have even developed their own learner strategies when they could not reach their goals. As a result, a positive effect of peer feedback on evaluation of strategies by students can be mentioned.

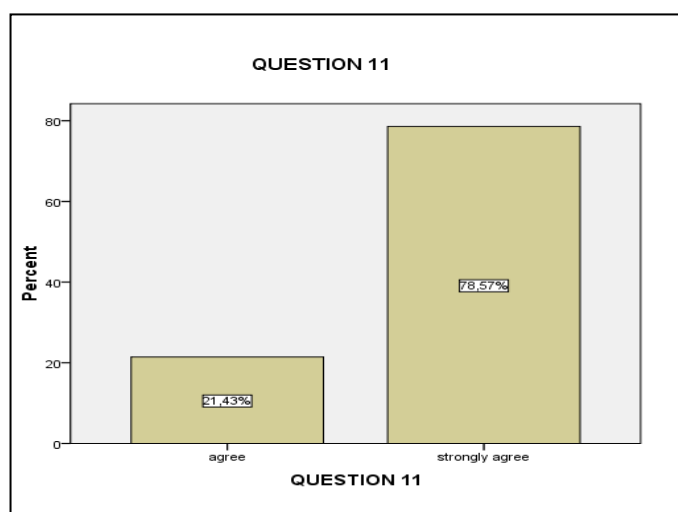
**Table 21: OPFQ Item 10**



*(Item 11: I discovered new ways to write, while I was searching model essays on internet.)*

The following item 11 asked students to state how much they benefited from internet to discover new strategies to write. It was already important to see the students taking actions in their learning and making research for their own benefits. However, it could have been better to see them discovering anything that might help them in their course. Therefore, I inserted the vocabulary ‘discovered’ instead of ‘saw’ in item 11 on purpose. After the analysis of the item (Table 22), it was obvious that all the students had ‘discovered’ new ways to write their essays on internet. That is, they realised that there are other strategies to write. However, we cannot comment on the direct effect of peer feedback on students’ awareness of new strategies. Actually, the project in general was the factor for them to realise these strategies. In other words, within the scope of the project they were supplied with only a limited number of sample essays in the classroom by their teacher and they were instructed to search for model essays on their own from the websites similar to what their teacher showed. Intentionally, the students were canalized to find out them. Hence, despite the fact that we cannot observe immediate effects of peer feedback, the project has proved to have positive effects on learner autonomy.

**Table 22: OPFQ Item 11**



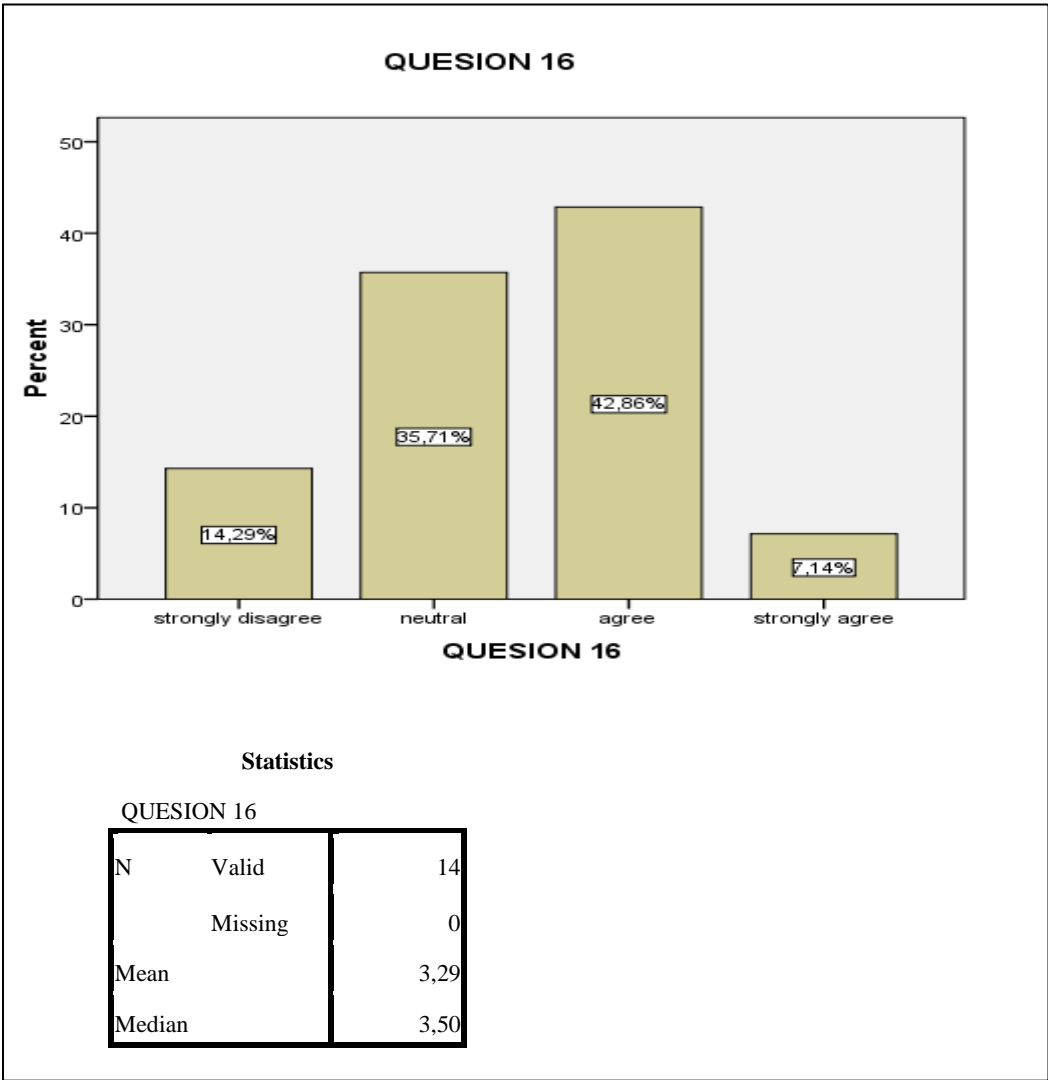
*(Item 16: I changed my strategy to study writing after my friends' comments.)*

As for item 16, although it seems to be very close in meaning to item 10, they aim to measure different factors. Item 16 tries to figure out the effect of peer feedback on the students' decisions to change their studying strategies. The responses to item 16 distributed around the mean at 3.29 (between strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (5)). From the analysis in the Table 23, it can be inferred that nearly the half of the students changed their strategies (42.8 % 'agree' plus 7.14 % 'strongly agree'). For the rest of the class, we can argue that even if they changed their strategies, their reason to do so was not peer feedback<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, it would be wrong to mention that there is an effect of peer feedback on the students' decisions about maintaining or changing their strategies to study writing as they were split in half in their views.

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<sup>14</sup> This item may appear as measuring two things. One is students' changing strategies and the other is effect of friends' comments on it. As my research is concentrated on the peer feedback, I am not interested in whether the students changed their strategies or not. My aim is to find out the involvement of peer feedback in their decision no matter whether the change occurred or not. This point was made clear to the students before they started to fill in the questionnaire.

**Table 23: OPFQ Item 16**



*(Item 22: With the help of the project, I learnt new ways to make use of the internet for my other lessons.)*

The last item in Category D, item 22 aimed to measure if the students were able to make their strategies flexible to be used in other disciplines as well. From Table 24, it is understood that most of the students learnt other ways of using the internet for educational purposes. However, there is one student who marked ‘neutral’. From the results and the character of the item, it is not clear whether this student did not learn any new ways or s/he had been already making use of them. Yet, it can still be argued that more than the half of the

students (57.1 %) was quite sure about using their new strategy/strategies. Therefore, we can safely arrive at the conclusion that there is a positive effect of online peer feedback on learner autonomy.

**Table 24: OPFQ Item 22**

QUESTION 22				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid neutral	1	7,1	7,1	7,1
agree	5	35,7	35,7	42,9
strongly agree	8	57,1	57,1	100,0
Total	14	100,0	100,0	

In the end, we can mention about the item clusters which were grouped during the factor analysis. The gist we can infer from them is that the students benefited from the internet in a way that they can use what they gained in their future studies as well. Moreover, they make us understand that with the help of peer feedback the students changed their strategies to write and to study writing for their benefit. In brief, the online peer feedback project helped the students to gain the ability of evaluating strategies characteristic of autonomous learning.

**4.2.1.2. PART B**

In the Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire there were 3 open statements for the students to complete them with their opinions (items 23, 24 and 25). With a descriptive analysis approach, the responses were coded and commented.

*(Item 23: If there are any, write the advantages of the project .....)*

Item 23 asked for the thoughts of the students about the advantages of the project. Out of 14 students, 4 students answered the item. When I coded the responses, there appeared two advantages of the project. One was that the students wrote their essays first on a Microsoft Word document on the computer and then they copied and pasted it to the forum's blank area to write. For them the advantages of doing this were that Microsoft Word corrected automatically their spelling mistakes and if there were sentence fragments, it showed them by underlining those sentences. It can be said that these advantages are extra gainings of the project, because there is already a blank space for members to write their texts on the forum. Instead, the students developed their own way to handle it.

The second one was that one student wrote s/he could study when s/he was at home as well. We can interpret this advantage as the advantage of implementing the project online.

*(Item 24: If there are any, write the disadvantages of the project.....)*

Item 24 asked the disadvantages of the project and only one student responded it. His/her answer was that s/he needed internet connection every time. Actually, this was expected as a limitation of the study.

*(Item 25: If there are any, write the difficulties you encountered during the project.....)*

The final item was 25 and the students were asked to write any difficulties they encountered during the project. And no response was received back.

#### **4.2.1.3. GENERAL ITEMS IN THE ONLINE PEER FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE**

In the Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire, it was necessary to write general items about autonomy to make interpretations about the possible effects of the project. Moreover, it was important to insert certain items which asked the students' opinions about internet and computer use in the project.

Items 2, 4, 15 and 19 were designed to be general ones about autonomy. However, during the application of the questionnaire, it was understood that item 15 was not a valid item, as it was mentioning what all the students actually did during the project. In other words, they could not grade the item with any range other than 'strongly agree'. For this reason, item 15 was omitted during the analysis procedures. Moreover, during the analysis it was also understood that the item 19 was a constant for all the students and because of the characteristic of the item, it was impossible to make a comment from the responses about the effect of peer feedback on learner autonomy.

As for items 5, 11, 14 and 21, they were designed to measure the effects of computer and internet use during the peer feedback activity on learner autonomy in the course of the project.

##### **4.2.1.3.1. GENERAL ITEMS ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY**

*(Item 2: I find it beneficial to work/study in groups.)*

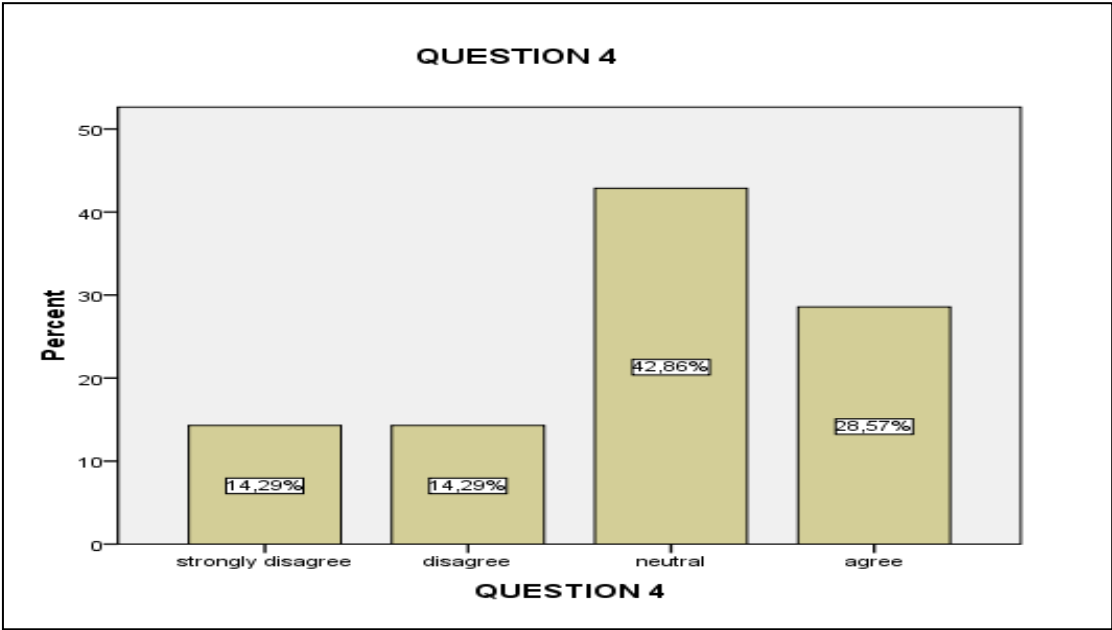
Item 2 was present in the questionnaire to understand the students' preferences of studying/working in groups or alone. Without any missing response, all the students agreed that they thought studying/working in groups was beneficial for them with the mean at 4.57 (between strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (5)). From this result we can infer that the

students were collaborative, ready to take responsibilities in their groups, tolerant and outgoing. Therefore, it can be suggested that they had certain features of autonomy at the end of the project.

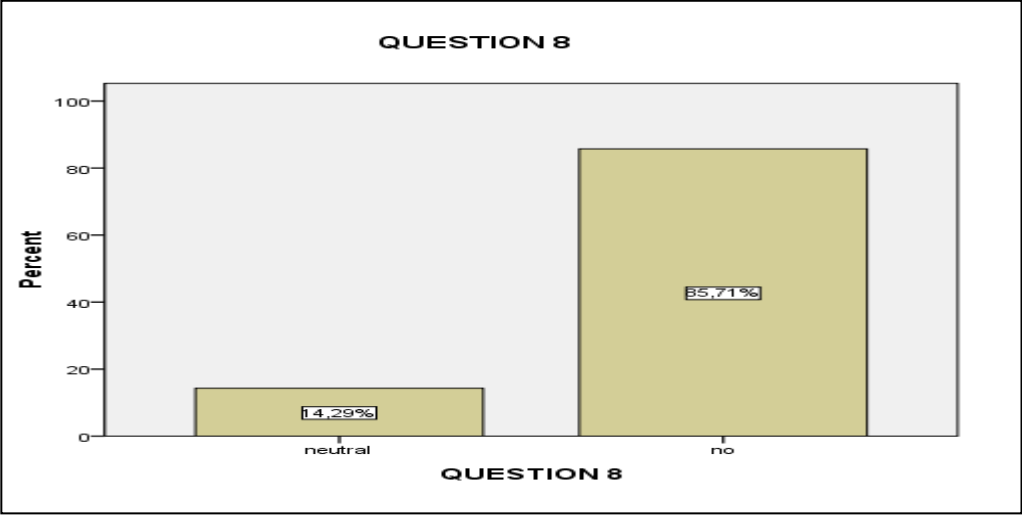
*(Item 4: I feel confident in writing in English.)*

The next general item 4 was the same item that the students had already answered in the Diagnostic Questionnaire (the item 8) except for the fact that this time it was a statement. The students were expected to indicate to what degree they agreed with their confidence in writing in English. In Table 25, it can be observed that the students scattered amongst the points unlike many other questions in the questionnaire. However, from the valid percent it can be understood that almost half of the students (42.9%) preferred 'neutral' as their answers. This is significant when I consider item 8 in the Diagnostic Questionnaire. In Table 26, the responses of the students to item 8 in the Diagnostic Questionnaire can be seen in percentages. If we consider 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' points as 'no', and 'strongly agree' (despite being inexistent in the responses) and 'agree' as 'yes'; the difference between the percentages becomes more obvious. In other words, while the mean was at 0.86 (0: neutral, 1: no, 2: yes) which meant that students were close to the option 'no' in the Diagnostic Questionnaire; in the Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire the mean is at 2.86 which means they were close to 'neutral' (between strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (5)). It can be interpreted that although students started the course with a low level of confidence in EFL writing, at the end of the project they gained a relatively small portion of confidence; at least to mark 'neutral' instead of 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'.

**Table 25: OPFQ Item 4**



**Table 26: Diagnostic Questionnaire Item 8**



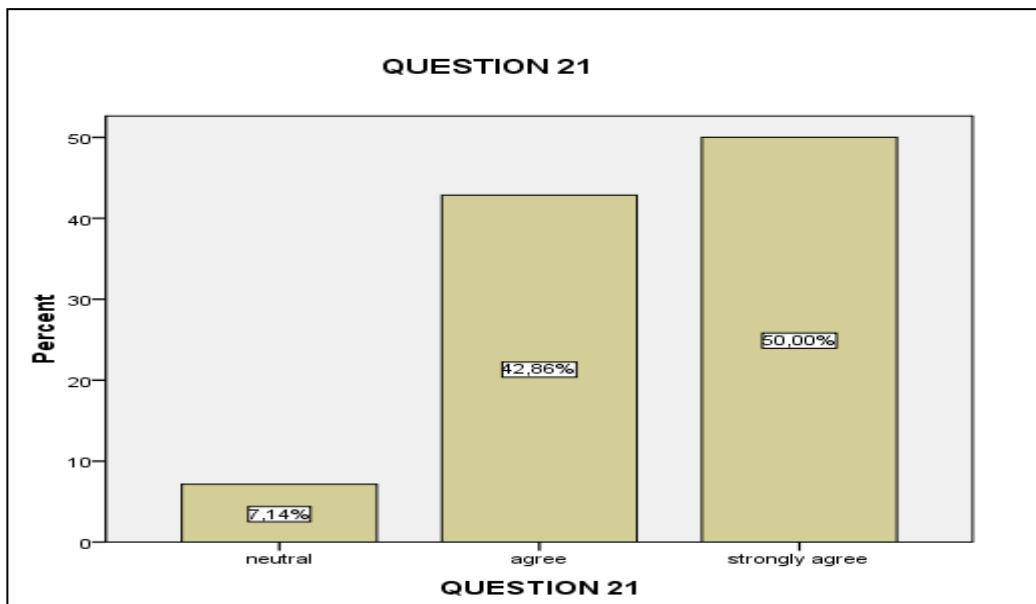
Furthermore, as mentioned above, there were four items (items 5, 11, 14 and 21) aimed to measure the effect of internet and computer use during the peer feedback project. Items 5 and 14 were already analysed. After the analysis of item 21, the results of these three items will be discussed.

*(Item 21: If I have an opportunity, I would like to use online forum activity in my future studies.)*

Item 21 aimed to display to what extent the students agreed on using online forum activities in their future learning. As it is seen in Table 27, students were positive in using it for their future learning situations. Therefore, it can be inferred that the peer feedback activity was appreciated as an online activity.

Actually, this question is particular in the questionnaire, because it gives a general idea of the whole project, in explanation, peer feedback and its being an online activity. From the data, it is obvious that the general opinion of the students was positive towards the whole process, because, except for the 7.1 % of the students, all the rest agreed to repeat same kind of activity, if they had the possibility in the future.

**Table 27: OPFQ Item 21**



As for the general impact of items 5, 11, 14 and 21, the results of each of the item show that the students were positive about using internet and they benefited from it during the

project. Furthermore, although it is not immediately obvious from items 5 and 21; from the figures of item 14, it can be argued that using internet to implement peer feedback had a positive effect on the students' autonomy. We can comment on the results as probably internet raised students' awareness that whenever they needed to check anything on the forum or on internet, it was always there, ready to be accessed. And it comforted them, because they themselves discovered new strategies to write from internet, which means they realised that there is not only the way teacher shows.

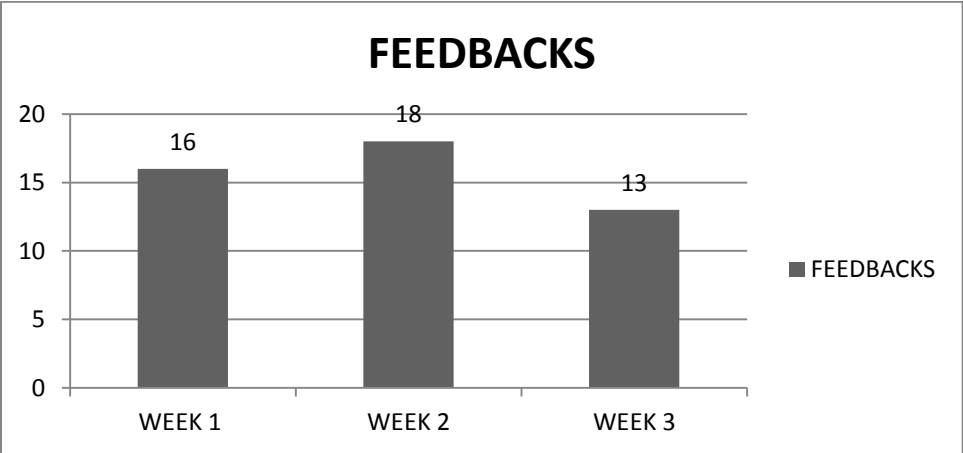
To sum up, the analysis of the Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire supplied information both on the relationship between online peer feedback and learner autonomy and the role of implementing the project online. All in all, according to the results, it can be inferred that in general online peer feedback positively affects learner autonomy, although the same cannot be deduced when it comes to each four single autonomous learner characteristics categories mentioned above.

#### **4.3. ANALYSIS OF THE FORUM AND COMMENTARY**

Being the last part of the study to be analysed all the texts on the forum including the students' essays and the feedback threads were copied and pasted on a Microsoft Word document without any changes made even on its layout (Appendix 4). Then each essay and each feedback were read carefully to observe any trait of autonomy in the students. Moreover, the number of the essays, how many students commented on them, which student wrote how many essays and comments were calculated. Finally the data were analysed by making use of descriptive approaches. As for the numbers, they were used to make generalizations.

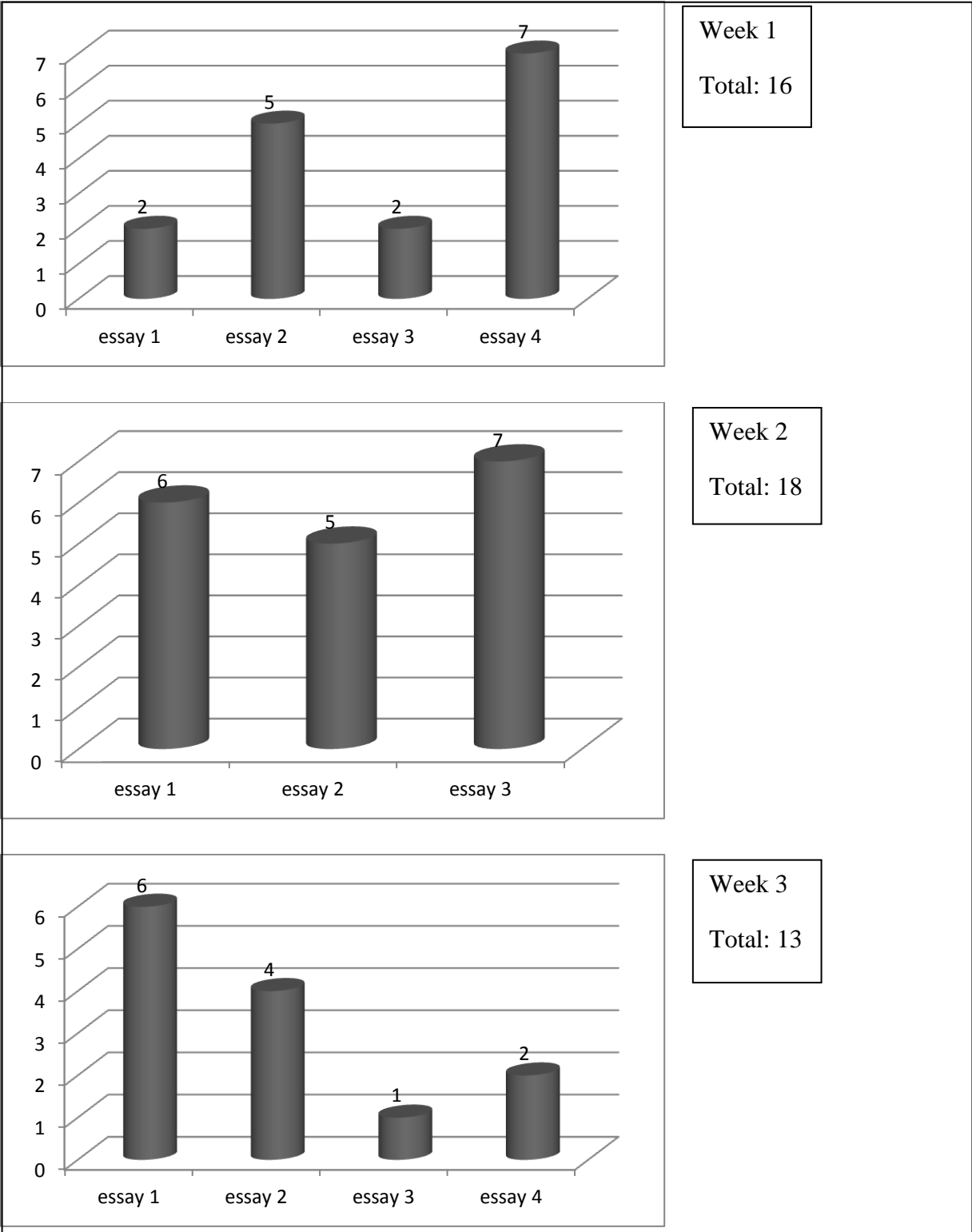
In total there were 11 essays on the forum in the three week period. When we consider there were 14 students in the classroom, it is obvious that 3 students did not post any essay. When we checked the letters that refer to the students and essays, those three students' letters become clear. Students U, B and N did not post any essay; however, they gave feedback. In Table 28, we can observe the total distribution of the number of feedbacks in weeks.

**Table 28: Distribution of Feedbacks in Weeks**



For the amount of the number of feedbacks for each essay, we can examine Table 29. It is seen that there is not a standard distribution of the numbers of the feedbacks for each week and for each essay. All in all, what we can understand from the numbers is that although the students did not comment on each of the essays and gave feedback to some essays more, for a classroom of 14 students, they can be said to have been active on average on the forum by giving at least 13 feedbacks in one week.

**Table 29: Distribution of Feedbacks in Essays**



As for the analysis of the texts and students' feedbacks, we can obtain a broader view than the numbers above to observe if the students showed any autonomous behaviour.

One significant sign of autonomy can be observed in the students' self-monitoring behaviours. Student E posted his/her essay (Damacana (Carboys)) in the second week and his/her friends gave feedback. In one moment, student E realises his/her mistake and corrects it himself/herself in another thread. Probably, this student was reading his/her essay again to check what his/her friends corrected in his/her essay and s/he realised a mistake in it himself/herself. Therefore, we can mention about a positive effect of peer feedback on revealing self-monitoring; indirectly, though.

Another point which can help us understand the relationship between online peer feedback and learner autonomy was hidden in the sentence qualities of the students in their feedbacks. In other words, it was observed that as the time passed, the students gradually started to use sentences which were complex and asking/giving more information about the essays than the ones that they formed with modal verbs (especially 'should') just to give suggestions. We may infer from this change that they became more confident during the project in writing what they thought. Furthermore, we can deduce also that they might have understood the function of giving/receiving peer feedback, thus in both ways they became more active in it.

Moreover, the students wrote in Turkish when they could not manage to express themselves in English. For example, student H gave feedback to his/her own essay after his/her friends' and to clear the problematic point, s/he wrote it in English and in parentheses, s/he explained what s/he meant by that in Turkish. This can be regarded as a learner strategy, because using Turkish would have provided immediate benefits in obtaining the information.

One last interesting finding was that student B gave feedback on vocabulary in the first essay (Genetically Modified Food) in the second week. What is interesting about his/her feedback was that she used Google to check vocabularies. In explanation, s/he searched the

vocabularies on Google to check the validity or even maybe frequency of the vocabularies instead of the traditional way of looking it up in a dictionary (even an online dictionary). S/he said s/he 'googled' the vocabulary and suggested that both of the vocabularies were suitable to the situation. It can be said that like student H, s/he made a decision on using 'googling' strategy, which provided solution for him/her in this new learning environment.

As the sample of the study was limited to only 14 students, it is difficult to make comments in a broad sense. However, even though it cannot be claimed certainly, from the behaviours of the students and their general attendance to the activity, we can infer that online peer feedback might have triggered learner autonomy.

#### **4.4. REFLECTION OF THE COURSE TEACHER ON THE PROJECT AND COMMENTARY**

At the end of the project, the teacher of the course was requested to reflect on all the process. Her observations are interesting to mention, since they shed light on the relationship between the online peer feedback activity and learner autonomy from the second perspective.

First of all, she stated that she was content with the project. It was a new experience also for her. She mentioned that because the feedback was given cold, in explanation, after the class hours, she thought this helped the students to study outside of the classroom as well. They had to remember/revise what they studied in that week and give feedback to their friends' essays. In this way, they studied in a programmed way instead of studying/revising before the examinations. Then she expressed what happens usually in her classes. 'During the class hours the students get tired to learn information, do all the steps to write and write their final texts.' she said and continued 'at the end of the lesson, they are usually reluctant to read other texts and reflect on them.'

Moreover, she stated that although she could not observe a great amount of reduction in the number of the mistakes she corrected, the overall quality of the essays had improved to some extent. Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that the teacher had lectured this class for 4 weeks before the forum was used. Therefore, her commentary can make comparisons of the students' success for a short period of time.

Finally, she said that then the students had an online portfolio to which they could apply at any time.

From the thoughts of the teacher, it can be inferred that the project supplied the students with a necessary situation to foster autonomy. In explanation, she mentions that the students could study after the class hours, in their free time. It was their own responsibility and when taken the Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire results into consideration, we can say that they did it not as their responsibility, but as an activity that they benefited from. Furthermore, her reflections make us realise one not-previously-devised advantage of the project: An e - portfolio that can be used by the students at any time. This aspect of the project may be designed deliberately for further research to examine phenomenon the scope of lifelong learning in the future.

#### **4.5. THE SUMMARY OF THE COMMENTARIES**

Having analysed and commented on the data gathered from the students, the teacher of the course and the online writing forum, we can step back and see the big picture now. It is clear from the figures in the questionnaires that the students had the necessary equipment to connect to internet and visit the forum, and actually it is seen that they did. It was observed that the students had negative ideas about English and English writing lessons and their main reason why they wanted to improve their English was the job and examination worries. However, it was found that after the online peer feedback activity, students showed behaviours which are the characteristics of autonomous learners. Therefore, in general it was interpreted that although the same effect could not be observed in all the four categories of

characteristics of autonomous learners; online peer feedback affects learner autonomy positively.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter a discussion of the study will be presented. The author's reflection on her work will be supplied as well as summary and conclusion. Finally, limitations of the study will be mentioned and implications for future research will be suggested.

#### **5.1. DISCUSSION**

Autonomy in language learning is all about committing oneself to his/her own learning voluntarily and consciously. Several studies in learner autonomy have revealed the characteristics of autonomous learners. One comprehensive work by Omaggio (1978, cited in Thanasoulas, 2000) in the field suggests that the characteristics of autonomous learners are as follows:

Autonomous learners

1. have insights into their learning styles and strategies;
2. take an active approach to the learning task at hand;
3. are willing to take risks, i.e., to communicate in the target language at all costs;
4. are good guessers;

5. attend to form as well as to content, that is, place importance on accuracy as well as appropriacy;
6. develop the target language into a separate reference system and are willing to revise and reject hypotheses and rules that do not apply; and
7. have a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language.

Having regard to chapter one, these characteristics of autonomous learners were incorporated under four categories and they were converted into items to be conducted to the subjects of this research as a questionnaire at the end of the project described previously to gather responses. The objective was to find out if there was a relationship between online peer feedback and learner autonomy. However, it was necessary to understand the subjects' backgrounds in using computer, attitudes towards EFL writing and readiness to learn autonomously. Thus, another questionnaire was applied before the project got started.

One point was immediately obvious from the figures in both of the questionnaires that all the students had the capability and chances of benefiting from the internet for educational and non-educational purposes. When handled wisely, this environment can supply numerous opportunities to develop learner autonomy. In this study, the advantage of conducting the peer feedback activity online, showed itself as an element to trigger learner autonomy. There are plenty of activities other than peer feedback that language teachers may implement directly or by modifying them according to their goals and new media to develop autonomy in their learners with the help of online environments.

Despite the fact that the subjects of the study took responsibilities required by the online peer feedback activity during the project, the results proved that they were encumbered with responsibilities to be active in the project not because they wanted, but because they had to. In other words, the feature of the case study, online peer feedback, was designed to have the students take responsibilities in their learning (i.e. the students searched for model essays on internet for their own use, they chose their own topic to write their essays etc.). As a result, although it was observed that the students took responsibility during the online peer feedback activity, due to the fact that they did not show significant signs of taking responsibility on

their own, it is concluded that online peer feedback does not affect the taking responsibility of one's own learning characteristic of autonomous learner. Therefore, the future imitations of the research needs improvements in more responsibility supplement for the subjects. In this way, it can help learners to develop their autonomy to an extent.

One of the advantages gained from the online peer feedback project was that the students became aware of their own learning strategies and they added new strategies to solve their problems in EFL writing. Applying new activities as well as already known ones in a tailored way in accordance with the objectives of the lessons allows learners to revise their strategies and methods of learning and adjust them to the new learning situations by modifying and/or adding/creating new ones. In the study, peer feedback was a new method of learning for the students. Implementing it in an online environment added more diversity to their learning chances. For teachers who would like to help their students realise and expand their strategies, the online peer feedback project can be suggested. In this way, they can also trigger learner autonomy in their classes.

Another important finding of the research was that it provided an environment for the students to realise how they learn and evaluate their learning activities by what they learnt, how they learnt and how quality it was. From the results, it is clear that the students benefited from the online peer feedback activity, and they could apply it in their future studies. For the teachers who want to foster autonomy in their classes, the project can be suggested.

Eventually, the results of the data gathered from the questionnaires, the forum and the teacher answered to the research questions of this study as follows:

- Does peer feedback in the English as foreign language writing lessons contribute to learner autonomy?

Yes, peer feedback is found to provide the emergence of autonomous behaviours in the subjects.

- Does online peer feedback activities in the English as foreign language writing lessons have an effect on the development of learner autonomy?

Yes, online peer feedback activity is found to provide a slight positive effect on the development of learner autonomy.

In conclusion, when examined under the categories of specific characteristics of learner autonomy, the relationship between the online peer feedback and learner autonomy is arguable. Despite this fact, when considered learner autonomy as a whole concept rather than its components, online peer feedback provided positive effects on learner autonomy in EFL writing lessons. However, due to the feature of the research, it is impossible to comment on to what degree they affected the phenomenon.

## **5.2. AUTHOR'S REFLECTION**

Since the beginning of the research, I have been around to read articles, attend conferences or watch them online, examine case studies about the development of autonomy in learners. It was interesting to observe how teachers can help their students by simple touches to the activities they implement in their classrooms. It was also interesting to see how students gain skills from which they can benefit for a whole life time.

I was lucky to be welcomed into the classroom in which I conducted my research. The atmosphere maintained its friendliness throughout the study. The teacher and the students volunteered to take part in the project. I did not have any difficulty in asking the students to fill in the questionnaires or requesting them to join the forum.

During the research, I learnt a lot, especially about autonomy and varieties and functions of feedback. In the end, I came up with peer feedback to be the most suitable kind to observe autonomous behaviours in students in periods of time.

Finally, I can say that I am convinced that the online peer feedback activity in EFL writing lessons helps learners develop autonomy. However, as in all social researches, the factors may make changes in the results. The outstanding features of this study were that the learners were adolescents and they were attending the course voluntarily.

### **5. 3. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The importance of the study stems from the fact that the shift towards communicative teaching methods put the learner in the center of the learning process. This change forced teachers to change their roles from the person who teaches to the person who facilitates learning. In this concept, autonomy appears to be the target of education, allowing the emergence of the need to understand what it is and discovering ways to foster it.

The aim of this dissertation was to clarify any relationship and its features between online peer feedback and learner autonomy in EFL writing lessons. It also sought to know the effect of conducting peer feedback in an online environment. To achieve this aim, the project which included 14 summer school students attending ESL writing lessons, a forum and peer feedback activity was arranged. The first step was to give the Diagnostic Questionnaire to the students to explore their background information on their computer use and frequency of connection to internet, attitudes towards English and finally autonomy readiness. Meanwhile the students were trained in giving feedback to each other, the forum was created and they were asked to join. Giving and receiving feedback activity on the forum lasted for 3 weeks and at the end they students were given the Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire. In addition to the questionnaires, the data gathered from the forum and the course teacher's reflections were used to achieve different perspectives to the study.

In order to analyse the questionnaires, SPSS 16.0 was utilized. However, for the analysis of the open ended items in the questionnaires and the data on the forum descriptive methods were used. Moreover, the teacher's reflection was interpreted.

Finally, even if it is difficult to generalise the finding, the students displayed behaviours characteristic to autonomous learners on the forum in their feedbacks. And the results of the analyses of the questionnaires and the course teacher's reflection showed that online peer feedback effects learner autonomy in EFL writing lessons positively.

#### **5.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Being the feature of the project, the students had to get access to computer/laptop/tablet computer etc. and internet whenever they wanted to participate in the activity. Considering the existence of internet points almost in every corner, this limitation can be eliminated. However, the brevity of the summer school period and the limited number of the subjects were the challenging parts of the study. Finally, the subjects participating in the study were already motivated students as they chose to attend the preparatory classes during the summer period voluntarily.

#### **5.5. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The study explored the relationship between online peer feedback and autonomy by dividing the characteristics of autonomy into four categories. In spite of the fact that the study provided a general comment on the effect of online peer feedback on learner autonomy, it was seen that there is need for a further detailed research on each category separately to understand the phenomenon better.

All in all, autonomous learning is the key to being a lifelong learner in our rapidly changing world. By being autonomous we can raise the quality of our learning. Online peer feedback has proved to have positive effects on learner autonomy in EFL writing lessons. If implemented in appropriate conditions like those described in the research, it can be used in foreign language classrooms to develop autonomy in learners.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **PEER FEEDBACK CHECKLIST**

Check your friends' essays by going through the list below. When you detect a part to be improved, tell your friends how you think they can improve it.

#### **ORGANIZATION**

The essay has a title.

The essay has a clear thesis statement.

The essay contains an introductory paragraph, body paragraphs and a conclusion paragraph.

#### **CONTENT**

The purpose of the essay is clear.

The topic is explained and developed well.

The supportive ideas, examples and sentence connectors are logically used to inform the reader.

#### **VOCABULARY**

The writer used a variety of vocabularies appropriately.

#### **GRAMMAR & MECHANICS**

Spelling, punctuation and capitalisation of the essay are correct.

There are few or no errors in grammar and mechanics.

## APPENDIX 2

Below you will see the sites that may help you in our writing class. You can find topics to develop as well as sample essays to examine. Don't forget! These are only a small number of them. Many more are waiting to be discovered!

- <http://www.123helpme.com/search.asp?text=effect>
- <http://www.buowl.boun.edu.tr/students/types%20of%20essays/Cause%20and%20effect%20Essay.htm>
- <http://www.abarticledirectory.com/>
- <http://www.essaymojo.co.uk/blog/essay-topics/opinion-essay-topics/>
- <http://www.goodessaytopics.com/cause-effect-essays-topics.html>
- <http://grammar.about.com/od/developingessays/a/topicargumt07.htm>
- <http://www.slideshare.net/aponce4/an-opinion-essay-presentation>
- <http://www.mesacc.edu/~joanf82551/eng102/class/lectures/opiniontopics.html>

## APPENDIX 3

### Diagnostic Questionnaire

I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following questions concerning our future project Online Peer Feedback. This is not a test, so there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers and you don't even have to write your name on it. I am interested in your personal answers. Please give your answers sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of the investigation. Thank you very much for your help.

Hacer Nilay Suludere

#### PART A

Following are a number of questions. I would like you to indicate your answer by putting an 'X' in the parentheses next to the choices.

1. Do you have a personal computer/ laptop/ tablet computer etc.?  
( ) Yes ( ) No
2. How often do you connect to internet?  
( ) Always ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Rarely ( ) Never
3. Do you benefit from internet for your educational purposes?  
( ) Yes ( ) Neutral ( ) No
4. Are you a member of at least one forum on internet?  
( ) Yes ( ) No
  4. a. If yes, are you an active member?  
( ) Yes ( ) Neutral ( ) No
5. How do you prepare your written assignments?  
( ) On Computer ( ) Manually ( ) Both on computer and manually
6. Do you think teachers are the only sources of information in the English Language lessons?  
( ) Yes ( ) No
7. Do you like the English Language writing lessons?  
( ) Yes ( ) Neutral ( ) No
8. Do you feel confident in the English Language writing lessons?  
( ) Yes ( ) Neutral ( ) No

9. Do you think you are successful in English Language writing?

Yes       Neutral       No

10. Are you tolerant to others' positive and/or negative criticisms?

Yes       Neutral       No

11. Have you ever been a part of online forum/s for educational purposes?

Yes       No

12. If you were given the chance, would you like to choose your course materials?

Yes       Neutral       No

13. If you were asked, could you define your own learning strategies?

Yes       Neutral       No

14. Which English Language skill lesson do you feel you do best?

Reading       Writing  
 Listening       Speaking (Interaction and Production)

**PART B**

Following is an incomplete statement. I would like you to complete the blank with your personal thoughts.

15. I want to improve my English, because

.....  
.....

**Thank You**



## **APPENDIX 4**

The following texts were copied from the forum (<http://hns.myfreeforum.org/index.php>) and no changes were applied. The letters refer to the possessors of the texts right below each.

### **WEEK 1, OPINION ESSAY**

#### **ESSAY 1**

##### **R**

##### **Families and Friends**

It is a common point of view that families have a great importance in a person's life. This is true. They grow us, teach us, support us etc. However, friends are another important element in person's life also. they play with us, enjoy with us etc. When a person asks which is more important, I say friends. I believe that friends are important in people's lives for three reasons: we spend most times with them, we share secrets with them, we talk with them.

To start with friends are important because we spend time with them. We go out to cafes, we play games, we go to school with them. So we usually have enjoyable time. But we do not spend many time with our families. If we are high school students, we come home to sleep after lessons and weekend courses. Furthermore if we go to another city for university, we see our families at the weekends or sometimes every month. Therefore, we see our friends more and it affects us.

Secondly, sometimes we can not talk everything with our fathers and mothers. So we talk with our friends. We share our secrets. For example I told that my friend that I liked a girl in or classroom two years ago. However I did not say it to my family. As I said, friends are important in our lives.

Finally, we talk with our friends. Our families are old people and can not understand us. We can not share all the things in our lives with them. So we talk with our friends. We gossip with them. Sometimes we create absurd ideas with them. This is important because we add to each other ideas.

To sum up, I am for the idea that friends are good companions. They are closer to us than our families if we are young enough. We talk with them, we share secrets with them and we spend time with them. now everyone should think about his/her friends and read this again.

**A**

It is well written.

the topic is interesting. you are creative.

In the second paragraph you did repetition 'we we'

you have to put commas. (however)

**H**

Your thesis statement is very good.

Your paragraphs are well organized.

## **ESSAY 2**

**F**

Smoking is the most harmful habit. It make people cancer. But people continue to smoke cigarettes. So why do they continue? I think they smoke because they don't know its dangers. In my opinion smoking should be banned in public places for three reasons.

Firstly, smoking is the most harmful habit. If people smoke, they can get ill easily. If they smoke in publick places where there are other people, they make ill them, too. They have to respect to them. So, smoking should be banned in public places.

Secondly, smoking is an expensive habbit. People pay a lot of money to buy cigarettes. Instead of it, they can buy healthy food or they can save money. Therefore I think smoking ban in public places can be a step for the smokers.

Thirdly, smoking is a dirty habit. People who smoke cigarettes are stinky. Their breaths, clothes and their rooms smell badly. Moreover, the people around them smell, too. So people don't like them. If we ban smoking in public areas, they will be happy.

All in all, smoking is bad and it should be banned in public spaces. If it happens, we will live healthier and happier.

**K**

You should write a title.

You wrote sentence connectors well.

It make people cancer (x) It makes people cancer

**R**

thesis sentence is good.

it is interesting. your topic is daily.

you forgot to write predictors.

**R**

you should pay attention to punctuation. (publick)

**A**

You should put commas. (therefore,)

you should give some examples.

**H**

I agree with my friends.

### **ESSAY 3**

**A**

Television and children

Think about how many hours do you spend in front of television. Why do we watch it? The things we learn from television are so many. But we can't say that all of the things are good. So, I am for the idea that television is harmful to children.

Firstly, television has health problems. If children watch it very close, their eyes can

deteriorate. They are children, so they like colourful things and they want to close to them. But if they watch television very close, they will have eye problems. They can't see well or their eyes are tired .

Secondly, television programmes have many violence scenes. Children watch it and think that it is real. For example, there was a children who throw from balcony. This child thought that he was picachu. so children are effected from cartoons and they think can do, too.

Lastly, television pushes children to laziness. Nowadays, there are researches about fat children. They found that most of these children watch television at least 8 hours on a day. Therefore, they don't play in the garden with their friends and they don't run. So, they don't do physical movements and they become lazy and fat.

In conclusion, I believe that television is dangerous to children. Families should choose television programmes for their children.

**R**

you didn't write predictors.

your conclusion paragraph is too short.

**O**

How many hours do you spend? = how many hours you spend. (reported question)

#### **ESSAY 4**

**H**

##### Keeping Pets

Have you ever thought about the life of pets? Sellers catch them and sell. Generally parents buy to their children them. And children can't take care of them and they die. Even if we say we take care of them well it can't be same with nature. I strongly believe that we make harm to animals when we keep them in our houses.

Firstly, pets are usually sold to children and they don't know care. Their parents help them but after sometimes they are bored. And families are bored, too. So they are ill or die. But in their natural world, they grow healthily and they have babies too.

As for the second, they like them little but when they are big they stop liking. So, parents take them to animal houses (shelter?) and they die there. Instead of keeping them, if we go to zoos we can see and like (?) them.

Lastly, we change their natural features when we make them suitable to houses. For example, we buy birds or fishes. And we put them in aquariums or cages. We take their freedom. Likewise, we buy snakes and sellers take their poisons from them. Therefore, we change them.

All in all, we shouldn't buy pets and keep them in houses. It has many dangers on animals and at the end they die. If we don't buy them, they don't bring animals. So, before buying an animal for us, we should think the damages.

**O**

Your topic is interesting.

Especially second paragraph is interesting.

You didn't write predictors.

You used conjunctions well.

**K**

shelter is ok. Why you put question mark next to like?

**S**

It is good but in the second paragraph, who are they? It doesn't have a referent.

**B**

I think, shelter is better.

**A**

Shelter

## **H**

like (sevmek demek istedim, hayvanı sevmek.). they=children

## **K**

pet kullan o zaman. Öyle bir anlamı var.

## **WEEK 2, ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY**

### **ESSAY 1**

## **T**

Genetically modified food

Go to your kitchen and open your fridge. The tomatoes you have in your fridge are reproductions of natural tomatoes with chemicals. According to a last survey its % 70 probability. Genetically modified food (GMF) is the name of this products. They may be seem harmless but they are in fact. The reasons for its danger are more than benefits.

The first reason why GMF is harmful is that they are not natural. People add chemicals to them. So they grow fast and give more production. So sellers become rich, however buyers become ill. Moreover, some people are allergetic to these chemicals. But they eat them without know.

The second reason why GMF is harmful is that we change the ecology. Last month in America hundreds bees died. A research showed that they died because they ate a flower polen from a garden. In this garden they grow soya beans but not normal. They were GMF. So we break the chain of ecology with GMF.

The last reason why GMF is harmful is that the taste. When we add chemicals to for example tomatoes their taste change. Now we can realize this change but think of our children. They won't know the tomato taste never. Ther may be some people who say that

these chemicals are good, because they (raf ömrünü uzatmak ??) prolong shelf life. however they are wrong, they don't deteriorate because they are like plastics anymore.

All in all GMF is dangerous for humanbeings. It has many reasons for it like the health, ecology and taste. There may be people against this, they may be right but all in all it has more disadvantages then advantages.

**F**

Wow! Very good and creative.

**O**

Thesis statement is not well organized. U could write: the reasons for its dangers are on health, ecology and taste

**B**

Expand shelf life olabilir. Googleladım. İkisi de var.

**E**

This may be seemED (passive)

I liked your paragraphs. there are useful informations.

Your refutation could be better. you should write more supportive details.

**D**

That'tan sonra isim geliyorsa that kullanımlaz. Cümle geliyorsa that kullanılır. (The last reason why GMF is harmful is that the taste)

**S**

You used however, because, for example well. You supported your ideas well. Maybe you could write another sentence in third paragrapf.

## ESSAY 2

### E

One of the hot topics of today is bottled water (carboy?) in Turkey. As you know we buy water in plastic bottle. But ministry of health made a superintendence and they found that they are not healthy. Actually, many people know this but we didn't have an option. But maybe after this, something can happen. Government should ban plastic bottles for three reasons.

The first reason is that plastic bottles have carcinogenic items. When they have water inside and stay under sun these items mix with water. And we drink it. So we take these items inside our bodies and we be ill. Therefore, plastic bottles should be banned.

The second reason is that carboys (?) have much water to drink. They have 20 litres of water inside and it is not healthy anymore if we open them and if we don't drink them in three days. When they stay open, they produce bacterias. And again we drink them so they make ill we.

The third reason is that deliverers bring them to our houses in open trucks. Producers load bottles in trucks and they bring to our houses if we call them. However, these trucks are different. That is some of them open and some of them closed. So on the way, bottles be dirty, stay under sun etc. There may be some people who say we can clean the bottles when we have them. Yes, we can do but in restaurants for example they don't take care too much.

In summary, government should ban plastic bottles (carboys) due to its health problems. They can sell water in supermarkets only and in glass bottles.

### N

Well done! It is a daily issue and you wrote very well.

But you should check your vocabularies.

(bacterias(x)= bacteria; trucks(x)= trucks so on.)

### U

You should write some more sentences in the concluding paragraph.

**D**

You wrote about ministry but you didn't say about it later. But, a good and interesting introductory paragraph.

**E**

Ups! Sorry, I wanted to write And again we drink them so they make ill we (x) = and again we drink them, so they make us ill. Thx for the comment! ☺

**L**

You should check your punctuation: before 'so' you should put comma

**A**

they are hot healty.. maybe they are not healthy. but in general it is good.

### **ESSAY 3**

**L**

Today when we enter into supermarkets, we can find a big fridge and it is full of frozen food. Beans, potatoes, even pizza! People can eat summer vegetables and fruits in winter or vice versa. But, isn't it dangerous to healthy? I strictly believe that frozen foods are dangerous to humans.

First of all, frozen food should be ate immediately. We shouldn't reserve them in our fridges after we buy them.

Secondly, we can reach every kinds of fruits, vegetables and foods everytime. So we don't have time to miss them. When I was a child, I was waiting summer to eat strawberries. But now, we can buy it in winter.

Thirdly, frozen food isn't taste fresh. You can try this at home. Buy frozen beans and buy beans from open market. When you cook, their taste different. Frozen beans are like plastics.

Finally, although there is an opportunity to buy frozen food, we should avoid buying it. It is dangerous to health and they isn't taste good.

**A**

In the first paragraph u should explain cause. And it is short.

**D**

You didn't write refutation. it is not argumentative essay

**T**

Your thesis sentence is about danger but your paragraphs aren't about danger.

**N**

You should write a title.

**N**

And your this is wrong (strawberries: it (x)). You should check your vocabularies.

**L**

I wrote but here there isn't. it is:

Thirdly, frozen food isn't taste fresh. You can try this at home. Buy frozen beans and buy beans from open market. When you cook, their taste different. Frozen beans are like plastics. It may be said that it is easy to prepare but when you think, taste is more important than time.

**L**

I wrote title in subject.

**K**

Taste is verb. So isn't taste good (x); tastes good.

## WEEK 3, CAUSE AND EFFECT ESSAY

### ESSAY 1

S

#### Traffic Problem

Where are you from? If you are from a small village, you may not know traffic. However, I am from Istanbul and I know perfect. It means the movement of pedestrians and cars on roads. Some days and some hours it is too much that you can't go more than 10 kmph. But why? Cities are big not like villages. But why do we have traffic problems? There are three main reasons of traffic problem in big cities which are unstructured roads, population and people's attitudes.

The first and the most important reason for traffic problem in big cities is that unstructured roads. Municipality makes new roads but they don't repair old roads. Old roads are usually main roads of city. So people should pass. So every people come from different quarters of city to there and they be crowd there. For this reason on many roads have traffic problems.

The first important reason for traffic problem in big cities is that population. In big cities population is usually more than one million. Imagine that they have cars. So in the morning when people go to job and in the evening when they turn from job they create a crowd. Especially at these hours traffic problem appears.

The first important reason for traffic problem in big cities is that people are thoughtless. They have cars and they use it every time. However they can use public transportation. Most busses free travel. They can take busses so there will be less cars on road. If we change our minds and use public transportations more, we can relieve traffic.

All in all, as I mentioned above, there are three causes of traffic problems. Although we blame municipality, we can do something, too, to decrease traffic problems.

**B**

pay attention to commas and put margins. but it is really good!

**F**

very good! you explained well causes.

**O**

well organized but i think in intro paragraph this sentence is irrelevant:

Cities are big not like villages.

**K**

after that you should use sentence. if you use vocabulry, you shouldnt use that.

kalıp şu: The first important reason for SOMETHING is that SENTENCE

The first important reason for SOMETHING is VOCABULARY

**T**

less sayılamayanlar için. fewer cars

## **ESSAY 2**

**K**

Unsuccessful University Students

After high school, students usually continue to university. And they usually go to other cities and leave their parents. In the new city, they have a lot of problems. And they add their be unsuccessful students. Actually, there are three main reason for university students to be unsuccessful.

The first reason why they are unsuccessful is that they change their environment. Most students move a new city and the cant live there like before. Their habits change. They don't

have mothers to clean their clothes and cook their food. So, they have to find time to do these things instead of just studying.

The second reason why they are unsuccessful is that lessons at university are more difficult than high school. They don't know how to start studying. They have a lot of topics and a lot of different lessons. Until they find their way to study, they are unsuccessful.

The final reason why they are unsuccessful is that they are free. When they go to different cities, they leave their parents. They have their own life in new city and their friends. No one is telling to study to them. So, they enjoy more than they study. This is the last but most important reason.

In brief, it is not a surprise that university students are unsuccessful in their first year. They have many factors. However, when they taste unsuccessful, they change things and they become successful.

**T**

It is good but second paragraph (supportive) is poor.

**F**

move to a new city,

And they add their be unsuccessful students (ne demek istedim?)

**K**

bu onların başarısız olmalarına katkı sağlar demek istedim.

**O**

it adds to their unsuccessfulness olabilir.

### **ESSAY 3**

**O**

Effects of Losing a Job

We don't think too much but we all want to have good jobs at the end of education. Actually, this is the main reason for us to get education. After we finish school, it is perfect if we can find a job, it is not bad if we can't find a job suddenly but it is too bad if we lose a job which we have. It has many effects on the person first of all and then on the people around him. We can cover effects of losing a job under three important topics: psychological effects, effects on family and development of new skills.

The most important effect of losing a job is on the person. When they earn money, suddenly they stop. And they feel insufficient because of this reason. What is more, they feel insufficient because they are dismissed. Therefore, their psychology goes down and they are stressed. They become unhappy and angry people.

The second effect of losing a job is that it effects families as well. Imagine that father loses his job in a family and they remain without money (if mother isn't working). This effects their financial situation and limits them from social life. Therefore, problems happen and sometimes families break up.

The last effect of losing a job is that people think why they dismissed. When they think about it, they find that sometimes they are not sufficient for job. Therefore, they start developing their skills and they have better jobs in the future.

To sum up, losing a job results in many bad ways like bad psychology and problems in families, however, some people can change it to a chance like developing their skills. Nevertheless, losing a job isn't the best thing in the world.

**E**

well done! It is really interesting

## **ESSAY 4**

**4**

Reasons of learning English

Are you a student? I am a student and along with many lessons, I am taking English as well. It is not easy; however, we should learn it. There are three main causes for learning English which are obligation, job and intellectuality.

The first reason why people learn English is that they study at schools and it is an obligatory lesson. You have to learn it well so you can pass your classes. For prep classes of universities, it is more difficult. If you cant pass it you have to study till you pass and if you cant pass in 2 years, they dismiss you. For this reason people learn English.

The second reason is jobs. When you look at the notices in newspapers, you see that they want English knowing people for jobs. Moreover, when you know English, u can have better jobs and you can earn more money.

The third reason why people learn English is that they want to be intellectual. Today information language is English. People want to read and listen to information but they cant find translations everytime. So they learn to read these things in English so they become intellectual.

In conclusion, there are many reasons for people to learn English. The most important ones are obligation, job and intellectuality. What is your reason to learn English?

**N**

You could write more supportive sentences in the second body.

**L**

Your conclusion is too short.

You should improve your introduction too. hemen thesis cmlesine girmiş. birşeyler daha yazabilirdin.

## APPENDIX 5

### Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire

I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following questions concerning our project Online Peer Feedback. This is not a test, so there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers and you don't even have to write your name on it. I am interested in your personal opinion. Please give your answers sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of the investigation. Thank you very much for your help.

#### PART A

Hacer Nilay Suludere

Following are a number of statements. I would like you to indicate your opinion by putting an 'X' in the box that shows the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I decided writing topics of my assignments on my own.					
2. I find it beneficial to work/study in groups.					
3. I benefited from the discussions of my classmates, while I was writing my own essays.					
4. I feel confident in writing in English.					
5. Posting essays on the forum was time consuming.					
6. I gave feedback to all of the posted essays on the forum.					
7. Now I know what I need to improve my writing in English.					
8. I felt that I learnt despite not being taught by the teacher on the forum.					
9. Now I can choose the methods of learning writing that suits me best.					
10. I didn't change my writing strategy during the project.					
11. I discovered new ways to write, while I was searching model essays on internet.					
12. My friends' comments helped me to see my weak points in writing in English.					
13. I felt more comfortable in writing for my classmates than for my teacher.					
14. I visited the forum even if I needn't have done.*					
15. I tried to write well to get good comments from my friends.					
16. I changed my strategy to study writing after my friends' comments.					
17. I don't rely on my friends' feedbacks.					
18. I got frustrated when my friends corrected my essay.					
19. I can organize my time for studying.					
20. I felt bad, when I couldn't give feedback.					
21. If I have an opportunity, I would like to use online forum activity in my future studies.					
22. With the help of the project, I learnt new ways to make use of the internet for my other lessons.					

\*Necessity may refer to posting essays or commenting about posts/essays on the forum.

**PART B**

Following are a number of incomplete statements. I would like you to complete the blanks with your personal thoughts.

23. If there are any, write the advantages of the project

.....  
.....

24. If there are any, write the disadvantages of the project

.....  
.....

25. If there are any, write the difficulties you encountered during the project

.....  
.....

**Thank You**



## APPENDIX 6

### Diagnostic Questionnaire

I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following questions concerning our future project Online Peer Feedback. This is not a test, so there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers and you don't even have to write your name on it. I am interested in your personal answers. Please give your answers sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of the investigation. Thank you very much for your help.

Hacer Nilay Suludere

#### PART A

Following are a number of questions. I would like you to indicate your answer by putting an 'X' in the parentheses next to the choices.

Numbers in red indicate the values I appointed for each response.

1. Do you have a personal computer/ laptop/ tablet computer etc.?

2 ( ) Yes 1 ( ) No

2. How often do you connect to internet?

5 ( ) Always 4 ( ) Often 3 ( ) Sometimes 2 ( ) Rarely 1 ( ) Never

3. Do you benefit from internet for your educational purposes?

2 ( ) Yes 0 ( ) Neutral 1 ( ) No

4. Are you a member of at least one forum on internet?

2 ( ) Yes 1 ( ) No

4 .a. If yes, are you an active member?

2 ( ) Yes 0 ( ) Neutral 1 ( ) No

5. How do you prepare your written assignments?

1 ( ) On Computer 2 ( ) Manually 3 ( ) Both on computer and manually

6. Do you think teachers are the only sources of information in the English Language lessons?

2 ( ) Yes 1 ( ) No

7. Do you like the English Language writing lessons?

2 ( ) Yes 0 ( ) Neutral 1 ( ) No

8. Do you feel confident in the English Language writing lessons?

2 ( ) Yes 0 ( ) Neutral 1 ( ) No

9. Do you think you are successful in English Language writing?

2 ( ) Yes                      0 ( ) Neutral                      1 ( ) No

10. Are you tolerant to others' positive and/or negative criticisms?

2 ( ) Yes                      0 ( ) Neutral                      1 ( ) No

11. Have you ever been a part of online forum/s for educational purposes?

2 ( ) Yes                      1 ( ) No

12. If you were given the chance, would you like to choose your course materials?

2 ( ) Yes                      0 ( ) Neutral                      1 ( ) No

13. If you were asked, could you define your own learning strategies?

2 ( ) Yes                      0 ( ) Neutral                      1 ( ) No

14. Which English Language skill lesson do you feel you do best?

- ( ) Reading                      ( ) Writing
- ( ) Listening                      ( ) Speaking (Interaction and Production)

**PART B**

Following is an incomplete statement. I would like you to complete the blank with your personal thoughts.

15. I want to improve my English, because

.....  
.....

**Thank You**



## APPENDIX 7

### Online Peer Feedback Questionnaire

I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following questions concerning our project Online Peer Feedback. This is not a test, so there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers and you don't even have to write your name on it. I am interested in your personal opinion. Please give your answers sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of the investigation. Thank you very much for your help.

#### PART A

Hacer Nilay Suludere

Following are a number of statements. I would like you to indicate your opinion by putting an 'X' in the box that shows the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

Numbers in red indicate the values I appointed for each level.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26. I decided writing topics of my assignments on my own.	5	4	3	2	1
27. I find it beneficial to work/study in groups.	5	4	3	2	1
28. I benefited from the discussions of my classmates, while I was writing my own essays.	5	4	3	2	1
29. I feel confident in writing in English.	5	4	3	2	1
30. Posting essays on the forum was time consuming.	5	4	3	2	1
31. I gave feedback to all of the posted essays on the forum.	5	4	3	2	1
32. Now I know what I need to improve my writing in English.	5	4	3	2	1
33. I felt that I learnt despite not being taught by the teacher on the forum.	5	4	3	2	1
34. Now I can choose the methods of learning writing that suits me best.	5	4	3	2	1
35. I didn't change my writing strategy during the project.	5	4	3	2	1
36. I discovered new ways to write, while I was searching model essays on internet.	5	4	3	2	1
37. My friends' comments helped me to see my weak points in writing in English.	5	4	3	2	1
38. I felt more comfortable in writing for my classmates than for my teacher.	5	4	3	2	1
39. I visited the forum even if I needn't have done.*	5	4	3	2	1
40. I tried to write well to get good comments from my friends.	5	4	3	2	1
41. I changed my strategy to study writing after my friends' comments.	5	4	3	2	1
42. I don't rely on my friends' feedbacks.	5	4	3	2	1
43. I got frustrated when my friends corrected my essay.	5	4	3	2	1
44. I can organize my time for studying.	5	4	3	2	1
45. I felt bad, when I couldn't give feedback.	5	4	3	2	1
46. If I have an opportunity, I would like to use online forum activity in my future studies.	5	4	3	2	1
47. With the help of the project, I learnt new ways to make use of the internet for my other lessons.	5	4	3	2	1

\*Necessity may refer to posting essays or commenting about posts/essays on the forum.

**PART B**

Following are a number of incomplete statements. I would like you to complete the blanks with your personal thoughts.

48. If there are any, write the advantages of the project

.....  
.....

49. If there are any, write the disadvantages of the project

.....  
.....

50. If there are any, write the difficulties you encountered during the project

.....  
.....

**Thank You**

