

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' PREFERENCE
FOR WRITTEN FEEDBACK AND IMPROVEMENT IN WRITING:
IS THE PREFERRED ONE THE BEST ONE?

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' PREFERENCE FOR WRITTEN FEEDBACK AND IMPROVEMENT IN WRITING: IS THE PREFERRED ONE THE BEST ONE?

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This study aimed to investigate a) which type of written feedback (*direct feedback* or *use of error codes*) university prep-school EFL students with elementary level of proficiency prefer to receive on their written texts, b) whether or not the (mis)match between students' preferences and received feedback affect their level of improvement in writing, and c) to what extent the students' previous writing experience affect their preference for the type of written feedback. In order to determine the students' preferences for a specific type of feedback and to find out their previous writing experiences, a questionnaire was designed. Moreover, the participants were given two subsequent writing tasks with the purpose of determining the level of improvement in their linguistic accuracy after receiving their (not) preferred type of feedback. The results show that the majority of the students in the preparatory class with Elementary level prefer to receive use of error codes in their written texts; however, giving them what they ask for may not contribute to their improvement as would be expected. Moreover, some conclusions are made as to the relationship between the students' previous writing experience and their current practices.

Keywords: error correction, feedback, students' preferences

ÖZ

ÖĞRENCİLERİN YAZILI GERİ BİLDİRİM TERCİHLERİ İLE YAZMA BECERİSİNDEKİ İLERLEMELERİ ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ: TERCİH EDİLEN YÖNTEM HER ZAMAN EN İYİSİ MİDİR?

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Bu çalışma, İngilizce yazma becerisi ile ilgili üç soruya cevap aramaktadır: a) İngilizce dilini yabancı dil olarak öğrenen, başlangıç üstü seviyedeki üniversite hazırlık sınıfı öğrencilerinin, hangi tür yazılı geri bildirim (öğretmenin hataları düzeltilmesi ya da hata kodlarının kullanılması) tercih ettiklerini belirlemek, b) öğrencilerin tercih ettikleri düzeltme yöntemini aldıklarını daha başarılı olup olmadıklarını tespit etmek, c) öğrencilerin geçmişteki İngilizce yazma becerisi deneyimlerinin, bugünkü tercihlerine ne kadar etkisi olduğunu belirlemek. Öğrencilerin tercih ettiği geri bildirim yöntemini belirlemek ve geçmiş yazma deneyimleri hakkında bilgi edinmek için, bir anket oluşturuldu. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin tercih ettikleri ya da etmedikleri geri bildirim yöntemleri uygulandıktan sonra dilbilgisi açısından gösterdikleri ilerlemeyi görebilmek için, katılımcılara, iki farklı paragraf yazdırıldı. Çalışmanın sonucu, öğrencilerin birçoğunun hata kodları kullanımını tercih ettiğini, fakat istedikleri yöntemi onlara vermenin her zaman onların gelişimine katkıda bulunmayabileceğini ortaya çıkarmıştır. Aynı zamanda, öğrencilerin geçmiş yazma deneyimleri ve bugünkü uygulamaları ve tercihleriyle ilgili bazı çıkarımlara ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Hata düzeltme, geribildirim, öğrenci tercihleri

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Presentation

In this chapter, the background of the study, its purpose, its significance and the research questions will be presented.

1.1. Background of the Study

Teaching and assessing writing has always been a great interest to both teachers and researchers. With the increasing amount of interest in L2 writing in English language education, the number of research studies that focus on how to improve students' writing skills has risen, and both researchers and teachers have started to look for better ways to assess students' writing. The more the teachers and the students got involved in the process of improving writing skill, the wider the area of research started to spread seeing that there were a number of important areas to investigate. Being one of these areas, the assessment of writing has gradually become a controversial issue as teachers have found it difficult to agree on one method of assessment which can be applied effectively and universally. As the methods of assessment have led to more debate among teachers and researchers, whether students really need to receive feedback from teachers or not has become another controversy and many different ideas have been brought up on the topic.

Although there is plenty of evidence related to the fact that error correction is beneficial for students (Ashwell, 2000; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris & Roberts, 2001, Ferris, 2004), there have also been studies which suggest that correcting students' grammatical errors does not yield any positive results in terms of their writing improvement (Polio et al., 1998; Truscott, 1996). The debate has become more heated with the claims of two scholars in the field, one of whom is Truscott (1996), who came up with the suggestion that error correction did not contribute to the students' success in writing, and the other, Ferris (1999), who claimed that error correction in students' written texts helped them to improve their writing skill.

Despite the fact that they have controversial ideas on the subject of error correction, they tend to agree that the number of research studies in the field is limited, and the existing research evidence is incomplete and inconsistent (Ferris, 2004: 50).

To date, most of the research in the field of error correction in L2 writing has focused on the different strategies that teachers use while giving feedback to students' written tasks, and which one(s) of these methods the students are able to benefit from most. A number of researchers investigated whether or not error correction helps students to improve their linguistic accuracy in their written texts, and whether or not one type of feedback is more effective than the other (Ashwell, 2000; Chandler, 2003; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima, 2008; Ferris, 1997; Sheen, 2007). However, despite a great number of studies, there seems to be no clear answer to the question of how to treat errors.

Another concern related to the effectiveness of different types of written feedback is whether to give focused or comprehensive feedback to the students' texts (Ferris, 2002; Hedgcock and Lefkowitz, 1996; Kroll, 2001; Lee, 2004, 2005). There has been some disagreement among researchers and teachers as to whether focused (i.e. selective) or comprehensive correction is preferable. Supporters of focused correction (choosing several major patterns of error in a student paper to mark rather than trying to address all types of error) argue that this more limited approach allows students to focus on their more serious writing problems without overwhelming them and their teachers (Ferris, 1995; Hendrickson, 1978, 1980). On the other hand, the researchers who support the comprehensive error correction (Lalande, 1982) argue that students need such detailed feedback in order to improve, primarily because they may be misled about the correctness of their writing if teachers do not mark all errors (Ferris, 2003).

Another area of interest in the field of error correction is what type of feedback the students and teachers prefer. The number of studies that investigated the preferences of teachers and students is quite low compared to the studies that examined the overall effectiveness of error correction (Ferris, 1995c; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Lee, 2005; Lee, 2007; Leki, 1991; Zhu, 2010). These studies reveal different

results in terms of preferences for feedback, and there is need for further research in this area.

The most important benefit of the studies investigating preferences for feedback is that the perceptions of students and teachers about the writing skills will help to determine the current approach to improving this skill and developing new ways to deal with it. Stoner and Anderson (1969: 252) drew a good illustration of one of the perceptions of written work by saying that ‘a first contributing cause of poor writing is undoubtedly ‘busy work’, writing assignments of one sort or another that teachers frequently give -sometimes collect- and regularly (God forbid) chuck in the wastebasket.’ In order to change this perception and attach more importance to improving writing ability, more studies that look into the preferences and search for better methods are needed. Considering the fact that it takes quite a long time for students to be able to write a grammatically correct and well-organised paragraph, and it also takes a long time for the teacher to read, mark and give feedback on these written texts, it becomes more important to know how to be more effective writers and assessors of written work.

Considering the current situation of the error correction issue and examining the previous studies, it becomes clear that there is need for more research in order to determine whether or not error correction helps, and whether or not students’ preferences should affect the way teachers teach and assess writing. The design and purpose of this current research study have been determined by investigating the results of the previous studies and noticing the obscurity in the following areas: that error correction *does* help students to produce more accurate text, that focused feedback is more effective for improvement of linguistic accuracy, and that students’ preferences are valuable but may mismatch with those of the teachers.

1.2. Purpose and Significance of the Study

As mentioned above, there have been a number of research studies that focus on which types of grammar feedback is more useful for students, and several studies that investigate what students and teachers prefer concerning error correction in L2

writing. However, there is no single study in literature which, first, investigates what students prefer and what their reasons are for their preferences, and then, tries to find out whether or not their preferences are the ones that they benefit from most. By ascertaining Turkish university students' perceptions and preferences towards error correction and putting forward whether their preferences are the best methods for their improvement in writing, this study is expected to fill a gap in writing research with its uniqueness.

The studies seeking answers to the question of what students prefer for feedback have contributed to this research area; however, knowing students' preferences may not always be enough for teachers and researchers to design their writing curriculum and help their students to improve their writing skills. 'Preference' is a tricky word in the field of language teaching, and it may bring about some unwanted results. As Brown (1998: 253) rightly puts it, 'students' preferences should neither be ignored nor put on a pedestal, and any mismatch between teacher practices and student preferences must be examined because students' preferences are not necessarily more effective for being preferred'. Therefore, this study is significant since it aims to fill in a gap in the field of error correction in L2 writing by investigating what type of feedback students prefer to receive on their written work (i.e. *direct feedback* or *use of error codes*) and analysing whether or not their preferred type of feedback helps them better to improve their writing skill. By grouping the students according to their feedback preferences and (not) giving them the type of feedback they prefer, the researcher aims to find out whether the students' preferences make any contribution to their level of success in L2 writing.

Another aspect of this study which distinguishes it from the previous studies is the fact that it investigates the effects of previous writing experience on the students' current feedback perceptions and preferences. Although there is a number of studies that examine the students' feedback preferences, none of them seems to have looked into the effect of students' writing background. Therefore, this study aims to break new ground in the field of error correction in terms of bringing the background factor into the fore with regard to students' preferences.

The results of the study are expected to shed a new light on the error correction applications, and it is hoped that the results of this study will contribute to the fields of second language acquisition, teaching L2 writing, foreign language testing and evaluation, and pre- and in-service teacher training.

1.3. Research Questions

The current study aims to answer the following research questions:

Q1. Which type of written feedback (*direct feedback* or *use of error codes*) do university prep-school EFL students with elementary level of proficiency prefer to receive on their written texts?

Q2. Does the (mis)match between students' preferences and received feedback affect their level of improvement in writing?

Q3. To what extent does the students' previous writing experience affect their preference for the type of written feedback?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Presentation

In this chapter, the concept of error correction in L2 writing will be presented, and the role of error correction in L2 writing improvement will be discussed. The terminology for specific written feedback types (i.e. direct feedback, indirect feedback and metalinguistic feedback) will be introduced by referring to Ellis's typology (2009). Research studies that have dealt with the issue of error correction will be presented and their results will be discussed in relation to the current study.

2.1. Correcting Grammatical Errors

A great amount of the research on written feedback in L2 writing has dealt with the efficiency of error correction and whether or not this plays a role in students' writing development (Ashwell, 2000; Fathman and Whalley, 1990; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Kepner, 1991; Polio et al., 1998; Semke, 1984; Truscott, 2001). Research studies in this area have investigated whether error correction is effective, what strategies and methods teachers use for error correction, and to what extent students make use of the feedback they receive on their written texts.

The perception of error correction has changed a lot throughout the history, and it has always been a troublesome issue for both teachers and researchers. When one studies error correction on written work, 'it almost seems as if they are dismissed as a matter of no particular importance, as possible annoying, distracting, but inevitable by-products of the process of learning a language about which the teacher should make as little fuss as possible' (Corder, 1967: 162). In the 1950s and 1960s, when the audio-lingual approach was popular in foreign language education, language students were supposed to spend many hours memorising dialogues and studying all kinds of grammatical generalisations. As Hendrickson (1978: 587) clearly put it, 'not only did many supporters of audio-lingualism overestimate learning outcomes for most language students, but some of them regarded second language errors from a

somewhat puritanical perspective ... errors were considered to have a relationship to learning resembling that of sin to virtue'. Back in those years, Brooks (1960) said that the basic method of avoiding errors was to observe and practise the right model a number of times, and 'if students still continued to produce errors, inadequate teaching techniques or unsequenced instructional materials were to blame', emphasising the importance of error-free writing (cited in Hendrickson, 1978: 587).

Despite the widespread opinions of considering errors as 'sins to be avoided' in 1950s and 1960s, errors started to be treated more tolerably with the introduction of the communicative approach, which arose in 1970s as a response to audio-lingualism. With the advent of this new approach, the focus shifted from being product-based to process-based, and the learners started to be expected to participate more in the learning process. Now there was a belief that 'making mistakes is a healthy part of the learning process, and that mistakes and subsequent corrections can provide the learner with valuable information on the target language' (Nunan & Lamb, 1996: 68). In process-based, learner-centred classrooms, for instance, mistakes are seen as important developmental tools moving learners through multiple drafts towards the capability for effective self-expression (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Moreover, in order to deal with the learners' errors effectively, it is important to be aware of the students' needs, the objectives of the course and the beliefs on the nature of the learning process.

Despite the great number of studies in this field of research, no agreement has been reached as to the benefits or pitfalls of error correction on students' writing, and the debate has been going on for years. However, what is certain is that the teachers should create a healthy learning environment in which students recognise that making errors is a natural and a necessary phenomenon in language learning. As Hendrickson (1980) suggests excessive embarrassment caused by one's errors can be an obstacle to learning from them. It is important that students learn how to tolerate and benefit from their errors, and making an error should be acceptable, if not desirable, for them in order to acquire the language better. Considering the fact that making errors is an inevitable part of language learning, teachers have developed

different methods to deal with these errors. Nevertheless, the question of how, when and by whom the errors should be corrected has remained unanswered despite a considerable amount of research that has been done in this field. However, this question is preceded by a more comprehensive and critical one: Do students' grammatical errors need to be treated or is it alright if they are ignored?

Although there are quite a lot of studies trying to answer this question, researchers have not been able to come to a conclusion about it due to the inconsistent research designs, settings and participants in the various studies. The studies have been carried out with inconsistent numbers of participants, different contexts and designs, which hinders drawing a general conclusion. While conducting the studies, the researchers focused on many aspects of error correction, and their methods of application were based on different criteria. As a basis for a systematic approach to investigating the effects of written corrective feedback, Ellis (2009) introduced a typology of the different types available to teachers and researchers. The typology basically presents various strategies for providing feedback (e.g. direct, indirect, or metalinguistic feedback). The summary of the different kinds of feedback suggested by Ellis is given below:

Table 2.1. A Typology of Written Corrective Feedback (Ellis, 2009: 98)

Type of corrective feedback (CF)	Description
Direct CF	The teacher provides the student with the correct form.
Indirect CF	The teacher indicates that an error exists but does not provide the correction.
Indicating + locating the error	This takes the form of underlining and use of cursors to show omissions in the student's text.
Indication only	This takes the form of an indication in the margin that an error or errors have taken place in a line of text.
Metalinguistic CF	The teacher provides some kind of metalinguistic clue as to the nature of the error.
Use of error code	Teacher writes codes in the margin (e.g. ww: wrong word; art: article)
Brief grammatical descriptions	Teacher numbers errors in text and writes a grammatical description for each numbered error at the bottom of the text.
The focus of the feedback	This concerns whether the teacher attempts to correct all (or most) of the students' errors or selects one or two specific types of errors to correct. This distinction can be applied to each of the above options.
Unfocused CF	Unfocused CF is extensive
Focused CF	Focused CF is intensive.
Electronic feedback	The teacher indicates an error and provides a hyperlink to a concordance file that provides examples of correct usage.
Reformulation	This consists of a native speaker's reworking of the students' entire text to make the language seem as native-like as possible while keeping the content original.

Research on error correction in L2 writing has been popular for many years; however, the discussion became heated with the claims of Truscott (1996) that error correction was something to be avoided. Since the publication of his article, the studies trying to prove the positive *or* negative effects of error correction on students' writing ability have increased in number, but the scholars have not come to an agreement on the issue yet. In order to find out the effect of written feedback on the improvement of students' writing skill, researchers have carried out studies involving experimental and control groups, and they have mainly focused on whether error correction helps students improve their writing ability or not. Later, the area of error correction spread, and other aspects of giving corrective feedback have also been brought up by the researchers.

In the design and data collection procedure of this research study, three basic questions raised in the previous studies were influential: 1) Does error correction help students to improve their writing skill, and, if yes, what type(s) of written corrective feedback is more effective?; 2) Is focused feedback more valuable than unfocused feedback for the students' improvement of writing skill?; 3) How much should the students' perceptions and preferences be taken into consideration while giving feedback on their written work? Since the beginning of the hot discussions about the subject of error correction, there have been numerous studies revealing different results on the issues mentioned above.

2.2. Does error correction help students to improve their writing skill, and what type(s) of written corrective feedback is more effective?

There are a number of studies that have found that students benefit from teacher's feedback. One of these studies belongs to Fathman and Whalley (1990), whose study included three groups that either received feedback on form, feedback on content, or a combination of both. They also had a control group who received no feedback. In this study, the groups who were provided with feedback on form and feedback on content seemed to show improvement in accuracy, which indicates that feedback does help students develop their writing skills. Their study focusing on feedback on content and/or form inspired other researchers as well.

Another study related to the feedback focus on form or content was conducted by Ashwell (2000), who obtained similar results with the previous ones. In this study, four different patterns of teacher feedback were given to EFL students who produced three drafts of a single composition. He compared the following patterns: 1. content-focussed feedback on the first draft followed by form-focussed feedback on the second draft, 2. form and content feedback mixed at both stages, and 3. a control pattern of zero feedback. It was found that all the groups that received feedback on grammar made a similar amount of progress in terms of gains in formal accuracy between the first and the final drafts.

A similar study was conducted by Soori, Janfaza and Zamani (2012) in the Iranian context with the purpose of investigating the impact of teachers' written feedback on students' composition while focusing on form and content. They examined any probable improvement in writing ability for a group of 47 EFL students under four feedback conditions: 1. No feedback; 2. Feedback on form; 3. Feedback on content; 4. Feedback on both form and content. The results of this study showed that providing feedback on form or content improves the students' writing significantly. Moreover, the study revealed that the absence of feedback will not help the students' writing improvement, which is in line with the results found in the previous studies.

The only area of interest for the researchers in the field of error correction was not content-focussed or form-focussed feedback. There are also studies that investigated the effects of different types of corrective feedback on the students' improvement of writing skill. One of these experimental studies was carried out by Ferris and Roberts (2001), in which they investigated 72 university ESL students' differing abilities to self-edit their texts across three feedback conditions: 1. Errors were marked with codes from five different error categories; 2. Errors in the same five categories were underlined but not marked or labelled; 3. No feedback was given. They found that the groups who received feedback performed significantly better than the no-feedback group on self-editing, but there were no significant differences between the 'error-codes' and 'no-codes' groups in terms of writing improvement.

Bitchener and Knoch (2008) carried out a two-month study with international and migrant ESL students in New Zealand and investigated the extent to which different written corrective feedback options (i.e. direct corrective feedback, written and oral meta-linguistic explanation; direct corrective feedback and written meta-linguistic explanation; direct corrective feedback only; no corrective feedback) help students improve their accuracy in the use of two functional uses of the English article system (referential indefinite 'a' and referential definite 'the'). The study found that students who received all three feedback options performed better than those who did not receive feedback. The results of this study were also important to reveal that focused feedback *did* help the students to learn from their mistakes and improve their writing ability.

In the same year, Bitchener (2008) did another study and investigated how much ESL learners benefit from written corrective feedback. In this study, the participants were low intermediate international students in New Zealand, and they were asked to produce three pieces of writing in a 2-month period. Four groups were assigned according to the types of feedback they were going to receive (i.e. direct corrective feedback, written and oral meta-linguistic explanation; direct corrective feedback and written meta-linguistic explanation; direct corrective feedback only; the control group received no corrective feedback). Two functional uses of the English article system (i.e. referential indefinite 'a' and referential definite 'the') were targeted in the feedback. The results showed that the accuracy of students who received written corrective feedback in the immediate post-test outperformed those in the control group.

It is important to mention that Bitchener's (2008) study was different from the previous ones in one aspect. In the previous studies, the students were asked to rewrite a text so that the researchers could compare their scores between the first draft and the second draft. However, in this study, the students were asked to produce new pieces of writing, which provide more data and reveal relatively more reliable results. As Bruton (2009) claims, one of the basic research requirements is that 'there should be a pretest and a posttest writing tasks in order to measure any changes in

levels of correctness', and the posttest should mean writing a new text after the experiment (p. 605). Therefore, the importance of having the students write a new text, rather than rewrite one, has been brought to the fore.

Beuningen, Jong and Kuiken (2012) carried out a similar study with 268 students, which investigated the effect of direct and indirect comprehensive corrective feedback on L2 learners' written accuracy. They also wanted to test Truscott's (2001) claims that correction may have value for non-grammatical errors but not for errors in grammar, and students are inclined to avoid more complex constructions due to error correction. The results showed that both direct and indirect corrective feedback led to improved accuracy, which seems to have disproved the Truscott's theories.

Chandler (2003) used experimental and control group data to show that students' correction of grammatical error between assignments reduces such error in subsequent writing over one semester without reducing fluency or quality. According to the results of his study, having the teacher either correct or underline for student self-correction all the grammatical errors in the autobiographical writing of high intermediate to advanced ESL undergraduates resulted in a significant improvement in accuracy.

Despite the strong arguments developed by the researchers as to the benefits of written feedback, there have also been studies which aim to ascertain that feedback does *not* help students at all; on the contrary, it harms and discourages them, and it should be abandoned (Truscott, 1996: 328). When Truscott (1996) came up with this strong argument, he attracted a lot of attention from scholars all around the world since this was a very strong, innovative argument and unusual at the time. Although he was confronted by many researchers who tried to refute his claims, he carried on working in this field in order to prove that he was right. In his article, Truscott (1999) openly challenged Ferris by saying:

I argue that these criticisms (belonging to Ferris) are both unfounded and highly selective, leaving large portions of my case unchallenged and, in some cases, even strengthening them. If the case for correction has any appeal, it rests on a strong bias, that critics must prove beyond any doubt that correction is never a good idea, while supporters need only show that uncertainty remains (p. 111).

In another research paper he published on the (in)effectiveness of error correction, Truscott (2007) evaluated and synthesized research on the question of how error correction affects learners' ability to write accurately, combining qualitative analysis of the relevant studies with quantitative meta-analysis of their findings. The conclusions are that, based on existing research, the best estimate is that correction has a small negative effect on learners' ability to write accurately, and we can be 95% confident that if it has any actual benefits, they are very small.

For many researchers, this argument is too strong to accept without doing more experiments; however, there are also some studies which already results in line with Truscott's claims, although not many in number. One of these studies was carried out by Polio et al. (1998), who investigated whether or not ESL students edit for sentence-level errors during revision and whether or not additional editing instruction helps them reduce sentence-level errors in revised essays. Sixty-four students participated in their study, and they were asked to write 30-minute drafts and were provided with 60-minute revisions both at the beginning and at the end of a semester. They found that students' linguistic accuracy improved over the semester. However, an experimental group, who received additional editing instruction and feedback, did not perform any better than the control group on measures of linguistic accuracy. They conclude that 'while the improvement in accuracy on the revised essays is statistically significant and theoretically interesting to researchers in the areas of second language acquisition and second language writing pedagogy, it may be too small to have practical implications in the context of writing assessment.' (Polio et al., 1998: 43)

In another study, Semke (1984) worked with German students at a U.S. university over a 10-week period. Students were divided into four groups according to the types of the feedback to receive (i.e. direct correction, coded feedback with self-correction

by students, comments on content only, and a combination of direct correction and comments on content). The researcher found no significant differences in accuracy between the three correction groups and the comments group; therefore, the study found correction ineffective.

2.3. Is focused feedback more valuable than unfocused feedback for the students' improvement of writing skill?

While the question of whether or not students' errors should be corrected still remains unsettled, another debate has occurred among the researchers: Which errors should be treated? Many advocates of error correction warn against attempting to mark *all* student errors 'because of the very real risk of exhausting teachers and overwhelming students' (Ferris, 2002: 50). According to Ferris (2002), who supports the idea of focused feedback, there are three ways to understand the need to prioritise error feedback: whether the error is global or local error; whether the structure has been discussed in class or elicited by the assignment; or whether it is a frequent error (pp. 57-60).

Global errors are defined as those that interfere with the overall message of the text, whereas local errors do not inhibit the reader's comprehension. Although spotting the global errors is more appealing to teachers, the pitfall is that the concept of 'globalness' varies according to the context of the error. Another way to decide on which errors to correct is to determine which structure the text requires the students to use. If the assignment brings along the need to use certain grammar structures, the teacher may go over them in class, therefore, can assess the students' performance on these language points, which is also the criterion suggested for error correction by Walz (1982). The last way of prioritising the errors is to determine the errors that the students tend to make frequently. This is particularly good since it gives the teacher the opportunity to make the feedback individualised, and it helps the students to correct their most frequent errors in each written text.

Similar to Ferris's ideas on the issue, Ur (1996) also suggested that teachers should give focused feedback because 'too much correction can be discouraging and

demoralising' (p. 171). Kroll (2001) has similar ideas on the issue and states that the decision whether to address all or selected errors is a complex one, and it depends on the level of writing the student is able to produce. However, 'correcting all of a student's errors is probably rarely called for, unless there are very few errors present in the text. The teacher should concentrate instead on calling the student's attention to those errors which are considered more serious' (p. 230). The idea of focused feedback is supported by Trucott (2001) as well, who claims:

For teachers, comprehensive correction can be extremely unpleasant and time-consuming, problems which are almost certain to result in a lower quality of correction. For students, the sea of red ink on their assignments is likely to prove quite discouraging, and even the most highly-motivated students cannot be expected to adequately deal with every error in their work. Partly for these reasons, standard thinking now is that correction must be used selectively (p.93).

There have been many studies which investigated the preferences of students and/or teachers for the focus of the feedback. When the students were asked whether they preferred focused or comprehensive feedback, the tendency was that the students favoured comprehensive feedback more. For instance, Lee (2004) carried out a study on the preferences of teachers' and students' for the type of feedback, and she found that both the teachers and students preferred comprehensive feedback over focused feedback. One year later, Lee (2005) conducted another study and reported that 82.9% of the students preferred the teacher to correct *all* the language errors in their texts, mainly because they wished to know their mistakes. One of the participants in her study reported her concerns clearly: 'My teacher just chooses to correct some of my mistakes because she is busy, but I don't know how to correct them ... If teachers correct only some of the mistakes, I will miss some mistakes, then I can't learn' (p. 7). Since her study was also related to whether to use error codes or direct feedback, Lee suggested that if the teachers consider reducing the number of codes used in their error feedback and concentrate on specific error patterns, it will be easier for the students to interpret them, which is possible by giving focused feedback.

There have been a few studies that investigate the effects of focused corrective feedback on the students' improvement of writing skill. For instance, Bitchener and

Knoch (2008) examined the effectiveness of focused feedback by targeting only on two functional error categories (i.e. indefinite article 'a' for the first mention and definite article 'the' for the subsequent mention). The study was conducted with low-intermediate ESL students and took 10 months to complete. The participants, who were assigned to two groups (i.e. receiving focused corrective feedback and receiving no corrective feedback), produced five pieces of writing, and the results showed that those who received feedback on the two grammar points outperformed the control group in the post tests, which reveals the effectiveness of the focused feedback.

In another study, Sheen (2007) aimed to find out whether written CF focusing on article errors produced a significant positive effect on acquisition. By assigning three groups (i.e. a direct-only correction group, a direct metalinguistic correction group, and a control group), the researcher found that both treatment groups performed much better than the control group, and she provided evidence that the focused written corrective feedback resulted in improved accuracy. However, since the focus of the correction was the use of articles, like the previous study, the results are hard to generalise to the use of other grammar structures.

Although there is a considerable number of research studies on whether or not focused feedback leads to improvement in writing skill, there have not been many studies that compare the effects of focused feedback with unfocused feedback, and there is a need for further research in this area. In one of these few studies, Ellis, Sheen, Murakami and Takashima (2008) aimed to provide evidence that corrective feedback is effective in an EFL context, and they compared the effects of focused and unfocused written feedback on the accuracy of university students in the use of definite and indefinite articles, the focus being on the same language point. The focused group received correction of just articles, whereas the unfocused group received correction of all errors. The results revealed that both groups improved in terms of accuracy, and they outperformed the control group, which received no correction. This may show that comprehensive feedback is not the only way to benefit the students since focused feedback also leads to the same targeted result. As

Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1996) pointed out, feedback that too much focuses on linguistic form can discourage writers, and in order not to have this consequence, the teachers should practise focused feedback more in their feedback applications.

Another study by Sheen, Wright and Moldawa (2009) examined whether direct focused feedback, direct unfocused feedback or writing practice alone produced better effects on the accurate use of certain grammatical forms (i.e. copular 'be', regular and irregular past tense and prepositions) by adult ESL learners. The results showed that the focused group achieved the highest accuracy for all the grammatical structures. The researchers believe the reason for this result is that 'focused correction is clear and systematic and thereby induces learners to pay more attention to form overall' (p. 566).

In a more recent study, Pashazade and Marifat (2010) investigated the long-term effect of focused grammar feedback. The participants received written corrective feedback on the use of articles and a limited number of various other grammatical categories. The results showed that focused feedback can produce large short-term gains, but that it may prove to be detrimental in the long term, and it requires further research.

2.4. How much should the students' preferences be taken into consideration while giving feedback on their written work?

The research on the error correction in L2 writing has not been limited to the studies that investigated whether feedback on grammatical errors yields any improvement in students' writing. With the growing interest in the field of L2 writing, researchers have also become more involved in the students' preferences and teachers' practices concerning error correction. The students have mostly been asked what type of feedback they prefer to receive (i.e. direct, indirect, error codes, conferencing, etc.), and whether they prefer teacher feedback, peer feedback or self-correction.

In his study, Enginarlar (1993) investigated the attitudes of 47 freshmen students towards the feedback procedure employed in the Writing Composition class at a state

university in Ankara, Turkey. In his application, he not only used error codes to indicate linguistic errors but also various types of comments to help students improve their drafts. His conclusion displays important findings as to the students' perception of what effective feedback is. The students believe that effective feedback involves attention to linguistic errors, guidance on compositional skills, and overall evaluative comments on content and quality of writing. Additionally, they prefer that the grading should be done on the revised drafts, and not every piece of writing should be graded. In the same year, Oladejo (1993) examined the preferences and expectations of intermediate and advanced ESL learners regarding error correction. The result is that the learners want their errors corrected, and they also prefer such correction to be comprehensive, rather than focused. In this study, some important differences were observed between learners' preferences and expectations, and the opinions and practice of linguists and teachers. Believing that the teachers sometimes need to modify their practices in order to meet the students' needs and expectations, the researcher suggests:

Since teachers' opinions and classroom practice regarding error correction do not always match the perceived needs and expectations of learners, such mismatch could contribute to lack of success in language learning ... While not suggesting that practitioners should abandon their beliefs and practices regarding error correction, we should be willing to examine critically some of the things we believe in and practise, in the light of new evidence (pp. 84-85).

A year later, Saito (1994) investigated the fit between teachers' practices and students' preferences for feedback and the students' strategies for handling feedback on their written work. The results showed that students preferred teacher feedback to non-teacher feedback (i.e. peer correction and self-correction) although their teachers who participated in the study frequently used non-teacher feedback in their classes. Her suggestion is that 'teachers should pay careful attention to what their students feel toward their instructional methods and find out whether there are any differences in opinion between the teachers and the students in this regard, attempting to resolve such discrepancies appropriately' (p. 66).

There are also other studies that investigate the (mis)match between the teachers' and students' preferences for error correction. In his paper, Schulz (1996) reported on an exploratory study which examined and compared foreign language student and teacher beliefs regarding the benefit of a focus on form in language learning. The main difference between his study and the previous ones was that the participants consisted of a total of 824 students and 92 teachers of the commonly taught as well as the less commonly taught languages; therefore, these results are more likely to be generalised for foreign language learning. Results revealed that, regardless of language, the students had a tendency toward a focus on form. However, there were also some discrepancies between student and teacher beliefs. The author's recommendations are similar to those of Saito (1994) in that 'since current theories of learning and teaching emphasize student commitment to and involvement in the instructional process, it might well be wise to explore the fit of learner and teacher beliefs and take into account learner opinions of what enhances the learning process' (p. 349). She adds that while opinions alone do not necessarily reflect the actual cognitive processes that go on in language acquisition, perceptions *do* influence reality.

In order to examine ESL writers' reactions to and uses of written feedback, Hyland (1998) carried out a study, in which she used a case study approach and the data including observation notes, interview transcripts and written texts. She analysed the students' revisions after receiving feedback and found that use of teacher written feedback varies due to individual differences in needs and student approaches to writing. The researcher suggested that more teacher / student communication is required in order to assure the effectiveness of the feedback.

With a similar objective, Ferris (1995) carried out a study in order to assess the student reactions to the feedback they receive from their teacher. Her study included 155 students in university ESL programme responded to a survey in single-draft settings. The results of the survey indicated that students pay more attention to teacher feedback provided on preliminary drafts (vs. final drafts) of their essays, and they find their teachers' feedback useful in helping them to improve their writing.

Results also showed that students had some problems in understanding their teachers' comments. This result requires special attention since it suggests that the teachers should train the students well before they start providing them with error correction using codes; otherwise, some misunderstanding may occur between the teachers and the students. As Hyland suggests (1998), there needs to be a more open dialogue between teachers and students on feedback in order to prevent any potential miscommunication and misunderstanding.

In a different context from the previous studies, Lee (2004) conducted her study with 320 students from eight secondary schools in Hong Kong and aimed to find out how error correction was perceived and carried out by ESL writing teachers in Hong Kong secondary classrooms and how it was perceived by students. The results showed that both teachers and students preferred comprehensive error feedback, and the students were reliant on teachers in error correction. In a similar situation, Chiang (2004) carried out a classroom research study to investigate Hong Kong students' preferences for and responses to teacher feedback. It is suggested that the ineffectiveness of teacher feedback may not lie in the feedback itself, but in the way how feedback is delivered to students. The students stated that they felt discouraged when they received too much negative feedback, and they did value teacher feedback despite having difficulty in making use of the feedback.

A year later, Lee (2005) also investigated students' perceptions, beliefs and attitudes toward error correction. The data were obtained from a questionnaire and interviews, and the results showed that most of the students (75.7%) wished their teachers to correct every error and believed that error correction was teacher's responsibility and job. Similarly, Diab (2005) carried out a study in Lebanon, in which 156 EFL university students took place. The participants in this study largely (90%) agreed on the fact that it is important to them to have as few errors as possible in their written work. Moreover, most students (63%) stated that they read each of the teacher's remarks on their paper carefully. Finally, while only 35% of students chose crossing out an error and writing the correction as the best teacher feedback technique, 49% of

the students chose showing where the error is and giving a clue about how to correct it (using error codes).

In another study with the purpose of examining students' attitudes towards teacher feedback, Zacharias (2007), collected data both quantitatively and qualitatively. The results of the study showed that the students valued teacher feedback since the teacher could control the grades. Moreover, it was revealed that the students preferred feedback on language more than the feedback on content because they thought grammar feedback was more helpful.

Similarly, in his research, Zhu (2010) investigated the attitudes of students towards error correction by the aid of a survey, and came up with important results as to the students' preferences. According to the results of the study, 63.3% of the participants preferred teacher feedback since they thought they could feel confident in this way. As far as the students' preference for the amount of teacher's correction is concerned, 70% of students preferred the teacher to correct every mistake. They said that if the teacher were strict with them, they would make greater progress in their future language learning, which goes parallel with the other studies on students' preferences. The findings of a similar more recent study carried out in Iran (Rahimi, 2010) showed that the L2 learners' level of writing ability influences their views about the importance of feedback on errors pertinent to particular grammatical units.

Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) investigated how ESL students and teachers perceive the usefulness of different types and amounts of feedback and the reasons for their preferences. The results showed that while there were some areas of agreement between teachers and students, important discrepancies in their opinions occurred. According to the results of the study, the students think that the larger the quantity of corrective feedback, the more useful it is. Moreover, they stated that explicit types of corrective feedback allow them to remember their errors and understand how to fix them. Most students said that a clue with no correction (i.e. use of error codes) is not useful because students need more specific advice.

In a more recent study, McGrath, Taylor and Pychyl (2011) examined the effectiveness of two different types of feedback, developed and undeveloped, in terms of its influence on students' subsequent writing performance and students' perceptions of the feedback. Results revealed that the type of feedback significantly affected students' perceptions, with developed feedback related to higher ratings of fairness and helpfulness; however, this feedback did not have a significant positive effect on students' written performance.

The studies carried out in the field of error correction show that the interest in writing skill has been gradually increasing. Considering the three aspects of error correction studies mentioned above (i.e. 1. Does error correction help students to improve their writing skill?; 2. Is focused feedback more valuable than unfocused feedback?; 3. Do students prefer to receive written corrective feedback?), a summary of research findings related to three aspects of error correction has been prepared and is presented in Table 2.2. below. Taking the results of the previous studies and, hence, emerging questions into consideration, the design and purpose of this current research study have been determined. In this study, the assumption is that error correction *does* help students to produce more accurate text, that focused feedback is more effective for improvement of linguistic accuracy, and that students' preferences are valuable but may mismatch with those of the teachers.

Table 2.2. Summary of research findings and suggestions in the field of error correction

Research Question	Studies and Findings
<p>Does error correction help students to produce more accurate texts?</p>	<p>Yes: Ashwell (2000), Beuningen, Jong and Kuiken (2012), Bitchener and Knoch (2008), Bitchener (2008), Bruton (2009), Chandler (2003), Fathman and Whalley (1990), Ferris and Roberts (2001), Soori, Janfaza and Zamani (2012).</p> <p>No: Polio et al. (1998), Semke (1984), Truscott (1996, 2007).</p>
<p>Is focused feedback more effective than comprehensive feedback?</p>	<p>Yes: Bitchener and Knoch (2008), Ellis et al. (2008), Ferris (2002), Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1996), Kroll (2001), Lee (2004, 2005), Pashazade and Marifat (2010), Sheen (2007), Sheen, Wright and Moldawa (2009) Truscott (2001), Ur (1996) , Walz (1982)</p> <p>No: ---</p>
<p>Do students want to receive feedback on linguistic errors?</p>	<p>Yes: Amrhein and Nassaji (2010), Chiang (2004), Diab (2005), Enginarlar (1993), Ferris (1995), Hyland (1998), Lee (2004, 2005), McGrath, Taylor and Pychyl (2011), Oladejo (1993), Rahimi (2010), Saito (1994), Schulz (1996), Zacharias (2007), Zhu (2010)</p> <p>No: ---</p>

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0. Presentation

In this chapter, the subjects involved in the current study, the data collection instruments and the research design will be presented.

3.1. The setting

The study was conducted with students from the Department of Basic English (DBE) at Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara. METU is one of the most respected universities in Turkey, and it requires the students to get really high scores on the university entrance exam in order to be accepted to any department of the university. The medium of instruction at METU is English; therefore, the students are required to get at least 59.5 / 100 in English Proficiency Exam (EPE) in order to continue their education in their departments. METU is basically a technical university whose principles involve scientific approach, academic freedom, lifelong education and communication with society, which means that the students are equipped with a variety of skills and different perspectives throughout their education. Once the students are accepted to METU, they have to take the English Proficiency Exam (EPE), which aims to determine whether their level of proficiency is appropriate to study at their departments. In the EPE, the language section includes two cloze tests, dialogue completion (five items), and response to a given situation (five items). In the listening section of the exam, there are thirty listening comprehension questions and a note-taking section, in which the test takers need to listen to a lecture, take notes and answer a related question in three or four sentences. As for the writing section, the test takers need to write an academic paragraph on a given topic, which usually goes parallel with the subject in the listening and note-taking section.

The criteria for the evaluation of the students' paragraphs go parallel with the education given during the preparatory year. At the Department of Basic English, the programme for one semester is divided into two spans for all groups. In each span, the students are presented with different modes of discourse (e.g. description, cause-effect, argumentation, etc.) and asked to write a paragraph on a given topic. For the students with beginner and elementary level of proficiency, the span programme includes sentence-level writing at the beginning of the semester. However, the students with intermediate or upper-intermediate level of proficiency are presented with descriptive or cause-effect paragraphs.

The writing hand-outs, which are embedded in the programme every week, aim to teach students how to write a topic sentence, major & minor supporting sentences and a conclusion/summary sentence. Moreover, some writing hand-outs include the presentation and practice of such topics as linkers and clauses. During the writing classes, which take around 2-5 hours a week depending on the content of the writing hand-out, the students are presented with the related discourse/grammar subject, do some practice and write a paragraph on a given topic using the newly acquired information. The students are given about 30 minutes to complete the writing task in class. At the end of the lesson, the students hand in their paragraphs to the teacher, who evaluates them in terms of content, organisation and language. The feedback method the teachers at the preparatory class use is 'metalinguistic feedback – use of error codes'. The teacher does unfocused correction with error codes; that is, s/he labels all the language errors on the student's paper with pre-defined symbols (the students are given a list of error codes at the beginning of the first writing class at the department). Apart from the feedback given on grammatical errors, the teacher also provides the students with feedback on content and organisation on the same draft. When the students get their papers back, they can see all the remarks and feedback, and they rewrite the paragraph on a separate sheet, making use of the teacher's feedback. The students try to correct their mistakes, and they change the content and reorganise the paragraph, if necessary. This makes the students' second draft of the writing task. Then, the teacher analyses the second draft. If the students could not / did not correct (some of) the errors, the teacher makes the final correction(s) and

gives back the papers to the students. Therefore, the students have three drafts of the same writing task. Each writing hand-out throughout the semester is dealt with in the same way. Later, all these written texts are collected in a writing portfolio, 10% of which is added to the overall grade of the students in one semester.

Although the students' writing tasks are evaluated with specific criteria for each hand-out, their paragraphs in the midterms are assessed with a common rubric in which the 15-point grade is given out of content (5 points), organisation (5 points) and language (5 points). Therefore, the students know what they are expected to do during the semester and in the exam concerning the writing skill. They also know that the grades they get in the writing section of the midterms and the writing portfolio make a significant contribution to their overall grade. As a result, most of the students are very interested in writing classes, and they give importance to the feedback the teacher provides them with.

The students who pass EPE can attend their departments. However, the ones who fail the exam have to study at preparatory class for one year, and they have to take a Placement Test, which aims to determine their level of proficiency in English. The students are placed in different groups (Beginner, Elementary, Intermediate and Upper-intermediate) according to the score they have achieved on the Placement Test. The groups and the number of the hours they have to study in each semester are as follows:

Table 3.1. The groups after the EPE and the Placement Test

First semester		Second semester	
Groups	Daily class hours	Groups	Daily class hours
		Pre-Faculty	3
Upper Intermediate	3	Advanced	3
Intermediate	4	Upper Intermediate	4
Elementary	4	Intermediate	4
Beginner	5	Pre intermediate	5
Repeat	3	Repeat	3

During the education at the preparatory year, the assessment of the students' improvement involves quizzes, which are announced or unannounced exams given towards the end of a class period, midterms, which are lengthy exams, and speaking tests along with the performance grade, based on the writing portfolios they need to prepare, and the instructor's grade, based on the overall impression of the teacher over the student concerning his / her participation in class activities, being prepared for the lesson, etc. It is important to note that midterms, which are administered twice a semester, consist of reading comprehension, writing, listening, vocabulary and grammar components, which makes it necessary for the students to focus on all aspects of the language. Quizzes, on the other hand, mainly include questions on the reading skill, the listening skills and the vocabulary knowledge, and the students hardly ever have a quiz on the writing skill. The students have the speaking assessment one day after each midterm, and they are required to speak on a given topic in pairs. The performance grade is comprised of the speaking test and the writing portfolio. The speaking assessment constitutes the 5% of the overall performance grade, and the writing portfolio constitutes the remaining 10% of the whole grade.

The grades of the students are calculated at the end of each semester according to the percentages given below (see Table 3.2). The students whose average is 64.5 or above can take the EPE at the end of the year (in June), except for the Pre-intermediate students who need to get an average of 84.5 or above in order to sit the exam.

Table 3.2. Yearly Achievement Grade

First Semester:	Second Semester:
Mid-terms 20 %	Mid-terms 30 %
Pop-quizzes / Quizzes 10 %	Pop-quizzes / Quizzes 10 %
Performance Grade 15 %	Performance Grade 15 %

3.2. Subjects

The participants in this study were the students from the Department of Basic English at METU, who had been studying at the department for about two months when the study took place. Their ages ranged between 18 and 25. For the pilot study, the first questionnaire was given to 38 students. The second pilot study was conducted with a different group of 34 students. The final version of the questionnaire for the study was given to 186 students at preparatory class, 105 of whom were females and 81 males. The following steps of the study, in which the students were asked to write two paragraphs, included 120 students who were selected randomly and grouped according to their feedback preference. All the students were native speakers of Turkish, and foreigners and bilinguals were eliminated with the purpose of making sure that all the participants were in the same condition in terms of familiarity with a foreign language. It was also important to know which faculties the students were registered to, since their departmental choices may make a difference in the type of feedback they prefer. The categories related to the faculties of the students who participated in the writing component of the study are given below:

Table 3.3. The percentages of students from different faculties

Faculties	Frequency	Percent
Architecture	4	2.2
Arts and Sciences	55	29.6
Economics and Administrative Sciences	24	12.9
Education	36	19.4
Engineering	67	36.0
Total	186	100.0

The reason why the students with an elementary level of English were chosen is that these students were somehow new to learning a foreign language. This is very important for this study because the participants in the study were chosen among

those who would have been affected the least by the writing experiences in the past. In other words, while the study was being carried out, the researcher tried to guarantee that the participants' preferences for corrective written feedback was not influenced by their previous writing experiences. By eliminating the positive or negative 'background factor' throughout the study, the researcher aimed to reach reliable results concerning student preferences over different feedback types. However, it was also important that the students know about the types of feedback used in this study well enough to be able to understand the differences and state their preferences on the questionnaire given to them at the beginning of the study. When the questionnaires were delivered to the students in the elementary group, they had already started to write basic sentences in their writing classes, which take around 2 hours a week. When they first started to write sentences at the very beginning of the semester, their language errors were located and corrected by their teachers, so they were all provided with the correct forms of the errors, including tense, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, as well as spelling and punctuation. Therefore, these students are familiar with the direct correction system to some extent. After a few weeks, the students started to write paragraphs, including more information which needs to be somehow organised. With the introduction of paragraph writing, the students started to receive feedback with error codes, which is the common error correction type in the Department of Basic English at METU. Along with the language feedback with error codes, the teachers also started to give feedback on content and organisation in a more elaborate way. Therefore, these students had already received feedback on their written work with both direct correction method and use of error codes, which made it possible for the students to make a choice between these two correction types. For the current study, the fact that they were not totally familiar with the feedback system at the preparatory class was an advantage since the students were expected not to be influenced by a system which they were used to; rather, their preferences were on the foreground.

Since the current study aimed to investigate the students' preferences regarding feedback in writing classes and to uncover whether their preferences are what they benefit from most, the students were given a questionnaire aiming to elicit

information related to their personal and educational background, their previous writing experience and their preferences about teacher's written feedback. Because of the reliability concerns, the researcher made sure that the groups which would be formed according to their grammar feedback preferences included students who had similar language learning experiences, who were attending similar, if not the same, faculties (that is, they were all science students, as their learning style may make a difference in their preferences), and who had been exposed to a similar amount of writing classes and written feedback during their high school education. In order to have enough number of students to form the groups in the study, the questionnaire were distributed to 200 students, and 120 students with similar features were selected and were included in the study and divided into two groups according to their preferences, the first group consisting of 60 students who prefer direct feedback on their written texts, and the second group with 60 students who prefer to have error codes.

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

The data for this study were collected using a questionnaire and students' written texts.

3.3.1. Questionnaire:

The questionnaire used in this study is comprised of 4 sections and 39 questions. The original questionnaire was prepared in English, and the back translation was made by three English teachers, who were working at the same institution and who held a Master's degree in English Language Teaching. The participants in this study were given the Turkish questionnaire since their level of English proficiency was Elementary, and conducting the study in English would cause misunderstandings on behalf of the students while answering the questions in the questionnaire.

The main focus of this study is to find out which type of written corrective feedback (direct feedback or use of error codes) elementary-level students of English prefer in their written work, and whether there is (mis)match between their preferences and received feedback in terms of affecting their level of improvement in writing.

Moreover, the third research question aims to determine whether or not their previous writing experiences affect their preference. Since there are many essential points to be considered throughout the study, it was important for the researcher to prepare a questionnaire which included all the items that would provide answers to the questions in mind.

The first step to be taken was to go through the literature and search for a questionnaire which would serve the purpose of this study, ideally including questions that would provide information not only about students' preferences but also about their previous writing experience. Using a questionnaire which was already tested and statistically proven to be reliable would eliminate the reliability concerns for this study as well. However, the previous studies mainly focused on either what the students preferred (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Leki, 1991) or what the teachers preferred (Coskun, 2007; Evans et. al., 2010) in terms of written corrective feedback. Therefore, the questionnaires used in these studies included questions that asked them whether they preferred to receive direct or indirect feedback, whether they would like their teacher to correct every error or major errors, whether they would prefer to be corrected by their teacher or their peers, or whether they preferred to receive written or oral feedback on their written mistakes. None of the questionnaires in the literature included questions related to the students' background writing experience, asking them what type(s) of feedback they had received before. The reason for the lack of such a questionnaire may result from the different foci of the studies, since the researchers did not aim to collect information related to students' background. However, for the current study, the students' previous writing background had an important role, and the data gave very important results.

After examining the questionnaires used in the previous studies (Cohen, 1987; Leki, 1991), the researcher prepared her own questionnaire, which would serve the purpose of this study. The questionnaire consists of four sections (see the questionnaire in Appendix A). The first section of the questionnaire includes questions about personal information, such as students' names, contact information, gender, their native

language and the duration of their language learning. It was essential to ask the students to write their names and contact information on the questionnaire because of the nature of the study, as they would be grouped according to their preferences and contacted again by the researcher to do the writing tasks. However, it was clearly stated at the beginning of the questionnaire that their information would be kept confidential.

The second section of the questionnaire was related to the students' previous writing experience. In this section, the students were asked to respond to the sentences about the frequency of certain writing activities during their high school education. The items between 13 and 22 in this section were prepared using the 5-point Likert scale. The students were asked to circle the best number that represented the frequency of their writing activities in high school (1= never, 5= always). There were two questions (item 16 and item 22) which asked them about the type of corrective feedback they received on their written work. In order to make sure that the students understood the different types, example sentences and corrections were provided. The second part of this section was comprised of 5 open-ended questions. In this part, the students were asked to give brief answers to the questions given, such as how often they received grammar feedback and how much they used to focus on writing skill during their high school education. There was one very general question at the beginning of this part, item 23, which asked the students whether or not they were satisfied with the English classes in high school. Although this item does not seem to be totally relevant to the focus of this study, it was important to know because their feelings about the education they received totally correlated with the duration and quality of their English classes.

The third section of the questionnaire, which consists of 6 questions, is related to the students' feelings about the importance of grammatical errors and their correction. The students were asked to make choices between 1 and 5 (5= I strongly agree, 1= I strongly disagree), which showed how important for them to receive feedback on their language errors.

The questions in the fourth and the last section of the questionnaire aimed to reveal the students' preferences about the type of written corrective feedback. In item 37, the students were given a sentence in which the language errors were corrected in two different ways (one with error codes, and the other with direct teacher feedback). The students were also given extra options such as 'It doesn't matter to me', and 'I prefer neither of them' in order not to oblige the students to make a choice between these two. Moreover, the last option (i.e. 'I prefer something else') was expected to reveal students' real preferences and contribute to the teachers' applications in writing classes. In item 38, the students were asked to rank 6 writing components in order of importance to them (1= the least important, 6= the most important). The reason for including this item in the questionnaire was to see where the students place 'grammar' in their list while writing a 'good' paragraph.

3.3.2. Writing tasks

After the questionnaires were delivered to the students and collected back, the selected students were given two writing tasks. Since the English proficiency level of students was Elementary, the students were not familiar expressing opinions in their essays; therefore, it would be too challenging to ask them to write a cause-effect, argumentative or persuasive essay. By the time the students participated in this study, they had only written paragraphs in which they described their families, their hobbies and their hometowns. Moreover, they had been given a guided task which included some facts about a famous city (i.e. Barcelona in Spain), and they had been asked to use the information given and write a paragraph in 10-12 sentences using the correct tenses and linkers. For this reason, the task was carefully designed by the researcher and proofread by two other English instructors working at the same institution in order to make sure that the task was appropriate for the students' level.

The writing task needed to be guided and had to include some prompts. At the same time, it had to lead the students to use some articles, prepositions and different tenses, since they would be given feedback on these points later on. For these reasons, a guided writing task was prepared asking the students to write a short paragraph about a famous Turkish writer, Orhan Pamuk, about whose life a lot of

information was provided on the task sheet (see Appendix B for the first writing task). For this writing task, the students were asked to write sentences including information about Orhan Pamuk's birth, education, books, awards and private life.

In order to observe the effects of different types of written feedback on the students' improvement of writing skill, a second writing task was prepared considering the same factors mentioned above (see appendix C for the second writing task). It is important to mention that the students were not asked to rewrite the first writing task; in other words, their second task was not 'the second draft'. Instead, they were asked to write a completely new paragraph since 50% of the students had already been corrected by the teacher and they had already been provided with the correct answers. Therefore, their rate of improvement was assessed by asking them to write a new paragraph, not by asking them to rewrite the same paragraph. This is also very important in the literature since it is claimed that getting the students to rewrite the same paragraph does not guarantee that their writing ability improved. As Truscott (1996, 1999, 2004) and Ferris (1999, 2004) point out, the effectiveness of written corrective feedback can only be assessed when accuracy is measured on new texts.

The important point while preparing this task was that it had to lead the students to use similar structures to those they used in their first writing task, so that the researcher would be able to compare the errors in the two papers. For this reason, the second writing task had to be about a person who had some achievements, awards, and who was still alive (so that the students would have to use 'present perfect tense' or 'future' structures as well). While preparing the second writing task, the researcher examined the common errors made by the students and tried to include most of them in the second writing task in order to observe more clearly whether there was any improvement in the second writing task or not (e.g. *translate sth into sth, graduate from, be born in, etc.*).

3.4. Research Design

The purpose of this study is to determine which type of written error correction (direct feedback or use of error codes) the elementary-level Turkish learners of

English prefer in their written work, and whether or not their preferences benefit them more. Furthermore, the study seeks an answer to the question of whether or not the students' previous writing experience affects their preference. The research design for this study is presented here in 7 stages:

Stage 1: Pre-evaluation and choosing the participants

Before the study was conducted, it was important to determine which group of students would take place in the study and how they would be chosen. Since it was essential that all students have a similar level of English language proficiency, the researcher examined the first midterm results of 53 Elementary classes at the preparatory year. Fourteen classes with a similar success rate were determined (with an average of 74,2 out of 100). In addition to the overall midterm results of the students, their average scores in the writing component were also taken into consideration in order to get more reliable results (The average score of the writing component for each class was 9,6 out of 15) . The instructors of these classes were informed about the content of the study. The students of 10 classes had been planned to get involved in the study, and those in the other 4 classes took part in the piloting of the questionnaire.

Another application before the administration of the questionnaires was to examine the written works of the students in the selected 14 classes in order to determine the common grammatical errors. The students had already been given 10 pieces of writing hand-out with different topics and grammar foci. Randomly-selected five students from each class were asked to bring their writing portfolios prior to the study, and the most common errors they tended to make were determined (i.e. tenses, prepositions and articles). The reason to determine these errors was that the feedback procedure would be in the form of focused feedback, and the scorers would only treat those errors.

Stage 2: The first pilot study

After the participants were determined, the first piloting of the questionnaire was conducted with 38 students, 21 of whom were females and 17 males, in 2 Elementary

classes. Their ages ranged between 18 and 20. Their instructors were requested to hand out the questionnaires in the last 15 minutes of the class hour, and they were reminded to encourage the students to bring up any questions they had or anything they could not understand.

The analysis of the first questionnaires revealed some important results for the researcher. First of all, in the second section of the questionnaire, related to the students' writing experiences during high school, one of the statements was found to be misleading. The statement was 'when I was in high school, I didn't receive any grammar feedback'. While the students agreed with this statement, they chose '1=never', meaning that 'they *never* received grammar feedback'. When the Alpha was calculated, the questionnaire turned out to be unreliable; however, when this item was deleted, the reliability rate went up to 0.86. Therefore, this item was taken out of the questionnaire.

Another important point the first pilot study revealed was that most of the students stated that they did not write any English paragraphs in high school, nor did they get any feedback on their written work. Moreover, almost all of them said that they had been studying English for nearly 9-10 years, but they were all elementary level students at the preparatory class. As a result of these striking results, a new question arose: what did they do in high school in their English lessons? Therefore, the second section of the questionnaire was modified, and six open-ended questions were added to this section (e.g. what did you do to improve your English writing skills in your English classes in high school?). One of the new questions was related to the frequency of students' writing in English in high school. The reason for adding this question to the questionnaire was to make it more reliable and internally consistent.

Another question which needed to be modified was the item 37 in Section IV. In the first questionnaire, the item 37 included only two options, which were either the example sentence for direct feedback or the example sentence for use of error codes. However, in order not to oblige the students to choose either one, new options were added to the question (e.g. *It doesn't matter to me, I prefer no feedback, and other*);

therefore, the students were given the opportunity to express their opinions more thoroughly.

Finally, the organisation of the questionnaire was subjected to a change. The students were asked to state their feedback preferences in the last section of the questionnaire. Considering the fact that the students might feel tired or bored towards the end of the questionnaire, three different questionnaires were prepared, and the order of the sections were shuffled (i.e. Section II in the first questionnaire was given as Section IV in the second questionnaire). Therefore, the effect of fatigue was minimised.

Stage 3: The second pilot study

The first piloting of the questionnaire brought along the need to amend certain sections, as a result of which new questions were added to the questionnaire. After the evaluations of the first pilot study and the applications of the changes, it was essential that the second piloting be conducted. It was carried out with another group of elementary students, which consisted of 36 students, 19 females and 17 males, from 2 different classes.

In the second piloting of the questionnaire, the sections gave reliable results in SPSS; therefore, there was no reliability concern. Furthermore, the questions added to the end of Section II revealed good data (e.g. what did you do in high school to improve your writing skills?). Students seem to have answered those questions willingly since none of the students left any of the questions unanswered.

Stage 4: Questionnaires

With the application of the two pilot studies, essential changes were made in the questionnaire, and the last version was prepared. Although the questionnaire was first prepared in English, the questions were translated back into Turkish by three independent English teachers working for the same institution. The reason why the questionnaire was given to the students in Turkish was that the students' level of proficiency was Elementary, and they would not be able to understand the questions in English. The questionnaire was distributed to 10 classes, and the instructors were

asked to give the questionnaires to the students in the last 20 minutes of the last class hour. Each of the classes consisted of 22 people. Therefore, the total number of the participants would be 220 people. However, each class had 2 or 3 international students, who were taken out of the study for reliability concerns. Since the questionnaire was given during the class hour, it would not be ethical not to include the foreign students in the 'task'; for this reason, these students were given the English version of the questionnaire although their answers were not taken into consideration during the analyses of the results. Apart from the international students, another group of students whose answers were not included in the analyses was the students who were bilingual. Considering the fact that bilingual people may have different learning habits which may affect their preferences, they were not included in the study. Therefore, when the international students and bilingual students were taken out of the study, the number of the participants went down to 186.

The students were given 20 minutes to answer the questions. The instructors were requested to walk around the class and monitor the students while they were answering the questions in order to make sure that the students were following the instructions. This was necessary because in the piloting study, some of the students were reported to have ticked some of the ranking questions in Section IV. Although the instructions were written in bold and in bigger font size in the last version of the questionnaire, it was important to make sure that the students were on the right track while answering the questions.

When all the 220 questionnaires were collected, the papers of the international students and the bilingual students were singled out, and the remaining 186 questionnaires were analysed. The answers of the 186 students were entered into SPSS 20, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Each of the participants was given a number, so that it would be easy to enter the data into SPSS. Moreover, coding the students was essential in order to know which student wrote which paragraph and what kind of feedback s/he would be given in the following stages of the study. Using the descriptive statistics, the number of the students who preferred

to receive direct feedback and the number of the students who preferred to receive error code on their written texts were calculated, and the data were divided into two groups (the results will be explained in the fourth chapter). For the next stage of the research study, 120 students would be required to write a paragraph; therefore, 120 students were chosen randomly out of those 186 participants: 60 students who preferred direct feedback, and 60 students who preferred error codes on the grammatical correction of their paragraphs.

Stage 5: The first writing task

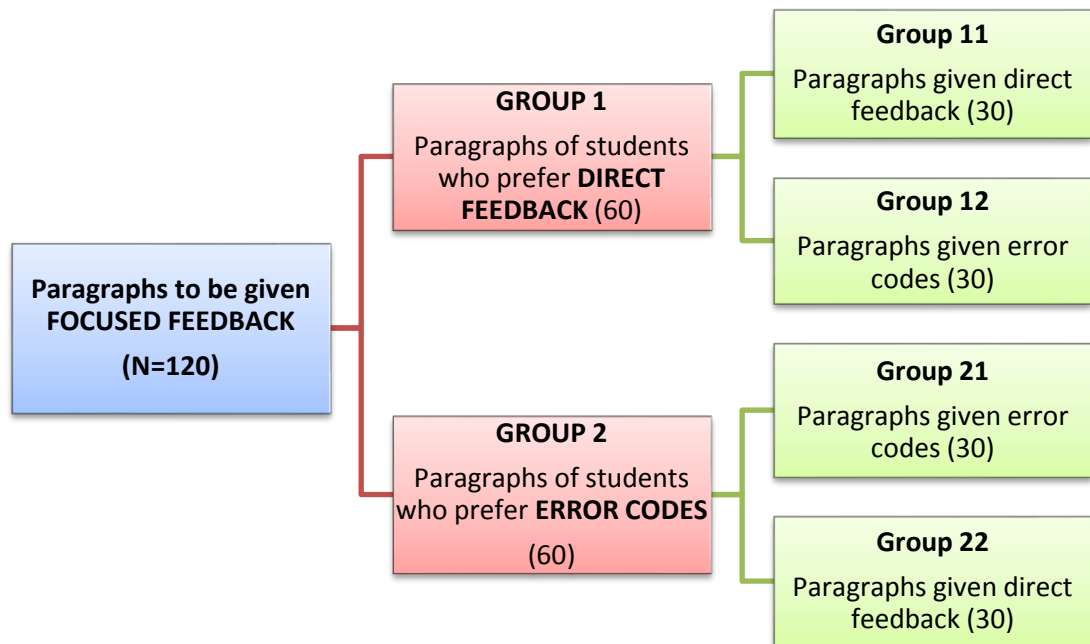
After the two groups were formed (60 students who preferred direct feedback, and 60 students who preferred error codes), all these 120 students were gathered in the auditorium in the Department of Basic English at METU. Each of the instructors of the participant classes was given the list of the names of the students who were chosen for the study. Although 12 students from each class were determined to take part in the next stage of the study, the instructors were given 4 more names in their classes in order not to oblige the students. Therefore, 16 students in each class were asked to volunteer for the writing task, and the ones who volunteered were invited to the auditorium to do the task. It is important to note that the students were willing to participate in the study since they reported that they believed they needed to improve their writing skills, and they would be happy to do an extra writing task in order to ‘see their mistakes’.

It was announced to the students by their instructors that they would meet in the auditorium half an hour after the class, and they would be asked to write a paragraph. The content of the paragraph was not announced to the students in order not to create any prejudice. They were told that the writing task would last 30 minutes. The students gathered in the predetermined time in the auditorium, and they were given the writing task, which was about the biography of a famous Turkish writer, Orhan Pamuk. Considering the proficiency level of the participants, the task was a guided writing task, where they were asked to write sentences about the life Orhan Pamuk using the words given. Another concern was the students’ familiarity with the writer, as some of them may not have even heard about him before. Therefore, all the

information about the writer was provided for the students on the writing task. All they needed to do was to use the biographical information about Orhan Pamuk and compose the information in a paragraph format using the correct grammar.

After the students wrote their paragraphs and handed them to the supervising teacher, the paragraphs were coded by the researcher according to the codes used in the questionnaires. In other words, each student was given a code (e.g. 17EC – 17: student number, EC: s/he prefers error code; 142DF – 142: student number, DF: s/he prefers direct feedback) in order to facilitate the evaluation process. Considering the codes on each paper, the students were divided into two groups: 60 students who preferred direct feedback, and 60 students who preferred error codes. Following this, each group was divided into two more groups. To illustrate, 60 students who preferred direct feedback were divided into two groups: 30 students who would be given the type of feedback they preferred (i.e. direct feedback), and 30 students who would *not* be given the type of feedback they preferred (i.e. error codes). The same procedure was applied to the other group as well.

Figure 3.1. The design of the feedback procedure



After the paragraphs were grouped and each paragraph was coded according to the type of the feedback the student prefers, the feedback procedure began. In order to make sure that there was no subjectivity in the evaluation of papers and concerning the inter-rater reliability, the paragraphs were marked by two more volunteer English instructors working in the same institution. The total number of paragraphs was divided into 3, and each instructor marked 40 paragraphs with the grouping criteria they were given. Each assessor was asked to mark 20 paragraphs with error codes, and 20 paragraphs with direct feedback, so that the reliability would be ensured. Before the assessment procedure began, the instructors did standardisation by marking randomly-selected six paragraphs, three of which were marked with error codes, and the other three with direct feedback. Therefore, they agreed on which errors to treat, which errors to ignore, and also which symbols they would use while marking the paragraphs using error codes.

All the students' papers were given 'focused feedback' regardless of their preferences. They were given feedback on the use of tenses, prepositions and articles, which were found to be the most common language errors made by the students in the Elementary level in the pre-evaluation stage of the study. These errors were not divided into subcategories (such as prepositions of time, or articles for the first time mention) because the students were asked to write a short paragraph of 10-15 sentences, and limiting the type of error correction might not reveal enough data for this specific research study. The reason why focused feedback was given is that 'providing error feedback on specific error patterns could facilitate students' own error correction' (Ferris, 2002). Therefore, as Ferris (2002) suggests, it is important to raise teachers' awareness of the possible side effects of treating errors comprehensively and correcting all errors for students, for example, frustration and burnout. Moreover, why the correction should be done on a limited number of types of errors is explained by Madsen (1983):

One reason to evaluate only a few factors at one time is that doing so helps us grade our papers more accurately and consistently. Another reason is to speed up our essay grading. A third reason for limiting the number of factors to be evaluated is to avoid unnecessary discouragement of our students (p.119).

The analytical approach that was adopted in the assessment of the paragraphs is the ‘points-off’ method, in which students begin with 100 points, and then lose points of a grade for errors that occur in their piece of writing (Madsen, 1983: 120). The evaluation criteria were based on the students’ grammatical errors, and the students lost 10 points for each error they made. For instance, if the student made 3 errors on prepositions, 30 points were cut off their total 100 points, so their score was 70. If the students made the same error more than once, they did not lose points for the second time; therefore, the inter-rater reliability was ensured. The data collected out of the paragraphs were entered into SPSS in three categories: Scores for prepositions, scores for articles, and scores for use of tenses.

Once the feedback procedure for the first writing task was over, the paragraphs with the feedback on were given back to the student writers, and they were asked to pay attention to the errors they made and analyse the feedback they received.

Stage 6: The second writing task

The students, who wrote a paragraph on the life of Orhan Pamuk for the first writing task, received feedback on their grammatical errors. Half of the students received the type of the feedback they preferred, and the other half received the one they would not prefer (either direct feedback or use of error codes). Their paragraphs were given back to them, and for one week, they had the opportunity to examine their mistakes and correct them, if their papers were treated using error codes. One week later, the students were gathered again at the same place for the second stage of the paragraph writing exercise. They were asked to write their second paragraph with the same discourse and a very similar topic (They wrote a short paragraph of 10-15 sentences about the life of the most well-known Turkish writer, Elif Safak). While this writing task was being prepared, a great attention was paid to the parallelism between her life and Orhan Pamuk’s life in terms of writing careers, education and achievements.

Since certain grammatical errors were examined and treated in this study, the second writing task should also include sentences which consisted of very similar grammatical points. For instance, in both of the writing tasks, the information about their university life was included since the students were led to use the structure ‘*graduate from*’. Similarly, the books of both writers have been *translated into* different languages, and in both writing tasks, the students were expected to use the correct tense (i.e. present perfect tense), and the preposition (i.e. ‘into’). While the students were writing their paragraphs, they were expected to recall their errors that they made in their previous paragraphs, but they did not have the opportunity to have a look at their previous compositions. The students were given 30 minutes to complete the task, as in the previous one.

After the students’ paragraphs were collected, they were coded again in parallel with the previous coding. This stage of the study required utmost attention since it was necessary to compare both paragraphs each student wrote. The assessing instructors were given the same paragraphs they had marked in the first writing task in order to obtain more reliable results. While evaluating the papers, only the errors the students made in their first paragraphs were taken into consideration in order to see whether or not they have improved those grammar areas. To illustrate, if the student wrote ‘He graduated at University of Istanbul’ in his first paragraph, the assessor considered these two errors (i.e. He graduated *from the* University of Istanbul) in his second paragraph. However, if the student made an error which he had not made in the previous task, the assessor did not take it into consideration. Because that error was considered ‘not treated’, it would not test whether or not the student improved for this specific research study.

The data collected out of the second writing task were entered into SPSS in three categories, just like the previous one: Scores for prepositions, scores for articles, and scores for use of tenses. Later, the paragraphs were given back to the students for self-evaluation.

Stage 7: Data analysis

The data for the research study were both quantitative and qualitative. After all the data from the questionnaires and students' written texts were collected, the data were entered into the SPSS 20, statistical packaging programme. In order to determine the number of the students who preferred error codes and who preferred direct feedback in their paragraphs, the descriptive statistics were used and frequencies were calculated. Similarly, in order to find out the feedback preferences of different gender groups and of the students registered in different faculties, frequency tables were prepared. Most of the questions in the questionnaire were prepared by using 5-point Likert scale. Therefore, the results were analysed by calculating the frequencies. The students' answers to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire were analysed by qualitative data analysis.

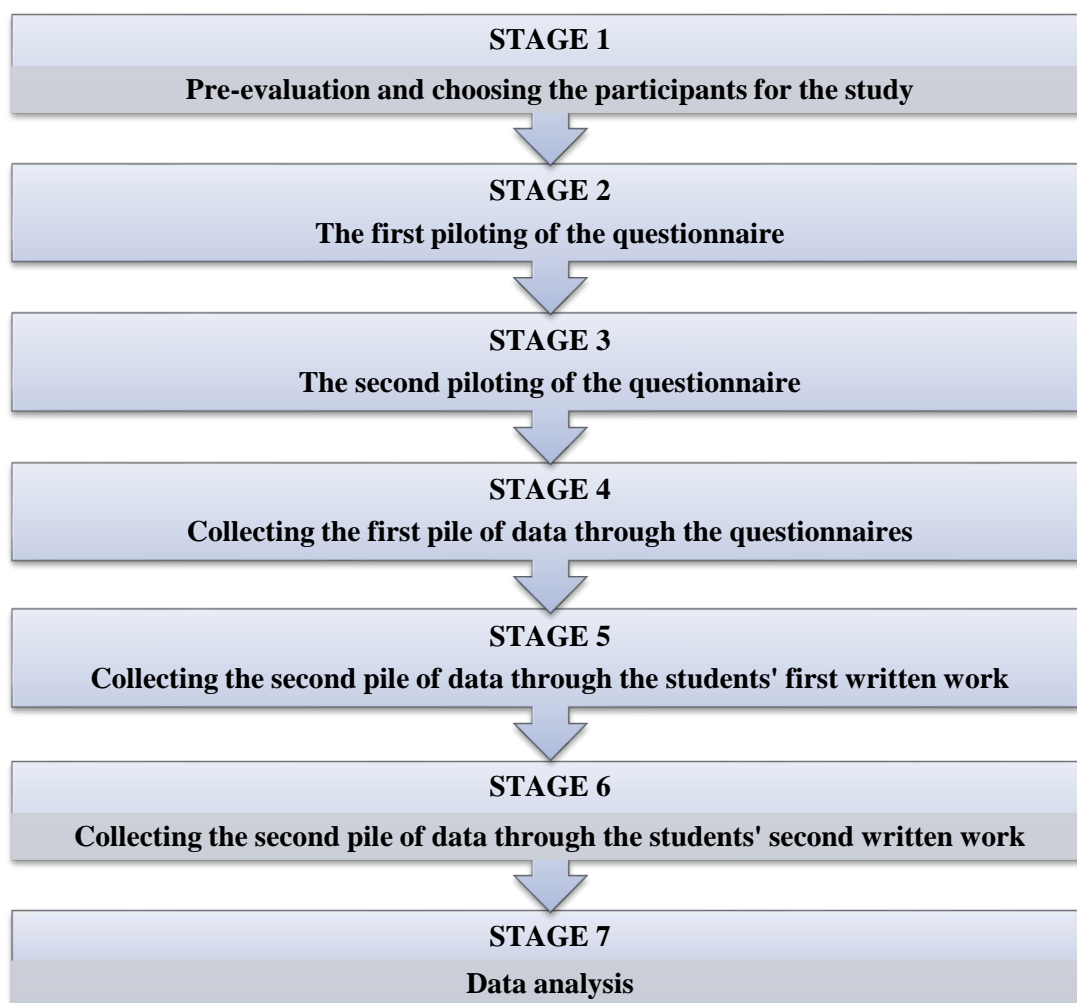
After the students wrote two short texts (about the lives of Orhan Pamuk and Elif Safak) and their paragraphs were marked by the instructors, their scores were entered into SPSS 20. Three categories for their errors were made: Errors in the use of tenses, errors in the use of prepositions, and errors in the use of articles. For each category, two columns were used: One column for their errors in the first writing task, and one column for their errors in the second writing task. Their scores were calculated by allocating 100 points for each error category and subtracting 10 points for each error in one error category. To illustrate, if a student made 4 tense mistakes in his first writing task, his score for this section was 60 (i.e. $100 - 40 = 60$). After all six categories were prepared (see table 3.4 for the illustration of the categories in SPSS), the difference between the success rate in the first writing task and the second writing task was calculated by using Paired-Samples T Test.

Table 3.4. The illustration of the error categories

	Tenses Task 1	Tenses Task 2	Prepositions Task 1	Prepositions Task 2	Articles Task 1	Articles Task 2
Student 1	60	70	50	70	60	80
Student 2	40	50	60	50	40	60
Student 3	70	90	80	70	80	90

The design of the research study is presented in the following scheme (i.e. Figure 3.2) in order to make it easier to comprehend. All the stages of the study are displayed with a brief explanation on how to conduct it.

Figure 3.2. The scheme for the research stages



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.0. Presentation

In this chapter, the results of the study and the interpretations are presented.

4.1. Findings about Research Question 1: Which type of written feedback (*direct feedback or use of error codes*) do university prep-school EFL students with elementary level of proficiency prefer to receive on their written texts?

The data for this research question were collected through a questionnaire, which consists of four sections. The first section of the questionnaire was about personal information, the second section was about the students' previous writing experience, the third section was about the students' perceptions related to written feedback, and the last section was about their preferences for written feedback. The questionnaire was given to 186 students at the Department of Basic English with a proficiency level of Elementary. In Section III of the questionnaire, there were 6 questions, and 5-point Likert scale was used for each item.

In order to answer this research question, the frequencies of the students' preferences were calculated using SPSS 20. As can be seen in Table 4.1.1, the number of students who preferred the use of error codes in their written texts was much higher than the ones who preferred to receive direct correction (64.5% of the students preferred to receive use of error codes while 35.5% preferred to receive direct correction). This is an important result since the number of the students who would prefer to receive error codes is almost twice as many as the ones who prefer direct correction.

Table 4.1.1. Students' preferences on the type of written feedback

Type of error correction	Frequency	Percent
Direct feedback (DF)	66	35.5
Use of error codes (EC)	120	64.5
Total	186	100

Although the results of the students' preferences are obvious, the factors that may have affected their choices should also be taken into consideration. It is important to note that a student's preference is usually determined by their perceptions. In this case, while the students were stating their preferences, they may have considered whether or not receiving feedback was significant for their language development. Therefore, the items in the Section III of the questionnaire were also analysed to see how the students perceived feedback. The third section of the questionnaire aims to find out students' perceptions about receiving feedback. In this section, there were 6 questions and 5-point Likert scale was used for each item. The first item in this section (item 29) asks the student to evaluate how important it is for them to make few grammatical errors in their written texts. The data for item 29 are presented in Table 4.1.2 below.

Table 4.1.2. Students' perception about the importance of grammar in writing

It is important for me to have few grammatical errors in my written work.		
5-point scale	Frequency	Percent
I strongly disagree	1	0.5
I disagree	4	2.2
I am not sure	13	7.0
I agree	69	37.1
I strongly agree	99	53.2
Total	186	100.0

As can be seen in Table 4.1.2, the big majority of the students (90.3%) either agree or strongly agree with this statement. The percentage of the students who think that

making grammatical errors is not very important is only 2.7%. This result suggests that students *do* believe in the positive effects of good grammar knowledge on the improvement of their writing skill, which is in line with other studies that investigated the students' perceptions about linguistic accuracy in their written work (Ferris, 1995; Hyland, 1998; Lee, 2004; Schulz; 1996). A similar result was obtained from the frequency analysis of item 34 in the same section, where the students were asked whether or not they used their feedback when writing another paragraph. As shown in Table 4.1.3, most of the students (79%; 147 out of 185) stated that they benefitted from their previous feedback, whereas only 7 (3.8%) of them said they did not. These results also correlate with those obtained from the study of Lee (2005) in regard to the students' tendency to make use of the corrective grammar feedback they received.

Table 4.1.3. Students' making use of previous grammar feedback

I use the previous grammar feedback when I write a new paragraph in English		
5-point scale	Frequency	Percent
I strongly disagree	2	1.1
I disagree	5	2.7
I am not sure	31	16.7
I agree	67	36.0
I strongly agree	80	43.0
Missing	1	0.5
Total	186	100.0

The fact that students regard grammar knowledge as essential to improve their writing skills is proven by another analysis. When the students were asked to rank the language elements in order of importance to them (i.e. cohesion, content, grammar, organisation, orthography and vocabulary), they put forward interesting results (Part IV, item 38 in the questionnaire). As can be seen in Table 4.1.4, almost half of the students (45.1%) put 'grammar knowledge' either in the first or the second rank. However, the percentage of the students who put grammar either in the fifth or the sixth rank is 20%, which is one fifth of the total participants. This

suggests important conclusions about the way the students would like to learn the language. It is clear that almost half of the students give high priority to grammar learning during their language education. However, the students who place grammar towards the end of their lists (20%) can not be underestimated, either. The reason why 45% of the students regard grammar as essential in their language education could be related to their past experiences. Because their English classes in high school mostly focused on grammar teaching, these students may still believe that grammar is the core of language learning. In contrast, the 20% of the students, who do not consider grammar as inevitable as the others, may be paying more attention to communication, therefore, productive skills and vocabulary, rather than focusing on grammar. Another reason could be that having received too much grammar instruction, they may feel confident enough to produce written texts without further emphasis on grammar. Alternatively, these students may be feeling overwhelmed by the intensity of the previous grammar instruction.

Table 4.1.4. Importance of grammar knowledge for students while writing an English paragraph

It is important for me to have few grammatical errors in my written work.		
Ranking order	Frequency	Percent
1 st rank	59	31.7
2 nd rank	25	13.4
3 rd rank	35	18.8
4 th rank	30	16.1
5 th rank	26	14.1
6 th rank	11	5.9
Total	186	100.0

The analysis of the data shows that grammar knowledge is regarded to be the most important language element while writing a good paragraph. The students' ranking of the other elements was also calculated in the frequency table. Their most and the least popular answers were taken as the criteria. The results are shown below in Table 4.1.5.

Table 4.1.5. The importance of different language areas for students to write a good paragraph

Ranking items	The most important items		The least important items	
	The number of the students	Percent	The number of the students	Percent
Grammar	59	31.8	11	5.9
Vocabulary	43	23.1	26	14
Cohesion	38	20.4	25	13.4
Content	24	12.9	31	16.7
Organisation	14	7.5	31	16.7
Orthography	8	4.3	62	33.3
Total	186	100.0	186	100.0

The table above shows the students' ranking of the areas which are important for them to write a good paragraph. While doing the ranking, most of the students (31.8%; 59 out of 186) put 'grammar knowledge' on the top of their list while very few students (5.9%; 11 out of 186) put it at the end. This means that many students regard grammar as an inevitable part of paragraph writing, and it can be implied that they give importance to receiving feedback on their grammar, as supported by many other studies (Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Chiang, 2004; Diab, 2005; Enginarlar, 1993; Zacharias, 2007; Zhu, 2010). The second language element considered to be important by the students is vocabulary with 23.1%, and the third one is cohesion with 20.4%. Therefore, according to the perceptions of the students, the most important element in paragraph writing is grammar, which is followed by vocabulary and cohesion.

The analyses of students' perceptions about grammar itself have revealed that students pay great attention to learning grammar during their language education. In addition to their perception of grammar learning, what they think about receiving grammar feedback is just as important. It is essential to know what students think about grammar feedback in order to help them benefit from feedback procedures

more (Oladejo, 1993; Saito, 1994). Therefore, other factors such as their motivation to learn the language and involvement in the feedback process should also be taken into consideration.

When the statement is related to their motivation to learn the English language after receiving feedback on grammar, most of the students (78.5%) stated that they feel more motivated while 16.7% of them stated that they were not sure about that. This means that receiving error correction awakes different feelings in every student, and it may even be disturbing or demotivating in some cases. Most students find it useful to receive feedback on their grammatical errors since they believe that they learn from their mistakes (Lee, 2005); however, receiving back a paragraph with full of grammar corrections may result in some students' losing their motivation and feeling disappointed. Therefore, it is important for the teachers to decide how much correction to make, which underlines the practicality of focused feedback.

Another statement aiming to find out the students' involvement in the feedback procedures was related to the students' revising the grammar feedback on their paragraph. When the students were asked whether or not they read the grammar feedback they received, 160 students out of 186 (86%) said they did; however, 8 students (4.3%) disagreed with the statement. This means that a great number of students revise their notes given by the teacher, whereas a small group of students do not pay attention to the feedback they receive. In the light of this, teachers should reconsider their feedback procedures and try to develop methods to give more effective, ideally individualised feedback in order to reach more students.

Preferences of students from different faculties

Another consideration about the students' preferences about written corrective feedback is whether or not their preferences are related to their faculties, that is, their educational preferences. It is important to research the relationship between which faculties the students are registered to and what type of written feedback they prefer in order to see whether their preferences are related to their educational preferences. Since each language learner is different from the other in terms of learning styles and

personal interests, it is important to know this connection to be able to give more beneficial, even tailor-made feedback to the students. As Beach and Friedrich (2006) suggest, teachers need to vary their assignments and feedback to accommodate individual differences in students' writing ability.

When the relationships between the students' faculties and their feedback preferences are analysed, the most significant difference is observed between the students who will study at the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Engineering. While the students of the Faculty of Education mostly prefer to receive error codes in their paragraphs (77.8%), the percentage goes down to 64.2% for the students who will study at the Faculty of Engineering. Although both groups prefer the use of error codes more than direct feedback, there is a considerable amount of difference (13.6%) between the students of the faculty of Education and Engineering. This difference may bring along important conclusions about the learner types and their preferences. It is obvious that the students of the Faculty of Education tend to favour the error codes more than direct feedback, which may be a result of their 'educational' approach. This could also be related to the background of the students. Those who will study engineering most probably did not take as many language classes as those who will go to the social sciences departments. Another reason could be that engineering students choose more analytic learning strategies than humanities students do (Oxford, 1989). However, it should be noted that these results could also be specific to this group of students whose proficiency level is Elementary, and different results could be obtained with different groups of participants.

In the second section of the questionnaire, in which the students were asked to give some background information about their writing experience, almost all of the students (94.4%) stated that they were not satisfied with the English classes they took in high school, and they stated that they did not receive 'proper' English education. Moreover, the students who will study at the Faculty of Engineering reported to have taken fewer classes in English since the focus of the lessons was on test-taking in science lessons.

Table 4.1.6. Corrective feedback preferences of the students who will study at the Faculty of Education and Engineering

Type of feedback	Faculty of Education		Faculty of Engineering	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Direct feedback (DF)	8	22.2	24	35.8
Error codes (EC)	28	77.8	43	64.2
Total	36	100.0	67	100.0

In summary, the results of this section revealed that most of the students prefer to receive use of error codes since they believe that they learn better if they correct their errors themselves, as stated by 10 students in item 39 in the questionnaire. Moreover, for many students, grammar is a very important language point to consider while writing a paragraph, and they tend to use their feedback while producing a new text. In addition, the students who will study at the Faculty of Engineering seem to have a greater tendency towards receiving direct feedback than those at the Faculty of Education. In all cases, the students report not to have been satisfied with their language education in high school, which is considered to have affected their current perceptions and preferences.

4.2. Findings about Research Question 2: Does the (mis)match between students' preferences and received feedback affect their level of improvement in writing?

Each student has different needs and interests; therefore, it is important to bring a variety into the classroom, taking the students' preferences into account. The teacher should consider the learner varieties while making decisions about such applications as introducing a new subject, assigning a project, or giving feedback. Corder (1967) states that successful language teaching and learning depends on the willing co-operation of the participants in the interaction and an agreement between them as to the goals of their interaction. Therefore, it is suggested that the students' preferences

be taken into consideration in language education. However, there are also scholars claiming that ‘any mismatch between teacher practices and student preferences must be examined because students’ preferences are not necessarily more effective for being preferred’ (Brown, 1998). For this reason, it is important to know whether the students’ preferences should always be counted on or not.

Students’ preferences for corrective written feedback has been the subject of many research studies for a long time. Although there are many studies that examined the students’ preferences for written feedback (e.g. whether they prefer direct, indirect feedback, focused feedback, etc.) (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Leki, 1991; Zacharias, 2007), none of the studies has brought the effects of preferences to the fore. In other words, there is no study in literature which focuses on whether or not the students’ feedback preferences have any influence on their improvement of writing skill. Therefore, this study is unique in its nature since it examines the relationship between the students’ preferences for feedback and their improvement of writing skill.

In order to answer this research question, two data instruments were used: First, the students filled in the questionnaire, and they were divided into two groups according to their preferences; and then, they were asked to write two pieces of paragraphs in different times. There were two motives for this application: 1. to find out what type of written feedback the students prefer, and 2. to see whether they improve more in terms of writing skill when they (don’t) receive the type of feedback they prefer.

In order to find an answer to this question, the data were analysed quantitatively. First, the students were grouped according to their feedback preferences (either they prefer to receive *direct feedback* or *use of error codes*) using frequencies in SPSS 20. Then, the students were given a writing task (to write a short biography of a famous Turkish writer, Orhan Pamuk). Their paragraphs were analysed and the numbers of their grammatical errors on the selected grammar topics (use of tenses, prepositions and articles) were entered into SPSS. Half of the students were given the type of feedback they preferred, and the other half were given the type of feedback they did not prefer. After they were allowed to take a look at the grammar feedback on their

paragraphs for a few days, they were asked to write another short paragraph with a similar topic (a short biography of another famous Turkish writer, Elif Safak). Their scores on these paragraphs were again entered into SPSS, and they were analysed statistically. In order to find out the difference between the scores of the first and the second writing task in terms of the use of tenses, prepositions and articles, the data were sorted and new files were created. Following this, paired-samples T Test was conducted to find out the relationship between the two scores of the students.

The Table 4.2.1. demonstrates the average scores of the students who preferred the use of error codes (EC) , and the differences between their scores in the first and the second writing task. In this table, the students' success rates for the three selected language areas (i.e. use of tenses, prepositions and articles) are presented. In the first category, the scores of the students who preferred *and* received use of error codes (EC and EC) in their written texts are presented. In the second category, the scores of the students who preferred use of error codes *but* received direct feedback (EC but DF) are displayed. Therefore, the differences between the performance rates of the students who received and didn't receive the type of the feedback they preferred are emphasised.

Table 4.2.1. The writing improvement of students who preferred EC

The language focus in the paragraphs	Paired-samples T Test statistics					
	The students who preferred EC <u>and</u> received EC			The students who preferred EC <u>but</u> received DF		
	Mean 1	Mean 2	Sig.	Mean 1	Mean 2	Sig.
Use of tenses	67.3	79.3	.000	72.0	84.0	.001
Use of prep.	68.0	69.3	.702	60.0	72.6	.000
Use of articles	65.3	74.6	.005	57.3	76.3	.000

As can be seen in the table above, the mean scores of the students who preferred error codes and received error codes were 67.3 in use of tenses, 68 in use of prepositions and 65.3 in use of articles in the first writing task. After they were given feedback on their grammatical errors, they were asked to write a new paragraph with a similar topic. The analyses of their results in the second writing task show that their success rate increased in all areas (the second mean score for tenses was 79.3, for prepositions 69.3 and for articles 74.6). There is a highly significant difference between the scores in the first and the second writing tasks in the use of tenses with a significance level of .000 ($p < 0.05$). The difference in the two scores of the use of articles also presents a significant value ($P = 0.005$). However, the results suggest that there is no significant difference between the two scores in the use of prepositions ($P = 0.702$). This means that the students did not perform significantly better in the second writing task considering the use of prepositions.

When the scores of the students who preferred use of error codes but received direct feedback are considered, it is obvious that there are more significant differences between the students' scores. The students who preferred the use of error codes but received direct feedback performed significantly better in all grammar areas (i.e. use of tenses, prepositions and articles). The significance level for the use of prepositions and articles was .000, and it was .001 for the use of tenses ($p < 0.05$).

When the scores of the students who preferred EC and received EC are compared with those who preferred EC but received DF, it can be concluded that the students who received the type of feedback they *did not* prefer performed significantly better in use of prepositions than the ones who received the type of feedback they *did* prefer (In the former, $P = 0.702$; in the latter, $P = .000$). The fact that the students improved more in the use of prepositions suggests that their preference did not affect their level of improvement positively. Similarly, the students made a slightly more progress in the use of articles when they were given the type of feedback they did not prefer ($P1 = .005$; $P2 = .000$). These results suggest that although the students prefer to receive use of error codes, they may benefit from the direct feedback more in some grammatical structures.

The same analysis was conducted for the group of students who preferred to receive direct feedback. The reason for this analysis was to find out whether there are any differences between these students' mean scores in relation to their preferences. The scores of the students who preferred direct feedback *and* received direct feedback and of the students who preferred direct feedback *but* received use of error codes are presented in Table 4.2.2.

Table 4.2.2. The writing improvement of students who preferred DF

The language focus in the paragraphs	Paired-samples T Test statistics					
	The students who preferred DF <u>and</u> received DF			The students who preferred DF <u>but</u> received EC		
	Mean 1	Mean 2	Sig.	Mean 1	Mean 2	Sig.
Use of tenses	72.0	85.0	.000	66.3	76.6	.003
Use of prep.	61.6	70.0	.066	52.0	68.6	.001
Use of articles	61.6	72.3	.001	61.3	74.0	.000

The statistical analysis of the scores of the students preferring direct feedback reveals similar results to those preferring use of error codes. As can be seen in the table, the students who preferred direct DF and received DF significantly improved in the second writing task in terms of using correct tenses ($M_1=72$, $M_2=85$, $P=.000$), and using correct articles ($M_1=61.6$, $M_2=72.3$, $P=.001$). However, there is no significant difference between the two scores in the use of prepositions ($P=.66$, ($p < 0.05$)). This means that when the students preferred DF and received DF, their improvement in the use of tenses and articles was statistically significant. However, they did not perform significantly better in the second writing task in terms of using prepositions.

When the scores of the students who preferred direct feedback but received error codes are examined, it is seen that the students performed significantly better in all grammar areas with a significance level smaller than 0.05 in all sections. Their use of

prepositions improved ($M_1=52$, $M_2= 68.6$, $P=.001$) as well as their use of tenses ($M_1=66.3$, $M_2=76.6$, $P=.003$) and articles ($M_1=61.3$, $M_2=74$, $P= .000$).

The comparison of these results suggests that the students who received the type of feedback they did not prefer showed more improvement in the use of articles, and especially in the use of prepositions. While the significance value was .66 for the group who received what they preferred, it was .000 for the ones who received what they did not prefer. For the use of tenses, there was not much difference between the significance level between the two groups of students as both groups made progress in the second writing task. However, the significance level was slightly lower ($P=.003$) for the group of students who preferred EC.

It is clear that the students who received the type of feedback they did not prefer performed significantly better than the ones who received what they preferred in the use of prepositions and articles. Considering the use of tenses, the level of improvement was slightly higher in the group of the students who received the type of feedback they preferred.

The results of the analyses bring about important conclusions related to the students' preferences and their level of improvement. There are many claims that students' opinions and preferences should be taken into consideration in terms of improving learner autonomy. For instance, Nunan (1989) states that accommodating learners' needs and preferences is essential in designing a learner-centered curriculum. Moreover, it is suggested that both teachers' and learners' awareness of each other's needs has to be raised, and there has to be a compromise between what the students want and what the teachers provide them with. However, the results of this study do not support the idea that learners' preferences should always be taken into account in language education. It is advisable to find out what the students prefer; however, the appropriateness of their preferences should be proven by classroom research and applications.

4.3. Findings about Research Question 3: To what extent does the students' previous writing experience affect their preference for the type of written feedback?

In order to collect data for this research study, one of the instruments was a questionnaire, which consisted of four sections. The second section of the questionnaire focused on the students' previous writing experience. In this section, the students were asked how much they worked on improving their writing skill in high school and what type of corrective feedback they received on their written work. The reason why there is such a focus on students' previous writing skill in this study is that none of the previous studies in the field of error correction has examined the background influence on feedback preferences. Although there are a number of studies that aimed to find out what type of feedback is more beneficial for the students' writing development (Ashwell, 2000; Bitchener and Knoch, 2008; Fathman and Walley, 1990; Ferris, 1997; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Hyland, 2003), or what the students' preferences for written corrective feedback are (Amrhein and Nassaji, 1995; Chandler, 2009; Chiang, 2004; Leki, 1991), none of the studies aimed to find out what lies behind these preferences. Therefore, this study is unique in that it focuses on the relationship between the students' previous writing experience and their feedback preferences for written texts.

In the second section of the questionnaire, there were 16 questions. For the first 10 questions, a 5-point Likert scale was used for the items, and the frequencies were calculated for the analysis. The other 6 items were open-ended questions and the students were asked to answer the questions briefly. Although most of the questions (14 questions out of 16 in the second section of the questionnaire) were mainly about how much importance was given to writing classes during their high school education and the types of feedback they received on their paragraphs, there were also more general questions such as whether they were satisfied with their English classes or not (items 23 and 24). The reason for the inclusion of these general questions in the questionnaire was to find out the students' perceptions about English

language education in high school and how much it related to their writing improvement.

It is important to know the reasons why the students at the preparatory school of university are not successful in performing written texts. The assumption in this study is that they may not have received enough English classes during their high school education. In his article about the native language and foreign language education in Turkey, Celebi (2006) states that the Turkish students, who start to learn English at primary school and continue their education up to university, unfortunately, do not have the expected proficiency level of English (p. 286). Considering the low success rate of writing skill in Turkey (Gokalp, 2001; Inal, 2006; Celebi, 2006), it is essential to find an answer to this question in this specific context.

The analysis of the items in Section II reveals important results. First of all, the data elicited via the Likert-scale items were analysed quantitatively. The frequency tables for 10 questions were prepared. The first item in this section (Item 13) puts forward interesting results as to the writing habits of students in high school. When the students were asked how often they used to write a paragraph in English in high school, 85.5% of them stated that they rarely or never wrote paragraphs regularly. This brings about important questions about writing classes in high schools in general.

Since a big majority of the students said rarely or never did they write paragraphs in English, it is essential to question why these students did not take proper writing education. The studies in the field of English language education in Turkey state that the problems related to improving writing skill start during the primary school education and continue with the university education (Deniz, 2000). Gokalp (2001) states that although writing is a very important element in English language learning, it is usually ignored in schools in Turkey. She says that the teaching of writing skill should mean helping students acquire permanent skills and involve those skills in daily life; however, English writing skill has been the most neglected lesson in both curriculum and application in English classes in Turkey. It can be concluded that if

these students had written English paragraphs in high school, they might be more successful in writing classes now, and they might be more aware of their preferences.

It has been mentioned above that 85.5% of the students stated that they did not write paragraphs in English regularly; however, when the students were asked how often the writing skill used to be tested, they revealed interesting results. According to the statistical analyses, 65.1% of the students never or rarely had writing sections in their English exams, whereas 15.6% of the students said that the writing skill used to be tested regularly. It can be concluded that some students had to write paragraphs in English exams although they did not work on writing ability in English classes. Moreover, in the second section of the questionnaire, where there were open-ended questions, some students (13.4%) wrote that they only wrote paragraphs in English just before the exam as a practice. This suggests that, in many cases, writing a paragraph is a testing method rather than something to be taught, practised and improved.

Table 4.3.1. The frequency of students' writing paragraphs in English in high school

I used to write a paragraph in English at least once a week		
5-point Likert scale	Frequency	Percent
Always	2	1.1
Usually	9	4.8
Sometimes	16	8.6
Rarely	38	20.4
Never	121	65.1
Total	186	100

According to the statistical analyses, only 11 students (5.9%) stated that they *usually* or *always* wrote paragraphs in English regularly, and all of these students studied at Anatolian High School (English-based high school). However, when the number of other students who also studied at Anatolian High School is considered, it can be said that whether or not a student took more effective English writing classes is not

determined by the type of high school they attended. Although more than half of the participants (54.3%) studied at Anatolian High School, only 5.9% said that they used to write paragraphs regularly. The students who participated in this study come from different types of high schools, so it would not be wrong to generalise the results of this study to all high schools. The numbers and percentages of the students who studied in different high schools are presented in Table 4.3.2. below.

Table 4.3.2. The frequencies of the high schools the students attended

Type of the high school	Frequency	Percent
Anatolian High School	101	54.3
Anatolian Teacher Training High School	20	10.8
Regular High School	37	19.9
Science High School	15	8.1
Vocational High School	13	6.9
Total	186	100

The fact that 85.5% of the participants did not write paragraphs in English regularly also brings about the idea that these students probably did not receive much, if not any, grammar feedback on their written work. For this reason, it might have been misleading if they were asked to state their preferences as soon as they started their education at preparatory class because they were probably not familiar with different types of feedback. This justifies the fact that these students were presented with examples of both direct correction and the use of error codes when they first came to the preparatory class. In fact, the students were introduced to the different feedback types well enough to be able to make choices, but not too much to affect their preferences.

Since the students stated that they were not used to writing paragraphs in English classes, it is expected that they did not receive much feedback on grammar, either. Item 14 in the second section of the questionnaire examined this, and the statement read ‘After I wrote a paragraph in English, my teacher used to read it and give me

feedback on the grammar mistakes in my paragraph'. The results of item 14 are presented in Table 4.3.3. below.

Table 4.3.3. The frequency of students' receiving grammar feedback

5-point Likert scale	Frequency	Percent
Always	7	3.8
Usually	13	7.0
Sometimes	10	5.3
Rarely	26	14.0
Never	130	69.9
Total	186	100

As can be seen in Table 4.3.3, the 69.9% of the students stated that they *never* received grammar feedback on their written texts, whereas only 3.8% of them *always* received grammar feedback. This is very important because a high majority of the students neither practised writing paragraphs regularly nor did they receive feedback on their written work, which shows that writing education they received in high school was not effective at all.

In item 23, more than half of the students (63%) wrote that English lessons were never taken seriously during their high school education since they were working hard to succeed in the university entrance exam. Almost the half of the students (42%) also said that the English teachers were as unwilling to have classes as the students, and all they did was to write some grammatical notes on the board for the students to copy down. Moreover, in item 24, when the students were asked what language skills or areas they especially focused on in their English classes in high school, the most popular answer was grammar (78%). These results give important clues about the current English education in Turkey, and not only the curriculum but also the practical applications need urgent modification.

The fact that the students did not receive effective writing education in English in high school is reflected on their current practices in writing as well. The most

important point to mention is that since these students did not write (m)any paragraphs in English in high school, they may not be aware of what they are expected to do in writing classes. Because of the insufficiency of writing instruction and practice in their background, they probably did not have the opportunity to work on multiple drafting, rewriting or revising the received feedback. It is also possible that most of the students heard of the concepts like *direct feedback* and *use of error codes* for the first time when they came to university. This shows that writing education in high schools is quite limited, and there is not much variety as to the different aspects of writing skill, such as components of writing, types of correction, and self/peer evaluation. Therefore, it seems that the questions of which errors should be corrected, how they should be treated or who should correct the errors remain underestimated, if not ignored, in English classrooms in many high schools.

This conclusion is very much related to the current study as well. When the students stated their feedback preferences in this study, their previous writing experience seems to have restricted them in terms of making decisions. Considering their writing experience in high school, these students probably did not make their preferences with the reflection of their previous studies. On the contrary, it is supposed that they benefitted from the short-term training they received on the different types of error correction in the first weeks of their education at the department. When the students were asked to state the reason for their preference for a specific type of feedback (in Item 39 in the questionnaire), the most popular reason (65%) the students who preferred the use of error codes reported was they remembered their errors better if they find them themselves. The reason for this could be related to the readiness to learn the language either because of enthusiasm or obligation. After long years of ineffective English writing education, the students may have the urge to 'learn' the language during their education at university. On the other hand, out of 66 students who preferred to receive direct feedback, 52% of them specified their reason as not being able to spot the problems so the teacher should spot and correct them for them. This may suggest that the students feel unconfident when it comes to writing skill, partly because they did not get enough training on it previously.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0. Presentation

In this chapter, first, a short summary of the study is presented. Then, the results of the study are discussed and the limitations are mentioned. Lastly, some recommendations are made for the teachers, administrators and researchers interested in the field.

5.1. The summary of the study

This research study was conducted with the participation of 186 Elementary-level students studying at the Department of Basic English at Middle East Technical University. This study aimed to find an answer to three main questions: what type of written corrective feedback (*direct feedback* or *use of error codes*) the university preparatory school students with a proficiency level of Elementary prefer in their written texts; whether or not the (mis)match between their preferences and the received feedback affect the level of their improvement in a new text; and how much their previous writing experience affects their preferences. While analysing the students' preferences, their perceptions about written feedback and the reasons behind their preferences were also taken into consideration. In order to answer these research questions, two types of data instruments were used: A questionnaire and two writing tasks.

The first data collection instrument to be used was a questionnaire. Since there was no questionnaire in the literature which focused on the same elements as this study, a new questionnaire was prepared and piloted twice to ensure its reliability. The previous questionnaires related to written feedback inquired either the students' preferences about the type of feedback (Leki, 1991) or the evaluation of the corrective feedback they were already receiving (Ferris, 1995). However, none of the questionnaires included questions related to the participants' previous writing experience focusing on how much it may have affected the students' feedback

preferences. The reason why there have been no studies examining this question may be the context in which the study was carried out. This study was conducted in Turkey, where the English studies are often thought to be ignored and writing skill is not given enough importance (a survey carried out by a private institution in the UK revealed that Turkey came 43 out of 44 countries in terms of English proficiency) (TEPAV, 2011). That the students do not receive sufficient writing classes in high school may not be the case in other countries, and there may not have been any need to examine the background factor for students' feedback preferences for their written texts. However, the nature of this study made it compulsory to design such a questionnaire which could yield data related to the students' writing experience, that is, how much they were exposed to writing classes in high school, and what types of feedback, if any, they received on their written texts. The questionnaire was composed of 4 sections: The first section included personal questions about the participants; the second sections included questions related to the students' writing experience during their high school education; the third section aimed to examine the students' perceptions about grammar feedback; and the last section focused on the students' feedback preferences. The questionnaires took 20 minutes for the students to complete. The data collected through the questionnaires were entered into SPSS 20, and in order to analyse the data, descriptive statistics were used.

The second stage of the study was initiated after the determination of the preference groups. Out of 186 participants, who filled in the questionnaire in the first stage, 120 of them were chosen to take part in two writing activities (60 of these students preferred to receive direct feedback, and the other 60 preferred use of error codes). These students were gathered in an auditorium to write a paragraph about a famous writer's life. After they completed the task, their paragraphs were marked and given selected feedback (the focus was on the use of tenses, prepositions and articles). Half of the students received the type of the feedback they preferred, and the other half received the type of feedback they did not prefer. The reason for this application was to compare the mean scores of the students who were given what they preferred, and who were not. After they received their feedback, they were gathered again to do a second writing task with a similar topic.

The scoring method for the marking of the paragraphs was the point-off method. For each mistake they made in the paragraph, they lost 10 points out of 100. Their scores were entered into SPSS, and Paired-Samples T Test was conducted in order to find out the difference between their first and the second mean scores.

The findings of this study revealed that almost two-thirds of the students (64.5%) preferred to receive error codes on their written texts, while the remaining 35.5% preferred to receive direct feedback. When the differences between the feedback preferences of students from different faculties were looked into, the most significant difference was observed between the students of the Faculty of Education and Engineering. While the main preference for direct feedback of the former was 22.2%, it was 35.8% for the latter, which could be related to the learner varieties.

When the students were asked what they thought about the significance of grammar in their written texts, 90.3% of them stated that it was important for them to have few grammatical mistakes. Moreover, when they ranked the language elements in terms of their importance to them while writing a good paragraph, about 45% stated that grammar was the most important, while 20% said that it was the least important. Another question was related to how much the students benefitted from previous feedback, and 79% of them said that they benefitted from the feedback they received before while writing a new text.

The analyses of the students' performance on the first and the second writing tasks made it clear that the preferred one is not always the best one in terms of written corrective feedback. When the mean scores of the students who received the type of feedback they preferred and who received the type of feedback they did not prefer were compared, it was clear that the students improved more when their paragraphs were *not* marked according to their preferred method of correction, especially in the use of prepositions.

As to the students' previous writing experience and its relevance to their current feedback preferences, the analyses of the questionnaire revealed that a big majority of the students (97%) were not satisfied with the English, especially writing classes

in high school, and the focus of English lessons was usually grammar. A noticeable number of the students (85.5%) stated that they rarely or never wrote paragraphs in English, and when they did, they did not receive much feedback. It is interesting to note that 13.4% of these students said that the only time they wrote an English paragraph was before the exams because there was a writing section in English exams although writing skill was not properly taught and practised in class. It was concluded that the insufficiency of writing education in high school may have affected the students' preferences by leading the students to prefer use of error codes hoping that they could compensate for this deficiency by getting more involved in the evaluation process of their written texts.

5.2. Discussion of the results

In this study, the students' written corrective preferences for their written texts were looked into, and the focus was on two types of feedback: *Direct feedback* and *use of error codes*. The fact that most of the students (64.5%) preferred to receive use of error codes and only 35.5% preferred to receive direct feedback raises many questions to be answered.

First of all, it is important to mention the language learning experience factor, which is closely related to the third research question. There were 186 participants in the study, and they came from different types of high schools (54.3% from Anatolian High School, 19.9% from Regular High School, 10.8% from Anatolian Teacher Training High School, 8.1% from Science High School, and 6.9% from Vocational High School). The students who took part in this study had different backgrounds in terms of their high school education; however, one thing was common according to the results of the questionnaire: When the study took place, they had been learning English for 9-12 years, and none of them was satisfied with the English language education they received in high school. Most of the students stated that the focus of the English classes was grammar, and writing classes seem to have been ignored since the students reported not to have written paragraphs in English regularly.

This implies important conclusions about the English language education (especially English writing education) in Turkish high schools and the students' perceptions about it since the number of the students who claimed that they did 'nothing' to improve their writing skills is quite high (92%). Because of the lack of writing classes in high school, as claimed by the students, most of the students (83.9%) rarely or never received any grammar feedback on their written texts. However, it is obvious that the students consider grammar as an important part of writing success since they stated that it is important for them to make few grammatical mistakes in their paragraphs (90.3%). Considering the previous research results that claim that error correction *does* help the students to improve their linguistic accuracy (Ashwell, 2000; Fathman and Whalley, 1990; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Kepner, 1991), it can be said that these students failed to benefit from the corrective feedback in high school.

This brings along another controversy: Although these students had been given grammar input for about 10 years, they were accepted into the Elementary-level group for the preparatory year, which means they did not have enough language proficiency to study at higher levels despite the long years of language education. One of the participants in the study stated that, during their high school education, they started to learn the 'Present Simple Tense' every semester and they could not go very far until the end of the year. It could be for this reason that when the students wrote a paragraph in English, it was usually about their likes and dislikes, and their last summer holiday. Since they did not 'write' very often, they did not have the opportunity to receive feedback and to improve their grammar knowledge through feedback. However, it should also be considered that this perception could be specific to this group of students whose level of proficiency is Elementary.

Despite the fact that more than 90% of the students did not even write paragraphs regularly in their English classes, and more than 80% did not receive grammar feedback on their written texts, it is interesting to know that 64.5% of the students preferred to receive error codes. Considering the lack of students' knowledge on different types of feedback, it is surprising to see that most of the students preferred

use of error codes over direct feedback. It is hard to say that this preference is the reflection of their previous writing experience since a big majority of them had never received error codes before. However, it could be related to the fact that these students are aware of their inadequacy in terms of writing ability, and they have an intention to compensate for this deficiency by getting more involved in the feedback process, ‘rather than taking it easy and leaning on the teacher’s corrections’, as one of the students reported (in Item 39 in the questionnaire).

The reason behind this preference may also be related to the students’ short training on the different types of feedback they received before the conduct of this research study. When this study was carried out, the students had written about 8 short English texts, and they were given both direct feedback and use of error codes. The reason for this application was the assumption that the students may not have had enough knowledge about different types of feedback. The results of the study show that this assumption was true. When the students were introduced to the two types of feedback at the preparatory class, they may have determined their feedback preferences. This is probably related to the overall education system that they are exposed to in the department. Since they learn all the skills in an integrated way, and even the grammar presentation is done through meaningful contexts, the students may have started to adopt a new way of learning for themselves. For this reason, they may have thought that error correction through error codes would help them learn better since it would require more engagement with the language.

The last section of the questionnaire, where the students were asked to state the reasons behind their preferences, revealed interesting results as well. For the students who preferred to receive use of error codes, the most popular reason (65%) was that ‘they remember their errors better if they find them themselves’. This may be an indicator of their internalisation of the new language learning methods they recently faced. Considering the fact that they were not very happy with the language education they received in high school, the students seem to be more determined to ‘learn’ the language at university, which may be related to their obligation to take the English Proficiency Exam and succeed in it in order to register for their departments.

On the other hand, out of 66 students (35.5%) who preferred to receive direct feedback, 52% of them specified their reason as ‘they can’t spot the problems so the teacher should spot and correct them for them’. There may be two reasons behind this result: Either these students used to receive direct feedback when they *did* receive feedback, or they are still finding it hard to adapt to the coding method. This question can be answered more clearly with another study conducted with the same students at the end of the year.

Another point that was examined in this study was the relationship between the students’ faculties and their feedback preferences. The reason for this question was to find out whether or not the students registered in different faculties have a priority over their feedback preferences. The assumption was that the students who study at Engineering departments are usually more target-oriented, and they would appreciate more direct methods in language learning. Oxford (1989) states that the factors that influence L2 students’ choice of learning strategies include sex, cultural background and academic specialisation, and engineering students choose learning strategies that are more analytic than those selected by humanities students. She puts forward the fact that analytic students tend to concentrate on grammatical details and often avoid more free-flowing communicative activities. Because of their concern for precision, analytic learners typically do not take the risks necessary for guessing from the context unless they are fairly sure of the accuracy of their guesses (Oxford, 2003). For this reason, the assumption that engineering students would prefer to receive direct feedback was partly true. The majority of the engineering students preferred to receive use of error codes (64.2%); however, the number of the students who preferred direct feedback was higher than the students of the Faculty of Education. According to the results, 35.8% of the engineering students preferred direct feedback, while the percentage decreased to 22.2% with the students at the Faculty of Education. This shows that the analytical learners, such as the engineering students in this case, have more tendencies to receive direct feedback than the humanities students. As Oxford (2003) suggests, the global student (the education students in this case) and the analytic student have much to learn from each other, and a balance between generality and specificity is very useful for L2 learning.

As mentioned above, there may be some factors that affect the students' feedback preferences, such as their previous writing background and their academic specialisation. However, the main question that this research study focuses on is whether or not these preferences are the best ones for the students' writing improvement. It is clear that students' opinions and preferences are highly valued in foreign language education, and their perceptions are usually consulted in different aspects of language learning and teaching. To illustrate, there are numerous studies that look into students' preferences about error correction (Ferris et al., 2000; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Leki, 1991; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Lee, 2005; Lee, 2008; Radecki & Swales, 1988). Moreover, there are studies that examine students' views on writing issues and their responses to the feedback they already receive (Cohen, 1987; Enginarlar, 1993; Ferris, 1995; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996). In this case, it is important to question whether the teachers should really take the students' preferences into consideration at all times.

In her study on the students' perceptions on error correction, Ferris (1995) reports that the students felt their teachers' comments helped them avoid future mistakes, improve their grammar, and clarify their ideas. As a response to her comments, Truscott (1999) emphasises the effect of teachers' applications on the students' preferences:

How much of students' false faith in correction is due to the reinforcement it receives from their teachers? To some extent, the argument from students' beliefs is circular: By using correction, teachers encourage students to believe in it; because students believe in it, teachers must continue using it (p.116).

Truscott's claims about the imposition of teachers on students regarding error correction pose an important contradiction: Do the students want to receive feedback because their teachers (over)do it, or do the teachers (over)do it because students want it? Ferris (1995) claims that teachers should continue giving feedback because English learners want and need it. However, Truscott (1996, 1999) insists that students are *made* to want it. These opposing ideas are very much relevant to the current study.

The results of this study showed that students were not happy with their writing instruction in high school since their teachers did not give them any feedback, so they could not improve their writing skill. Moreover, they emphasised that grammar knowledge was very important for them to be able to write a good paragraph. Therefore, it can be said that students feel dependent on their teachers to improve their grammar knowledge through writing paragraphs and receiving feedback, which goes parallel with Ferris' (1995, 2001, 2005) claims. However, there is a contradiction with Truscott's ideas in that most of these students (83.9%) never received grammar feedback when they were in high school, and their teachers do not seem to have encouraged them to get more involved in feedback procedures. It may be true that these students attach so much importance to grammar due to the overemphasis on grammar instruction in high school; however, as to the grammar feedback on their written work, the students seem to have made their preferences independent of what their teachers did before.

In this study, the focus was on whether or not the students gained more linguistic accuracy when they received the type of feedback they preferred. First, their feedback preferences were determined; and then, they were asked to write two independent paragraphs in order to see the difference between their two scores. When their scores were analysed, it was observed that the students who received the type of feedback they did *not* prefer performed significantly better in some grammar points than the students who received what they preferred. While the mean score of the students who preferred use of error codes *and* received use of error codes rose from 68 only to 69.3, that of the second group (who preferred use of error codes *but* received direct feedback) rose from 60 to 72.6 with a significance level of *.000*. This was also true for the other group of students who preferred direct feedback *and* / but received use of error codes. Similarly, the group of students who received their not-preferred feedback performed significantly better than the group who received their preferred type of feedback ($P=0.001$) in terms of use of prepositions. Likewise, the students who received the type of feedback they preferred did not improve as much as the other group (i.e. who received what they did not prefer) in terms of using articles.

The reason why the students showed more improvement especially in the use of prepositions and articles when they received the type of feedback they did not prefer could be related to the nature of these two grammar points. Article and preposition mistakes have been shown to be very common mistakes for English learners (Dagneaux et al., 1998; Tetreault and Chodorow, 2008). Ferris (1999) suggests that there are two types of errors: those that are ‘treatable’ and those that are ‘untreatable’. When the students commit treatable errors (such as tense errors), they can correct them easily by looking into a grammar book because these errors have certain patterns that can be learned or memorised. However, the untreatable errors (such as prepositions) can not be corrected easily since they do not follow a pattern and they are more difficult to grasp. For English language learners, ‘prepositions are challenging because they can appear to have an idiosyncratic behaviour which does not follow any predictable pattern even across nearly identical contexts’; similarly, in respect to the articles, ‘it is very hard to come up with clear-cut rules predicting every possible kind of occurrence’ (Felice & Pulman, 2008: 169). The students find prepositions and articles difficult to learn, and they probably do not know how to study for these language items. Therefore, it is possible that their preferences for feedback misguided them. Additionally, the analyses of the results show that, for this specific group of students, there was not a significant difference in the use of tenses between the two student groups who did / did not receive the type of feedback they preferred. Since the use of tenses is categorised as a more easily treatable error, the students may have searched for the correct version of their errors after the first writing task, and they may have corrected it in the second writing task. Therefore, it would not be surprising to see that the students showed almost the same level of improvement in the writing tasks regardless of their feedback preference.

The results of the study show that the preferred one is not always the best one when it comes to error correction with the university preparatory class students whose level of proficiency is Elementary. Although it is important that the students’ opinions be taken into consideration during their language learning education, sometimes it may be better to consider other factors as well. However, the differences of opinions between students and teachers are important and raise the question of whether

students should be corrected according to what is proven to be useful, what teachers believe is most beneficial, or according to what they would prefer (Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010). This requires a thorough investigation since there may be disadvantages in both sides. If the teachers prefer to follow their method of instruction paying no attention to students' preferences, this may be harmful on the students' side as 'ignoring students' expectations may demotivate students' (Leki, 1991). On the other hand, 'if the teacher always follows students' preferences, this may result in student dependence on the teacher' (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990). Therefore, the teachers should keep a good balance between what they prefer, what the students prefer, and what has been proven by the current studies. Knowing that the students' feedback preferences may not always be reliable for a better performance in a new piece of writing, teachers should communicate with the students, trying to find out the reasons behind their preferences. Therefore, a rational solution can be reached, and a convenient method for correction can be decided upon. Furthermore, the teachers should not fail to consult with the research studies carried out in this field. Only when the teachers are willing to cooperate will the students' performance advance and their language awareness improve.

5.3. Implications for ELT

The results of this study are important not only for the improvement of students' writing skill, but also for bringing a new approach to the concept of learner autonomy. With this research study, it is suggested that the students' preferences do not always prove to be the best tools for them to improve their language abilities. Therefore, it is important for teachers and students to communicate effectively in order to come up with the best methods to help improvement.

One of the suggestions for English language teachers is that they should introduce as many different types of feedback as possible to their students. Each student has a different learning style and needs; therefore, it is important to bring a variety to the classroom in order to be able to meet the students' needs. What the teachers can do is to apply a survey at the beginning of each semester to find out how the students perceive receiving grammar feedback and what their feedback preferences are.

Moreover, these surveys can be repeated at different times during the semester in order to observe the changes in students' preferences and practicality of different feedback applications. However, as this study suggests, the students' preferences should not be the only base for the teachers' teaching practises. It is good to take into account the students' opinions while making lesson plans and preparing the curriculum; however, overvaluing the students' preferences and overdependence on their choices may mislead the teachers and may not be as beneficial for the students' improvement as expected.

Another suggestion for the teachers of English is that they should follow the recent developments in the research area of second language writing and feedback, and they should try implementing different methods proven to be useful in classroom setting. It is essential for the teachers to keep a good balance between what has been proven to be useful, what they prefer, and what the students prefer. As Brown (2009) suggests, if students' and teachers' perceptions of instructional effectiveness do not correspond, it can lead to students' discontent, and learning can be impaired. For this reason, the combination of all these considerations is believed to contribute more to the students' level of improvement in writing skill. Moreover, it is advisable that the teachers carry out classroom research in their context because every classroom is different in terms of needs, interests and preferences. Therefore, conducting small-scale research at times may help the teachers to make better conclusions and decisions about their teaching practices. Being aware of students' preferences and attitudes will help teachers to choose the appropriate way of correction and will help them serve their learners' needs (Fantozzi, 1998), but awareness should not mean overreliance in this case.

This study also brings about some suggestions to the administrators and English teachers working at high schools. Although the setting of this study is a preparatory class of a state university, the results demonstrate that their current writing practices and preferences are influenced by their high school education. Considering the large number of students who stated that they did not receive a proper English writing instruction, it can be said that the language education in Turkish high school needs

urgent modification. Since writing is one of the most important and challenging skills in language education, the students need more time and concentration to improve their writing ability. In order to do this, the number of English writing classes in high schools should be increased, and the content of these lessons should be developed to higher standards. It is important that the students are made to write paragraphs regularly on different topics to improve both their writing skill and their knowledge of grammar. Another way of doing this is to introduce the students with different types of correction methods, and getting them involved in the learning process. However, as mentioned above, the teachers should find out the students' preferences and evaluate them objectively without blindly following their choices. The students are expected to be more successful writers, being more aware of their practices and preferences, when they start to receive a high quality education during the early years of their English language education.

5.4. Limitations of the study

Although this study reveals many important results as to the students' preferences on written feedback and how much they should be taken into consideration in writing classes, there are also some limitations of the study.

First of all, the design of this research study was not longitudinal, which means it was not carried out over a long period of time. After the students filled in a questionnaire stating their preferences of feedback types, they were asked to do two writing tasks, which was necessary to determine the level of improvement in certain language points. However, the time allocated between the two writing tasks was only a week, which may have affected the results.

Secondly, the number of the types of feedback included in this study may be considered as an important factor. In this study, the focus was on two types of feedback: *Direct feedback* and *use of error codes*. The inclusion of other types of feedback in the study (e.g. underlining, conferencing, writing brief grammatical explanations, etc.) may yield different results as to the preferences of the students.

Thirdly, the focus of this study was only on certain grammar points (i.e. use of tenses, prepositions and articles). The use of focused feedback was beneficial in order to concentrate more on certain language points and to better observe the differences between the two writing performances. However, the application of unfocused feedback type could yield different results. For this reason, the results are not generalizable for grammar feedback since the focus is on specific grammar points. Also, this research study only focused on grammar feedback, and feedback on content and organisation was not touched upon. Therefore, the results obtained in this study can not be generalised to the studies on feedback on content or organisation.

Finally, this study was conducted with the students whose level of proficiency was Elementary. It is important to consider that these students have low English language background and poor writing experience. Considering the fact that the students' preferences are affected by their language background as well, it would not be true to generalise the results to all students with different levels of English proficiency.

5.5. Suggestions for further research

For the researchers interested in the field of second language writing and written corrective feedback, it may be useful to make some recommendations for further research. It may also give an idea to the researcher teachers who would be willing to get to know the students' feedback preferences and perceptions more.

First of all, this study can be replicated in a longer period of time and with a larger number of participants. Since the written data were collected from the students twice in two consecutive weeks, the results of this study can be related to the short term improvement of the students' writing ability. The researchers may look into the question of whether or not there is a relationship between the students' feedback preferences and their level of improvement over a period of time. Having the students write multiple drafts and analysing their paragraphs regularly over a long period of time may yield more comprehensive results.

Another recommendation for research is related to the types of the feedback provided on the students' paragraphs. In this study, the students were made to choose between direct feedback and use of error codes; in a further study, however, the participants may be given more alternatives to choose from, and the study may cover a larger area of feedback procedures. Moreover, the researchers may prefer to give unfocused feedback on the papers, trying to obtain more information about the students' improvement on different grammar points.

Since the question of whether or not there is a relationship between the students' feedback preferences and their level of improvement is relatively a new research area, the researchers may also study this relationship regarding feedback on content and organisation. Asking the students' what type of content feedback they prefer and (not) providing them with their preference may also yield interesting results and may support the idea that 'the preferred one is not always the best one'.

Another recommendation is that the researchers carry out a similar study with different English proficiency groups. The students with a proficiency level of Intermediate or Advanced may state different feedback preferences, and it may turn out that their preferred methods prove to be the best method for their writing improvement. Since their language background is assumed to be stronger, and they are supposed to have received a more satisfying writing education, their language awareness and their preferences may present some differences with those of Elementary students.

To conclude, in order to reach more concrete results about the students' feedback preferences and how effective they are for a better linguistic accuracy in their written texts, further research is needed. In addition, not only the students but also the teachers should be educated on different types of feedback for a better performance in both teaching and learning.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Sevgili Öğrenci,

Aşağıdaki anket yüksek lisans tez çalışmamın bir parçası olarak geliştirilmiştir. Bu anketin amacı, yazma çalışmalarınızda öğretmenlerinizden almayı tercih edeceğiniz geri bildirim yöntemine dair görüşlerinizi almaktır.

Elde edilen bilgiler, öğretmenlerin öğrencilerine sundukları geri bildirimlerin çeşitlendirilmesi ve netice itibarıyla öğrencilerin yazma becerilerinin gelişmesi için büyük önem taşımaktadır.

Anketi tamamlamak yaklaşık 20 dakikanızı alacaktır.

Cevaplarınız saklı tutulacak ve anketin sonuçları sadece araştırma için kullanılacaktır. Katılımınız ve işbirliğiniz için teşekkür ederim.

Burçin KAĞITCI
Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi
İngiliz Dili Öğretimi, ODTÜ
bkagitci@metu.edu.tr

I. BÖLÜM: KİŞİSEL BİLGİLER & EĞİTİM GEÇMİŞİ (Bu bölüm, sizinle ilgili kişisel bilgiler edinmeye yönelik sorular içermektedir.)	
1. Adınız & Soyadınız	
2. Cinsiyetiniz	<input type="checkbox"/> Erkek <input type="checkbox"/> Kadın
3. Yaşınız	
4. Cep telefonu numaranız	
5. E-posta adresiniz	
6. Fakülteniz (lütfen geçerli kutucuğu işaretleyiniz)	<input type="checkbox"/> Eğitim Fakültesi <input type="checkbox"/> Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi <input type="checkbox"/> İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi <input type="checkbox"/> Mimarlık Fakültesi <input type="checkbox"/> Mühendislik Fakültesi
7. Bölümünüz	
8. Yabancı öğrenci misiniz?	<input type="checkbox"/> Evet (lütfen hangi ülkeden geldiğinizi belirtiniz) : _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Hayır

9. Ana dil(ler)iniz ne(ler)dir?	
10. İngilizce dışında başka yabancı dil(ler) konuşuyor musunuz?	<input type="checkbox"/> Evet (lütfen belirtiniz) : _____ _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Hayır
11. Hangi tür liseden mezun oldunuz? (lütfen geçerli kutucuğu işaretleyiniz)	<input type="checkbox"/> Anadolu Lisesi <input type="checkbox"/> Anadolu Öğretmen Lisesi <input type="checkbox"/> Düz Lise <input type="checkbox"/> Fen Lisesi <input type="checkbox"/> Meslek Lisesi <input type="checkbox"/> Diğer (lütfen belirtiniz) : _____ _____ _____
12. Ne kadar zamandır İngilizce öğreniyorsunuz?	_____ yıl / _____ ay

II. BÖLÜM: GEÇMİŞ YAZMA DENEYİMİ (Bu bölüm, <u>lise eğitiminiz</u> esnasında yapmış olduğunuz İngilizce yazma becerilerini geliştirmeye yönelik çalışmalarınızla ilgili sorular içermektedir. Soruları cevaplarken, lütfen <u>sadece lise döneminizi</u> değerlendiriniz.)					
13.-22. sorularda lütfen sizin için doğru olan şıktaki rakamı daire içine alınız.	Her zaman	Sık sık	Bazen	Nadiren	Hiçbir zaman
<u>Lise eğitimim esnasında,</u>					
13. İngilizce derslerinde, haftada en az bir kere İngilizce paragraf yazardım.					
14. İngilizce bir paragraf yazdıktan sonra, öğretmenim paragrafımı okur ve bu paragraftaki dilbilgisi (gramer) hatalarım üzerine dönüt verirdi.					

<p>15. farklı konularda İngilizce paragraflar yazdım (örnek: aile, tatiller, hobiler, biyografi, gelecek planları, bilim ve teknoloji, vs.)</p>					
<p>16. öğretmenim dilbilgisi hatalarım üzerine dönüt verirken, yaptığım hataları düzeltir ve doğrularını yazdı. Örnek: I gə to λ cinema yesterday. went the</p>					
<p>17. İngilizce sınavlarımızda yazma becerimiz test edilirdi.</p>					
<p>18. öğretmenim, İngilizce paragraflarımda yaptığım dilbilgisi hatalarının <u>tamamını</u> düzeltirdi (bütün zaman, zamir, özne-yüklem uyumu hataları gibi).</p>					
<p>19. öğretmenimden aldığım dönüt sayesinde İngilizce dil bilgisi becerilerim gelişti.</p>					
<p>20. İngilizce yazdığım paragraflardan oluşan ve kişisel gelişimimi gösteren bir yazı portföyü (dosyası) tutardım.</p>					
<p>21. öğretmenim, İngilizce paragraflarımda yaptığım dilbilgisi hatalarının <u>sadece bir kısmını</u> düzeltirdi [(örneğin, yalnızca önemli olduğunu düşündüğü hataları düzeltirdi (zaman hataları ya da zamir hataları gibi)].</p>					
<p>22. öğretmenim dilbilgisi hatalarım üzerine dönüt verirken, yaptığım hataları göstermek için belli semboller / işaretler kullanır fakat doğrularını yazmazdı. Örnek: I gə to λ cinema yesterday. T art (T= tense, art= article)</p>					
<p>23.-28. sorulara lütfen kısaca cevap veriniz.</p>					
<p>23. Lisede aldığınız İngilizce eğitimi genel olarak sizi tatmin etti mi? Neden? Kısaca belirtiniz.</p>					

- 24.** Aldığınız İngilizce derslerinde özellikle üzerinde durduğunuz beceri ya da alan ne oldu? (örnek: okuma, yazma, gramer, kelime, vs.)
- 25.** Lise eğitiminiz esnasında, İngilizce yazma becerinizi geliştirmek için neler yaptınız?
- 26.** Ne kadar sıklıkla İngilizce paragraf / kompozisyon yazardınız?
- 27.** İngilizce yazdığınız paragrafları değerlendirmesi için öğretmenimize verdiğinizde dönüt alır mıydınız? Lütfen ne tür dönütler aldığınızı kısaca belirtiniz (örnek: içerik üzerine, dilbilgisi üzerine, paragrafın düzeni üzerine, vs.)
- 28.** İngilizce paragraflarınızdaki dilbilgisi hatalarınızı göstermek için, öğretmeniniz nasıl bir yöntem uygulardı?

III. BÖLÜM: DİLBİLGİSİ DÖNÜTÜ İLE İLGİLİ DÜŞÜNCELER 29. – 34. sorularda lütfen sizin için doğru olan şıktaki rakamı daire içine alınız.	Kesinlikle katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
29. İngilizce paragraflarımda mümkün olduğunca az dilbilgisi hatası yapmak benim için önemlidir.					
30. İngilizce paragraflarımda dilbilgisi hatalarım üzerine dönüt aldığım zaman, bu dili öğrenmek için daha çok motive olurum.					
31. Bana göre, dönüt almak, İngilizce dilbilgisinde güçlü ve zayıf noktalarımın değerlendirilmesi demektir.					

32. İngilizce öğretmenimden aldığım dönüt, dilbilgisi becerilerimi geliştirmek için hangi konularda çalışmam gerektiğini bana gösterir.					
33. Öğretmenimin İngilizce paragrafımdaki dilbilgisi üzerine verdiği dönütleri her zaman okurum.					
34. Öğretmenimin İngilizce paragrafımdaki dilbilgisi üzerine daha önce verdiği dönütleri, yazdığım diğer paragraflarda kullanırım.					

IV. BÖLÜM: DİLBİLGİSİ DÖNÜTÜ İLE İLGİLİ TERCİHLER

35.-37. sorularda, size en uygun seçeneği işaretleyiniz.

35. Öğretmeninizin, İngilizce paragrafınızdaki dilbilgisi hatalarınızı nasıl belirtmesini isterdiniz?

- Hatalı kısmın üzerini çizip doğrusunu yazmalı.
- Hatanın nerede olduğunu belirtip ne tür bir hata olduğunu göstermeli (örnek: tense, article, etc.)
- Dilbilgisi hatalarımı göstermese de olur.

36. Bence öğretmenim, İngilizce paragrafımdaki

- bütün dilbilgisi hatalarını düzeltmeli.
- sadece çok önemli dilbilgisi hatalarını düzeltmeli.
- hiçbir dilbilgisi hatasını düzeltmemeli.

37. Aşağıda şıklarda verilen cümlelerde aynı dilbilgisi hataları mevcuttur; fakat hatalar öğretmen tarafından farklı şekillerde belirtilmiştir. Lütfen, sizin tercih ettiğiniz dilbilgisi dönütü şikkını işaretleyiniz.

- I live in Ankara since I was born. I think it is λ nice place to live.
tense article
- I live in Ankara since I was born. I think it is λ nice place to live.
have lived a
- Farketmez, ikisi de olabilir.
- Hiç dilbilgisi dönütü almamayı tercih ederim.
- Yukarıdakilerden farklı bir tür dilbilgisi dönütü tercih ederim (lütfen belirtiniz): _____

38.soruda verilen öğeleri, sizin için teşkil ettiği öneme göre, 1'den 6'ya kadar SIRALAYINIZ.

(1= En önemli öğe - 6= En az önemli öğe):

38. İyi bir İngilizce paragraf, _____ gerektirir.

() anlam bütünlüğü (örnek: zaman belirten, benzerlik ya da farklılık gösteren, sebep-sonuç bildiren ifadeleri kullanma, vs.)

() güçlü içerik (konu hakkında yeterli bilgiye sahip olma, asıl konudan uzaklaşmama, vs.)

() dil bilgisi (doğru zaman ifadeleri, zamirleri, vs. kullanma)

() organizasyon (iyi giriş, gelişme, sonuç cümleleri yazma)

() doğru yazım (kelimeleri doğru yazma, noktalama işaretlerini doğru kullanma, büyük harf kullanımına dikkat etme, vs.)

() kelime bilgisi (doğru kelime ve kelime gruplarını kullanma)

39.soruda belirtilen 'A' ve 'B' seçeneklerinden BİRİNİ SEÇİNİZ.

Seçtiğiniz şıkkın altında verilen ifadeleri, sizin için teşkil ettiği öneme göre, 1'den 3'e kadar SIRALAYINIZ.

(1= En önemli öğe, 3=En az önemli öğe)

Yalnızca 'A' YA DA 'B' sütunundaki öğeleri sıralayınız.

39. İngilizce paragrafımdaki dilbilgisi hatalarını _____.

A) öğretmenimin göstermesini ve düzeltilmesini tercih ederim çünkü ...

() eğer düzeltmeleri öğretmenim yaparsa, hatalarımı daha iyi görürüm.

() hatalarımı kendim farkedemem, bu yüzden öğretmenim bana göstermeli.

() bence hataları düzeltmek öğretmenin görevidir.

Diğer (lütfen sizin için geçerli diğer sebepleri yazınız) : _____

B) öğretmenimin semboller kullanarak belirtmesini tercih ederim çünkü ...

() hata sembolleri, ne tür bir dilbilgisi hatası yaptığımı bana gösterir; böylece, o alanlarda daha çok çalışabilirim.

() hatalarımdan kendim sorumluyum ve doğru cevapları kendim bulup yazmalıyım.

() hatalarımın doğrularını kendim bulursam daha iyi hatırlarım.

Diğer (lütfen sizin için geçerli diğer sebepleri yazınız) : _____

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE STUDENT PARAGRAPHS

172
EC

Name: _____

Class : _____

WRITING TASK I

In about 10-15 sentences, write the biography of Orhan Pamuk, the first Turkish novelist to win the Nobel Prize, using the information given below. While writing, remember to use the correct tenses and join your sentences with time linkers.



Birth	Istanbul, 1952
Education	Attend /department of Architecture / Istanbul Technical University Leave university after three years Graduate / department of Journalism / University of Istanbul/1976
Marriage	Aylin Türegün (married / 1982 – divorced / 2001) One daughter, Rüya / means 'dream' in Turkish
Relationship	Kiran Desai / Indian writer / since 2010
Writing Career	Start / write / 1974 – write / 14 books First novel: <i>Darkness and Light</i> / publish / 1982 Books / translate / 60 languages
Awards	Win more than 20 international awards Win Nobel Prize / 2006
Most popular books	<i>Snow, My Name is Red, The Museum of Innocence</i>
His current life	Live / Istanbul / now Give / seminars / Columbia University / once a year

Orhan Pamuk, who is one of the most popular Turkish writers, ^{was} born in Istanbul in 1952. He attended ^{at} a department of Architecture at Istanbul Technical University but he left ^{from} the university after three years. He graduated ^{from} the department of Journalism at the University of Istanbul in 1976. He married Aylin Türegün in 1982 but they divorced in 2001. He has one daughter, Rüya. It means "dream" in Turkish. He has been ^a relationship with Kiran Desai, ^{an} Indian writer, since 2010. He started to write in 1974, and he has written 14 books. His first novel, *Darkness and Light*, ^{was} published in 1982. His books ^{have been} translated ^{to} 60 languages. He has won more than 20 international awards. He won the Nobel Prize in 2006. His most popular books are *Snow, My Name is Red, The Museum of Innocence*. He is living in Istanbul now. He gives seminars at Columbia University ^{once} a year.

✓ All of the information is included.
✓ Nice organization :)

6
DF

Name: _____

Class : _____

WRITING TASK I

In about 10-15 sentences, write the biography of Orhan Pamuk, the first Turkish novelist to win the Nobel Prize, using the information given below. While writing, remember to use the correct tenses and join your sentences with time linkers.



Birth	Istanbul, 1952
Education	Attend /department of Architecture / Istanbul Technical University Leave university after three years Graduate / department of Journalism / University of Istanbul/1976
Marriage	AylinTüregün (married / 1982 – divorced / 2001) One daughter, Rüya / means 'dream' in Turkish
Relationship	Kiran Desai / Indian writer / since 2010
Writing Career	Start / write / 1974 – write / 14 books First novel: <i>Darkness and Light</i> / publish / 1982 Books / translate / 60 languages
Awards	Win more than 20 international awards Win Nobel Prize / 2006
Most popular books	<i>Snow, My Name is Red, The Museum of Innocence</i>
His current life	Live / Istanbul / now Give / seminars / Columbia University / once a year

Orhan Pamuk, who is one of the most popular Turkish writers, was born in Istanbul, in 1952.
 He attended ^{the} department of Architecture at Istanbul Technical University. After three years, he left ^{the} university. After that, he graduated from ^{the} department of Journalism ^{at the} University of Istanbul, in 1976. Then, he got married ^{to} Aylin Türegün in 1982, and then, he got divorced in 2001. He has one daughter, Rüya. It means 'dream' in Turkish. He and Kiran Desai, ^{who is} an Indian writer, ^{have been} friends since 2010. He started to write in 1974, and he ^{has written} 14 books. Later, his first novel: *Darkness and Light* was published in 1982. His books ^{have been} translated ^{into} 60 languages. He ^{has won} more than 20 international awards. And also, he won ^{the} Nobel Prize in 2006. Some of his most popular books are *Snow, My Name is Red* and *The Museum of Innocence*. Now, he is living in Istanbul, and also, he gives seminars at Columbia University once a year.

Good Work :)

APPENDIX C
TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

Enformatik Enstitüsü

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

YAZARIN

Soyadı :

Adı :

Bölümü :

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) :

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

Yazarın imzası

Tarih