

LEARNING THROUGH DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION:
ACTION RESEARCH
IN AN ACADEMIC ENGLISH CLASS

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ABSTRACT

LEARNING THROUGH DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION: ACTION RESEARCH IN AN ACADEMIC ENGLISH CLASS

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Effective writing is an essential skill in today's society and the workforce. However, as much as the importance it holds, writing can be a daunting and problematic skill to foster particularly in academically and socially diverse classrooms. Therefore, this action research aims to investigate whether differentiated writing instruction could be an effective method to cater for such differences in students' learning and development of academic English writing. 21 second year university students were the participants of this study which was conducted over a 10-week period. Throughout the study, the participants attended academic writing classes designed within the framework of differentiated instruction (DI). Employing qualitative data collection tools,

the study utilized a student background and learning profile questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, after lesson questionnaires, and researcher reflection notes. The analysis of the results revealed that students who attended the writing classes conducted via DI had favorable views about it as an instructional method, that DI made significant contributions to students and that DI helped improve students' English academic writing skills.

Keywords: Differentiated Instruction, EFL, Writing, Curriculum, Instruction



ÖZ

FARKLILAŞTIRILMIŞ ÖĞRETİM İLE ÖĞRENME: AKADEMİK İNGİLİZCE SINIFINDA BİR EYLEM ARAŞTIRMASI

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Etkili yazma günümüz toplumu ve işgücünde sahip olunması oldukça önemli olan bir beceridir. Ancak, özellikle akademik ve sosyal olarak değişkenlik gösteren sınıflarda bu becerinin gelişimi zorlu ve problemli olabilir. Bu sebeple, bu eylem araştırması, farklılaştırılmış öğretim yönteminin, öğrencilerin İngilizce akademik yazma becerilerinin gelişimine katkıda bulunan ve bu becerilerin gelişimindeki farklılıklara etkili şekilde cevap veren bir öğretim yöntemi olup olmadığını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. 10 hafta süren araştırmanın katılımcıları 2. sınıf düzeyinde 21 üniversite öğrencisidir. Çalışma süresince öğrenciler farklılaştırılmış öğretim çerçevesinde tasarlanan yazma derslerine katılmışlardır.

Veriler, öğrenci deneyim ve öğrenme profili anketi, yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler, ders sonrası görüş anketleri ve yansıtıcı araştırmacı notları aracılığıyla toplanmıştır.

Çalışmanın bulguları, farklılaştırılmış öğretim aracılığıyla işlenen yazma derslerine katılan öğrencilerin farklılaştırılmış öğretimin lehinde görüşlere sahip olduğunu, farklılaştırılmış öğretimin öğrencilere önemli katkılarda bulunduğunu ve öğrencilerin İngilizce akademik yazma becerilerinin gelişmesine yardımcı olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Farklılaştırılmış Öğretim, İngilizcenin Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğretimi, İngilizce Yazma Becerisi, Eğitim Programı, Öğretim

To My Parents, My Brother

and

to

Me 2.0



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEFR	The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CENG	Communication English
ESAP	English for Specific and Academic Purposes
RTC	Radio, Television and Cinema
PR	Public Relations



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a background to the study which includes the research problem, significance of the study and definition of terms.

1.1 Background to the Study

Language, which is basically a medium for people to communicate, is one of the essential features that people should possess in order to live a better life in a world that is constantly changing, evolving and losing its boundaries. It can even be said that it is required to know a foreign language in addition to one's mother tongue in order to take place in such an individual and international competition. (MoNE, 2015). In this context, it can be stated that it is essential to know English as it is a commonly spoken language with around 1,75 billion speakers in the world (British Council, 2013). Moreover, the mission statement of the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE) clearly proposes that one of its aims is to ensure that students are provided with the skills and knowledge required by the information society (n.d.).

In this so-called information society which increasingly relies on written communication for both personal and professional reasons, writing can rightfully be regarded as a very much needed skill yet as also stated by Gallagher (2006) it is a tough skill. Also, a number of studies conducted both in Turkey and abroad suggest that writing is an underdeveloped skill that requires immediate attention (Bartlett, 2003; Defazio, Jones, Tennant, & Hook, 2010; Odell & Swersey, 2003). In fact, a survey study conducted by Baer, Cook, and

Baldi in 2006 revealed that over half of the participants who were college graduates lacked even foundational literacy skills such as understanding a simple instruction and responding to it.

In the Turkish context, as it is also reported in the MoNE strategy report, one of the weaknesses of the Turkish Education System is the level of foreign language competency (MEB, 2015). This naturally reflects itself in higher education, as well. According to the “English Education in Turkish Higher Education Institutions, A Situation Analysis” report prepared by the British Council in November 2015, academics in Turkey state that the levels of their academic reading and writing skills are not sufficient. In the light of all this, it can be said that academic writing in English is a skill which requires development in Turkish higher education institutions.

Furthermore, the Turkish education system does not give writing enough priority as a result of both system-related and teacher and student-related problems (Tok & Ünlü, 2014). Particularly, due to the heavy emphasis placed on standardized tests in the Turkish education system, writing is likely to take the back seat and students are not able to fully develop their writing skills even in their native language Turkish, not to mention English (Çifçi, 2006).

Moreover, students consider writing as a challenging skill. For instance, Genç İter (2014) conducted a qualitative study in a Turkish higher education with the participation of 30 English Language Teaching undergraduates. The study was mainly concerned with students’ perceptions and attitudes regarding writing and revealed that student participants perceived writing as the hardest skill to improve.

A quick glance at the world of English language teaching shows that many teaching approaches and methods have been designed to help students become

proficient in the language. In Turkey alone, a number of approaches such as grammar-translation method, direct method, communicative method and total physical response have been adopted with the aim of increasing the quality of English language teaching since the establishment of the republic in 1923 (Demirel, 2014). However, none of these have been a remedy to the English language learning problems in Turkey and the World.

This led some scholars to argue that the reason for such ineffective attempts was the assumption that students learned in the same way. In other words, they proposed that student differences and needs should be taken into consideration, as well. As Stein, Dixon, and Isaacson (1994) put forward on a similar note, yet particularly with regards to writing, “many writing disabilities may derive from too little time allocated to writing instruction or from writing instruction inadequately designed around the learning needs of many students” (p. 392). As a result of all this intellectual and practical endeavor, new approaches which accept and celebrate students’ individuality have emerged.

One of such approaches is “differentiated instruction” developed by Carol Tomlinson (Tomlinson, 1999). According to Tomlinson (2014), each and every student differs in their readiness, personal interest and preference of experiencing and interpreting the World. For this reason, it is teachers’ responsibility to differentiate their instruction in accordance with the different needs of their students for effective learning to take place.

Tomlinson (2013) defines differentiated instruction as responsive teaching instead of a one size fits all approach to everyone. In a classroom where differentiated instruction is applied, the teacher differentiates the content, process and/or product by taking into consideration the specific characteristics and needs of the students. Here, content refers to the information and/or skill taught, while the process is how the student interprets, adapts and owns the

content, and the product is how the student shows what has been learned (Gregory & Chapman, 2007).

According to Tomlinson (2001) content differentiation can be done in two ways: adaptation of what is taught, or adaptation or modification of the way students reach what is taught. She also suggests differentiating content through changing the way by which the student is taught, while keeping the content unchanged. This change can be done in a way that is sensitive to the level of readiness, interests and learning profile of the student.

In process differentiation, the process refers to how the teacher plans instruction, how students make meaning of instruction and instructor's use of flexible grouping (Blaz, 2006). Just as in content differentiation, it can be differentiated in a way that is sensitive to the level of readiness, interests and learning profile of the student. Finally, product differentiation is the differentiation of the way students demonstrate what they have learned during a unit, semester or year, and can be done in the dimensions involved in content and process differentiation. The most commonly used products are "essays, speeches, paragraphs and reports" (Roberts & Inman, 2007, p. 54).

In addition, differentiated teaching takes into account the heterogeneous structure of the classes, recognizes the student as an individual, and therefore requires an analysis of the learning profiles of the students. When creating a learning profile, teachers should be able to identify students' past experiences, interests, learning style preferences, and so on. All this information guides the teacher in content, process and product differentiation in order to apply differentiated teaching (Tomlinson, 2001).

DI first appeared in, rather informally, one room school classes which had students at different ages and naturally with very different needs, abilities and

interests (Gundlach, 2012). As a result, the one room schoolteacher had to differentiate her instruction to reach all the students in the classroom. Thus, it can be said that DI first emerged as a result of pure intuition. Along with the obvious benefits of DI such as embracing student differences and responding to varying student needs, it also acts a tool to promote democracy in the classroom by providing all students with the same quality instruction tailored according to their needs and/or interests regardless of any race, nationality, or socio-economic status (Thousand, Villa & Nevin, 2015).

In addition to being an instrument to foster democratic practices, DI decreases any possible labeling that students may face as a result of their special needs or preferences. By accepting and celebrating student differences, DI offers them a way to be a part of the group and be successful. Moreover, DI is a brain-friendly instructional design method. Researchers in cognitive psychology and neuroscience have long been searching to unveil the inner mechanisms of learning and now there is ample amount of evidence showing that differentiation supports the basic principles of how people learn (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate (1) students' perceptions regarding the challenges they experience in writing academic English classes, (2) the effects of differentiated instruction on students' writing academic English skills, and (3) students' perceptions regarding the use of differentiated instruction in a writing academic English class at tertiary level. In line with these purposes, the following research questions guided the data collection and data analysis:

- 1) What problems do students experience while developing writing skills in an academic English course at university level?
- 2) How does differentiated instruction affect the development of English academic writing skills?

3) What do students think regarding the use of differentiated writing instruction in academic English classes?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in a number of aspects. To begin with, it is designed as an action study which is a type of research frequently defined as an investigation conducted by practitioners (teachers) with the purpose of improving both students' learning and teachers' practice (Burton & Bartlett, 2005; Efrat Efron & Ravid, 2013; Fox, Green & Martin, 2007; Jarvis, 1999; Menter, Eliot, Hulme, Levin & Lowden, 2011). Thus, first and foremost, this study is expected to effectively address the problems students face while developing English writing skills in addition to contributing to the teacher-researcher's professional development. Moreover, it is also expected that this study will provide suggestions for instructors working at the institution where the study was carried out and promote their practices, as well.

Secondly, as the literature also indicates, there are numerous studies investigating differentiated instruction in K-12 contexts; however, there are much fewer studies which specifically focus on differentiation in higher education (Alavinia & Sadeghi, 2013; Alhasmi & Elyas, 2018; Chamberlin & Powers, 2010; Chen & Chen, 2017; Dosch & Zidon, 2014; Ernst & Ernst, 2005). Furthermore, there are only very few studies inquiring into the use of differentiated instruction in English language teaching in Turkey (Aras, 2018; Gülşen, 2018; Kaplan Sayı, 2013; Özer, 2016 & Yavuz, 2018) and only one of these studies (Özer, 2016) took place in a higher education context. Also, two of these five studies focus on general English achievement (Kaplan Sayı, 2015 & Özer, 2016), two on the skill of reading (Aras, 2018 & Gülşen, 2018) focus and only one focuses on vocabulary (Yavuz, 2018). That is to say, there are limited studies conducted in Turkey with a focus on the skill of writing in

English in a higher education context. Therefore, it is anticipated that the results of this study will contribute to the literature on English teaching and learning via differentiated instruction in higher education.

Lastly, the results of this action study may increase English language teaching professionals' awareness towards the use of differentiation and provide practical knowledge as to its implementation. As differentiation is a technique with which teachers are familiar to some extent, yet only few put it into practice effectively. In fact, a survey study carried out by Mutlu and Öztürk (2017) revealed that of the 174 teachers who participated only 46% stated that they had some knowledge about differentiation and approximately 63% designed and conducted lessons appealing for the average student. In other words, less than half of the participants were not informed about differentiated instruction and more than half did not perform differentiation in their classes.

1.4 Definition of Terms

Academic Writing: “A vehicle through which scholars attempt to persuade other scholars of the validity of their arguments” (Hewings, 2006, p. 10).

Content: The knowledge and/or skill aimed to be taught (Gregory & Chapman, 2007).

Differentiated Instruction (DI): A student-centered, proactive, evaluation-based and qualitative teaching method which offers the content, process and product with various approaches by taking into account student readiness levels, interests and learning needs (Tomlinson, 2001).

Flexible Grouping: Grouping which enables students to work individually, in pairs, small groups or as a whole class depending on the task or objective (Conklin, 2010).

English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP): Second language (L2)-specific training in disciplinary academic courses (Crosthwaite & Cheung, 2019, p.1).

Process: How students internalize and make sense of content, skills or ideas (Tomlinson, 2001).

Product: How students demonstrate what they have learned during a unit, semester, or year (Tomlinson, 2001).

Writing: “The sequencing of standardized symbols (characters, signs or sign components) in order to graphically reproduce human speech, thought and other things in part or whole” (Fischer, 2001, p. 2).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter aims to provide information about the conceptual framework of differentiated instruction (DI) through presenting a brief history of differentiated instruction, the definition and characteristics of differentiated instruction, methods to differentiate instruction, the rationale for differentiated instruction, studies on differentiated instruction and finally a summary of the literature.

2.1 Historical Overview of Differentiated Instruction

After Carleton W. Washburne published his article “Adjusting the Program to the Child” in the Educational Leadership magazine in December 1953, he perhaps somehow inadvertently rekindled a familiar yet unnamed educational approach: differentiated instruction. Being a pioneer in the area, Washburne (1953) suggested in his article that teachers should seek for ways to best meet the wide range of differences in abilities, interests and development of students. According to Washburne, however, the first signs of differentiation belonged to Preston Search who “made it possible for each child to learn at his own natural rate in each subject, with no failures, grade repetitions or grade skipping” (1953, pp. 139-140). Yet, in fact, as Gundlach (2012) also stated the history of differentiated instruction can be traced back to as early as 1600s when one room schools were the reality of education.

The school system Gundlach (2012) refers to is the system which existed in the United States; however, as the education system of the Ottoman Empire was westernized starting around 1703 (Doğan, 1997), it can be inferred that the

Turkish system was not much different from that in the West and the United States. Taught by only one teacher, one room school classes had students at different ages and naturally with very different needs, abilities and interests. Faced with such a challenge, the one room schoolteacher had no choice but adapt her teaching, thus paving the way to differentiated instruction. While the schoolteacher was differentiating instruction out of necessity, Preston Search whom Washburne (1953) defined as “ahead of his time” was determined to address this problem with his research team (p.140). Search encouraged the teachers he worked with to build an environment in which students could learn at their own rate without the fear of failure. This initiative led by Search proved successful, yet the team’s efforts went unrecognized for some more time (Washburne, 1953).

It was not until the achievement tests pointed out the differences in student learning and therefore varying learning needs that the general public paid attention to the issue. Again, around the same time, Frederic Burk and his colleague Mary Ward carried out a casual experiment and designed self-instructive textbooks which allowed students to progress in accordance with their ability (Pour, 2006). By 1919, these experiments had proven statistical success and were introduced to public schools in Winnetka, Chicago (Gundlach, 2012). The success of these schools led to the birth of the “Winnetka Plan”, which was quickly embraced by some other schools to tailor their teaching according to their students.

However, this innovation did not last mostly due to the misinterpretation of the Project Method proposed by William H. Kilpatrick by some educators who thought that the individualism brought by the Winnetka Plan singled out the social experience attribute of learning (Washburne, 1953). As a result, schools abandoned the plan and returned using their former systems as Washburne also stated: “...but practically all ignored individual differences in the maturity and

readiness of the children about as completely as these had been ignored before...” (p. 141).

The formal comeback of differentiated instruction was around 1975 when the United States Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Act, which aimed to provide those with disabilities to have equal access to public education. Naturally, these students had diverse needs and many teachers resorted to differentiation to respond them (Weselby, 2014). In addition, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in the United States (2002-2015) further increased the popularity of differentiation as the law held schools responsible for students’ learning and achievement, and penalized the schools not showing improvement (Lee, n.d.). Although the NCLB act came to an end with the enactment of Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015, the resemblance of the nature of the two laws in terms of holding schools responsible for student achievement secures the important role that the differentiated instruction plays in today’s classrooms.

2.2 The Definition and Characteristics of Differentiated Instruction

Although no educational scholar or teacher maintains a monopoly on differentiation, the name “Carol Ann Tomlinson” calls for a special mention as she is a prominent figure known for her extensive work on differentiated instruction. A respected name in the field, Tomlinson (2001) defines differentiation as follows: “At its most basic level, differentiating instruction means “shaking up” what goes on in the classroom so that students have multiple options for taking in information, making sense of ideas, and expressing what they learn” (p. 1).

In other words, it can be said that in a differentiated classroom, students have both a choice and a voice in choosing what they would like to learn, how they would like to process and express what they have learnt.

According to Tomlinson (2001) differentiated instruction is proactive, which means that teachers who embrace DI would design their lessons with the assumption that students have different needs and therefore proactively plan for different ways through which students can acquire content and express their learning.

Operating on the premise that every student can be successful both despite and thanks to their different learning needs, DI offers students a variety of learning experiences which may take place in different formats. Students in a DI classroom, for instance, may opt for doing an exercise individually, in pairs, in small groups or as a whole class and the groups in which the students work could be formed based on the students' readiness, interests and/or learning preferences.

DI requires some essential changes in the thoughts and behaviors of both the teacher and the students as well as the classroom environment. In a DI classroom, the teacher is not only the one who knows about the content but is also a learner who constantly monitors her students and learns about their learning process so that she can differentiate her instruction better each time. Also, a teacher in a DI classroom continually assesses her students through informal tools such as a quick chat on the topic or more formal ones like a short quiz. This assessment is, however, not done with the sole purpose of assessing but of understanding the different needs of the students.

In addition, a DI classroom is student centered as DI believes that learning experiences are most effective when they are engaging, relevant and interesting to the students (Tomlinson, 2001). Since each and every student is different in terms of their tendencies and choices regarding what is appealing, DI offers multiple approaches to the content, the process and the product.

Lastly, DI regards the learning environment i.e. the classroom as a key factor in

success. Therefore, teachers who differentiate create an inviting and embracing classroom atmosphere where each and every learner feels welcomed, valued and safe. These positive feelings eventually have a positive impact on students' affective needs and thus learning (O'Meara, 2010).

2.3 Methods to Differentiate Instruction

Teachers may apply differentiated instruction through strategies which are rooted in three basic student characteristics that pave the way for effective differentiation: readiness, interest and learning profile (Tomlinson, 2001). In addition, flexible grouping is another method which can be utilized as a response to varying student needs and interests.

2.3.1. Differentiating Instruction by Readiness

Student readiness refers to the match between student skills, knowledge and understanding with the task at hand. As defined by Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) readiness is “a student's current proximity to specified knowledge, understanding, and skills” (p. 16). For a good match between the task and the student readiness, the task should be just a little above what the student can do. Although the learning goal does not change according to student readiness, the degree of difficulty and the degree of complexity should be in harmony with the existing situation of the learner (Cooper, 2010). Student readiness is usually measured through a pre-assessment before starting a unit of a study (Strickland, 2007). The results of this assessment provide teachers with the opportunity to plan flexibly.

Tomlinson (2001) suggests that designing differentiated instruction is “similar to using the equalizer buttons on a stereo or CD player” (p. 46). In fact, she proposes several different continuums to make sure that the students are faced

with the appropriate level of challenge. Therefore, she emphasizes that in order to respond to student readiness, teachers can transform materials, activities and products in a classroom from:

1. foundational to transformational
2. concrete to abstract
3. simple to complex
4. single facet to multiple facets
5. small leap to great leap
6. more structured to more open
7. less independence to greater independence
8. slow to quick. (p. 47)

2.3.2. Differentiating Instruction by Interest

Most experienced teachers know that the key to a great class is its capability to engage the students. Christenson, Reschly and Wylie (2011) maintains that engagement is an essential component of learning. Tomlinson (2001) further asserts that “engagement is a non-negotiable of teaching and learning” (p. 52).

As a result, it can be said that due to the importance it holds in creating an effective learning environment, enabling students to stay on task and therefore increase learning, engagement should always be taken into consideration when planning differentiated instruction.

According to Tomlinson (2001) engagement is best run by two motivators: student interest and student choice. However, it is not hard to guess that not all students have the same interests, which leads to differentiated instruction. In their book *Leading and Managing a Differentiated Classroom*, Tomlinson and Allan (2000) suggest the following as a way to include student interest in the differentiation process:

- Using adults or peers with prior knowledge to serve as mentors in an area of shared interest.
- Providing a variety of avenues for student exploration of a topic or expression of learning.
- Providing broad access to a wide range of materials and technologies.
- Giving students a choice of tasks and products, including student-designed options.
- Encouraging investigation or application of key concepts and principles in student interest areas. (p. 10)

2.3.3. Differentiating Instruction by Learning Profile

Learning profile is a term referring to the ways in which individuals feel that they learn the best. The aim of effective classroom teaching is to provide a good learning experience for all learners; therefore, teachers who differentiate their instruction by learning profiles aim to help their students find the best mode of learning for themselves. Table 1 summarizes some factors that can be taken into consideration when differentiating instruction through learning profile.

2.3.4. Differentiating Instruction by Flexible Grouping

Although it is important to understand and always remember that differentiated instruction is not another way to create homogenous grouping, it cannot be denied that it is one of the main tenets of differentiated instruction. Teachers may consider several factors such as “gender, chemistry between students, social maturity, academic readiness and special needs” when grouping students (Conklin, Sorrel & Van Dixhorn, 2012, p. 12).

Flexible grouping strategy refers to a group whose members change constantly so that negative feelings, stigma and feelings of shame are minimized (Conklin

et.al., 2012). This strategy highly contributes to student learning and encourages teachers to consistently monitor their students' challenge level (Brulles & Brown, 2018). In classrooms where flexible grouping is employed, students can be part of various groups or can work alone. Such groups can be skills-based or interest-based and be both heterogenous and homogenous in readiness level. Students may select the groups they want to work in, or teachers may assign them (Tomlinson, 2001).

2.4 The Rationale for Differentiated Instruction

In their book *Leading and Managing a Differentiated Classroom*, Carol Ann Tomlinson and Marcia B. Imbeau (2010) argue that:

Students differ as learners in terms of background experience, culture, language, gender, interests, readiness to learn, modes of learning, speed of learning, support systems for learning, self-awareness as a learner, confidence as a learner, independence as a learner, and a host of other ways (p. 13).

Therefore, although there are several reasons supporting the implementation of DI, the first and the foremost one is that DI acknowledges the fact that no two students are the same. While traditional teaching adopts a one-size-fits-all approach to the curriculum and instruction, DI embraces student differences and enables teachers to address these differences and diverse needs which directly affect the quality of learning (Tomlinson, 2011). In other words, by encouraging flexibility and autonomy in choosing and adapting the content, the process and the product in accordance with the needs and wants of a particular group of students, DI responds to varying student needs.

Table 1
Learning Profile Factors

<i>Group Orientation</i>	<i>Learning Environment</i>	<i>Cognitive Style</i>	<i>Intelligence Preference</i>
- independent/self-orientation - group/peer orientation - adult orientation - combination	- quiet/noise - warm/cool - still/mobile - flexible/fixed - busy/spare	- creative/conforming - essence/facts - whole-to-part/part-to-whole - expressive/controlled - nonlinear/linear - inductive/deductive - people-oriented/task or object-oriented - concrete/abstract - collaboration/competition - interpersonal/introspective - easily distracted/long attention span - group achievement/personal achievement - oral/visual/kinesthetic - reflective/action-oriented	- analytic - practical - creative - verbal/linguistic - logical/mathematical - spatial/visual - bodily/kinesthetic - musical/rhythmic - interpersonal - intrapersonal - naturalist - existential

Note. Adapted from “How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms.”, by Tomlinson, C. A., 2001, p. 61, Virginia, USA: ASCD.

In addition to its respect and acknowledgement of individual differences, DI can act as a tool to promote democracy in the classroom. In their book, Thousand, Villa & Nevin (2015) maintain that “when teachers differentiate instruction, they are consciously and conscientiously making the content, processes, and outcomes of instruction more accessible to all students—regardless of the students’ race, gender, ethnicity, language, or differing abilities” (p.6). As

education was once and sometimes still is a privilege given to only a few exclusive groups, teachers who differentiate their instruction practice and support democracy in their classroom by helping all students regardless of their background or socio-economic status.

In a typical classroom, there are students who have disabilities, who have difficulty with certain skills, who have behavior problems or who simply come from a poor family. In a society which values being normal, having any out of the norm quality may result in being labeled. Although teachers are professionals, they are also human beings, which means they may sometimes fall into the trap of “labeling” their students. These labels often cause teachers to unconsciously approach such students with some labels and attribute negative perceptions regarding their abilities. Therefore, teachers who differentiate their instruction challenge all negative assumptions about such students and offer them a way to prove that they too are able and can be successful. As a result, it can be said that with the help of DI, teachers can have a more inclusive teaching philosophy which may in turn result in being a more effective teacher (Thousand et.al., 2015).

Researchers in cognitive psychology and neuroscience have long been searching to unveil the inner mechanisms of learning and now there is ample amount of evidence showing that differentiation is brain-friendly in the sense that it supports the basic principles of how people learn. In their book “Differentiation and The Brain: How Neuroscience Supports the Learner-Friendly Classroom” Sousa & Tomlinson (2011) summarize these principles and how they support DI as follows:

1. Just like fingerprints, people’s brains have unique structures and therefore despite the similarities, there are differences and preferences regarding how they learn. Constituting a learning profile, these differences and preferences show

that a one-size-fits-all approach is not brain-compatible.

2. Faced with new information, the brain needs to make meaning out of it by looking for patterns and the more information the brain receives, the more patterns it creates. As the number of the patterns increase, so does the likelihood of retaining information in the long-term memory.

3. The frontal lobe of the brain mainly deals with two basic thinking styles: convergent and divergent. While convergent thinking refers to problem solving through one method, divergent thinking means looking for new ways and ideas to solve a problem. This in turn creates more novel patterns and expands the existing ones. Via differentiation, teachers can promote divergent thinking.

4. Emotions play a major role in pattern making in the limbic system of the brain and together with patterns they stimulate the brain's reward system which increases motivation. Differentiation, too, increases motivation as it offers more rewarding learning experiences.

5. Learning is not only a cognitive process but also a social one. People learn by not only experiencing an emotion or a task but also observing others' experiencing similar emotions and tasks. Similarly, students' learning is impacted by the group to which they belong and therefore a safe and positive environment enhances learning. Through differentiation teachers can build that environment.

6. People learn yet they also forget. While processing information, people tend to put it first into the working memory. That information will eventually fade away if there is no meaningful reason to put it in the long-term memory. Differentiation helps improving retention by offering instructional strategies which may encourage students' meaning making process.

7. Retention of information requires focus and extended attention. Today due to technological temptations students may pay attention to what's most relevant and meaningful to them. Therefore, both focus and extended attention are hard to find and maintain. Yet, DI may promote them by tailoring learning experiences according to individual students and thus making them more meaningful.

In addition to the results of brain and learning related research, it is not hard for one to expect that DI might increase student engagement. Since student interest is among the domains which DI encourages, it can be said that DI promotes student engagement which in turn triggers motivation (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). If students find that the content that they learn is somehow relevant to their interests, it is highly likely that they will be drawn to learning it compared to the content out of the scope of their interests.

2.5 Studies in Turkey

The literature analysis showed that studies with a focus on differentiated instruction in Turkey tend to be experimental and quasi-experimental and were carried out mainly in K-12 contexts with mathematics and science as the subject matters (Yabaş, 2008; Beler, 2010; Özyaprak, 2012; Şaldırdak, 2012; Demir, 2013; Taş, 2013; Atalay, 2014; Camcı-Erdoğan, 2014). In terms of language teaching and English language teaching in particular, the studies conducted were again in K-12 contexts with only one study carried out at higher education (Özer, 2016). Overall, most of the studies carried out in Turkey sought to determine the effects of differentiated instruction on students' academic achievement, learning retention and attitudes towards learning. Yet, there were also some studies which were interested in finding out the impacts of differentiated instruction on students' creativity, metacognitive skills, self-efficacy levels and autonomy.

Some experimental studies which aimed to investigate into the effect of differentiated instruction adopted the pre-test post-test experimental research design. One of these was carried out by Yabaş (2008) and focused on investigating the effects of a differentiated decimal fractions unit in a mathematics class. Specifically, the study sought to understand the impact of differentiated instruction on students' metacognitive skills, academic achievement and self-efficacy levels. The participants of the study were 25 grade 6 students studying at a primary school in Esenler, İstanbul, Turkey. The data were gathered through three instruments: an academic achievement test, self-efficacy scale and metacognitive skills scale developed by the researcher and several specialists. The instruments, of which reliability and validity analyses were already carried out, were implemented both before and after the treatment. The study showed that the difference between the pre-test and the post-test results were statistically significant and in favor of the experimental group.

In 2010, Beler aimed to determine the effects of differentiated instruction applied through tiered activities on students' learning and class management. To do so, Beler (2010) designed and conducted a mixed methods research which integrated case study and survey research methods. A class of third grade students studying at grade 3 composed the participants of the study. The study during which students received a differentiated introductory science class utilized interviews and observations as data gathering methods. The results of the study revealed that differentiated instruction applied through tiered activities had increased student learning and increased their motivation and helped the teacher ensure a smooth classroom management.

In her dissertation, Özyaprak (2012) sought to find out the effects of a differentiated mathematics unit on gifted and fast learning students' gain scores, attitudes and creativity. The study employed 24 students who were placed in two equally numbered groups, one experimental and one control. The study gathered

data via attitude and creativity scales and an achievement test. The results showed that the differences between the results of the two groups academic achievement, gain score and creativity were statistically significant and in favour of the experimental group.

Şaldırdak (2012) carried out another experimental study aiming to find out the impact of differentiated instruction on students' mathematics achievement. The participants of the study were 50 grade 5 at a state school in in İstanbul, Turkey. Randomly chosen, the students were put in two different groups: a control and an experimental group. While the control group continued receiving traditional instruction, the experimental one was exposed to differentiated instruction. The study which was adopted the pre-test post-test control group design gathered data through a Mathematics achievement scale developed by the researcher. The results of the study revealed that differentiated instruction had positive impact on students' mathematics achievement and that the students stated that in classes where differentiated instruction was implemented, they had fun and learnt at the same time.

Another study which was carried out by Demir in 2013 sought to find out the effects of differentiated instruction applied through tiered activities and stations on students' achievement, learning retention and attitude to learning. The study was designed as a pre-test post-test experimental study and had 132 participants all of whom were grade 5 students divided into two equally numbered groups so as to create one experimental and one control group. The data was gathered through an academic achievement test developed by the researcher and an Approaches to Learning Inventory developed by Çoban and Ergin (2008). The findings of the study showed that the students in the control group experienced increased achievement and retention levels.

In 2013, Taş conducted an experimental study investigating into the effects of

differentiated instruction on students' mathematics achievement and metacognitive skills. The participants of the study were 60 grade 6 students half of whom were assigned to the experimental group while the other half was assigned to the control group. The data of the study, designed as a pre-test post-test control group, were gathered via an academic achievement test developed by the researcher, a metacognitive skills test and one pre and post-test. The results suggest that although there was no statistically significant difference between the pre and post test results of the students with regards to their metacognitive skills, the difference between academic achievement was statistically significant and in favour of the experimental group.

Atalay (2014) carried out another pre-test post-test experimental study with gifted students, yet with a focus on social sciences teaching. The study applied a differentiated social sciences curriculum and investigated into its effects on students' academic achievement, attitudes, critical thinking skills and creativity. The participants of the study were 21 grade 4 students 11 of whom comprised the experimental group while the rest formed the control one. The study revealed that as a result of the differentiated program, there was statistically significant difference between the pre and post test results of students' academic achievement, attitudes, critical thinking skills and creativity in favour of the experimental group.

Camcı-Erdoğan (2014) was another researcher who was interested in differentiated instruction with a focus on gifted and fast learners. The study sought to find out the effects of a differentiated science and technology program on students' academic achievement, attitudes and creativity. The participants of the study were 21 gifted students constituting an experimental group (11 students) and a control group (10 students). The data were gathered through an academic achievement test, creativity and attitude scales. The study revealed that as a result of the differentiated program, there was statistically significant

difference between the pre and post test results of students' academic achievement, attitudes, creativity in favour of the experimental group.

Karip (2016) analyzed the effects of differentiated visual art instruction on students' academic achievement, attitudes towards the course and studying. Specifically, the study which adopted a quasi-experimental pre-test post-test control group design focused on the acquisition of the visual art instruction objective "using art equipment and design principles while creating visual art works" through differentiated instruction. The participants of the study were 7th grade students studying at an elementary school in Ağrı, Turkey. The data were collected through an achievement test developed by the researcher and a Visual Arts Course Attitude Scale developed by Demirel (2011). In addition, a grading key was utilized in order to evaluate student works. All the data obtained from the instruments mentioned was then analyzed through Mann Whitney-U tests. The study showed that the results of the students who received the differentiated program was significantly higher than the those who continued their learning with the traditional method.

For her PhD dissertation, Kaplan Sayı (2013) investigated the effects of an English language education program differentiated in accordance with the academic and cognitive needs of gifted children on their academic achievement and levels of creative thinking. The study utilized an experimental Randomized Pre-test Post-test Control Group Design and the participants were 24 grade 5 gifted students attending a mainstream primary school for gifted students in Turkey. The results of the Raven SPM Test and Torrance Test of Creative Thinking were used to randomly assign students into control and experimental groups. Throughout the intervention, the experimental group covered a unit in the English course book was differentiated for gifted students and the control group continued with the non-differentiated unit. The data were analyzed by means of Mann Whitney-U and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks tests. The results

showed that the differentiation significantly improved the academic achievement and creative thinking levels of the gifted students.

Another quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group study was carried out by Durmuş (2017). In her dissertation, Durmuş analyzed the effects of a grade 2 social sciences class taught through differentiated instruction on students' academic achievement and retention of learning. The qualitative part of the research was designed as a case study. The participants of the study were four classes of grade 2 students two of which comprised the control group while the other two formed the experimental group. The treatment lasted for 4 weeks and for 14 class hours. The results of the study propose that the academic achievement of both the experimental and the control group, based on the difference between the pre-test and the post-test, increased; however, differentiated instruction was more effective in increasing learning retention.

In addition to the above-mentioned studies carried out in various subject matters, there were several studies with a focus on English language teaching. One such study was carried out by Özer in 2016. Investigating into the effects of thinking-style-based differentiated instruction on academic achievement, attitude and retention in vocational foreign language classes, Özer (2016) carried out a quasi-experimental adopting the pre- and post- test design approach. The participants of the study were sophomores studying Tourism and Hotel Management at the Vocational College, Nevşehir Hacı Baktaş Veli University. Of the 43 students who participated in the study, 25 were in the experimental and 18 were in the control group. During the study, which continued for 7 weeks, students in the experimental group were given activities differentiated in accordance with their thinking styles and those in the control group continued to receive unadapted activities. The data were collected using a Thinking Styles Scale, a Vocational Foreign Language-II Achievement Test and a Vocational Foreign Language Attitude Scale. The results of the study revealed that

achievement and retention scores of the students in the experimental group were higher than those in the control group, yet there was no significant difference between the groups in terms of attitude towards the course. Students, on the other hand, were positive about the use of differentiated instruction in the adaptation of the activities and their interest and participation increased.

With the aim of understanding the impact of DI on students' intrinsic motivation, behaviour and academic achievement in English reading classes, Aras (2018) conducted a quasi-experimental study which adopted pre- and post-test design approach. The study employed a total of 46 grade 5 students of whom were divided into two intact groups to comprise one experimental and one control group. During the course of the study, while the control group continued to receive the same curriculum with no changes, the experimental one was taught through a 10-week differentiated instruction programme. The data were gathered through a reading motivation questionnaire, one behavior checklist and one reading achievement test. The results revealed that DI instruction had a positive impact on student motivation and behavior yet there was no significant difference between the academic achievement levels of the two groups.

Gülşen (2018) conducted a case study which focused on the effects of online differentiated reading in reading comprehension skills and learner autonomy of young learners. Utilizing a mixed methods research design, the study involved 72 grade 5 students, whose level of English was between A1 and A2. The data were gathered through pre and post reading comprehension tests, a learner autonomy questionnaire, teacher reflective journals and semi-structured focus group interviews carried out with the students. The results revealed that students' reading comprehension skills and the levels of learning autonomy increased.

Yavuz (2018) carried out an experimental pre-test post-test design study which investigated into the effects of differentiated instruction on Turkish students'

foreign language achievement in addition to the student and teacher perceptions. The participants of the study were 22 9th graders who were studying at a high school in İstanbul, Turkey. The control group consisted of 14 students, while the experimental group consisted of 8 students. Over the course of the research, the control group continued with the existing curriculum and activities, while the experimental group received 6 hours of differentiated instruction per week. The data were gathered through an achievement test applied, a vocabulary knowledge scale prepared based on the textbook target vocabulary, reflective essays and journals. The results of the study showed that there was a significant difference between pre and post-tests of the groups.

2.6 Studies Abroad

Most studies conducted outside of Turkey focused on teachers' perceptions and levels of efficacy with regard to the theoretical and practical aspects of differentiated instruction. As these studies are out of the scope of the current study, they were not reported. Yet, studies with a focus on student gains and perceptions were selected and reviewed. These studies were carried out both in the K-12 and higher education contexts and their subject matter ranged from mathematics to political science.

In 2005, Howard and Tracey Ernst carried out a case study where they designed an undergraduate political science course using the principles of differentiated instruction. The aim of the study was to show the characteristics of a differentiated classroom and reveal student and instructor perceptions regarding the use of the method. The course which was designed was applied to a class involving 35 undergraduate students. After a term, the students were asked to rate the effectiveness of the class. The findings showed that students generally held positive views with regard to the use of differentiated instruction and reported higher levels of learning, increased interest and contentment with the course.

Similarly, the instructors who taught the class were positive about the method, yet they also reported concerns regarding the time needed to differentiate a class and whether the approach was fair for every student.

Investigating the effect of independent study as a differentiated instruction strategy on learner motivation and achievement, Powers (2008) selected 10 female and 10 male gifted 7th grade students in Arlington, U.S. During the study which lasted for 8 weeks, students independently studied following the Powers Plan, a research-based and field-tested method of independent study. The primary data collection methods used for this study were reflections, surveys/questionnaires, and interviews. The results of the study revealed that as a result of the independent study as a differentiated instruction strategy, participants' motivation and achievement increased.

Chamberlin and Powers (2010) carried out a concurrent mixed method study with the aim of evaluating the impact of DI on undergraduate students' understandings of mathematics. One part of the study was designed as quasi-experimental pre-test post-test while the other part gathered data through interviews and analyses of student work. The results showed that those in the treatment group receiving DI had greater gains in their mathematics understandings.

Through an action study, Martínez Martínez (2011) sought to find out the effects of systematic, explicit and differentiated phonics instruction on young English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' literacy skills. The study specifically focused on the following skills: reading comprehension, spelling, and proper use of verbs in written statements. The differentiation of the phonics instruction included differentiating the instruction time, instruction sequence and phonics vocabulary in line with the needs of the students. The results showed that differentiation and explicit phonics instruction had positive impacts on EFL

learners' reading comprehension and literacy skills in general. Also, in 2012 another action research was conducted by Chien and applied differentiated instruction strategies, namely were tiered tasks, student choices and various assessment types, in EFL classes of elementary school learners in Taiwan. The results of the study revealed that use of differentiated instruction through these strategies increased student motivation, sense of learning and autonomy.

In the study of Alavinia and Sadeghi (2013), the impact of differentiated task-based instruction through learning styles on students' English language proficiency levels was investigated. The participants of the study were 60 undergraduate freshmen students who were given a 2006 version of the TOEFL test as for homogenization and pretest purposes. Based on the results of the TOEFL, the participants were divided into two groups (30 students per group). In addition, all participants were given the VAK Learning Styles Self-Assessment Questionnaire developed by Chislett and Chapman (2005). Over the course of one semester during which the study took place, both groups made use of the same coursebook; however, while half of the participants continued to cover the book via the traditional approach, the other received differentiated instruction which was based on the results of the VAK test. At the end of the semester, students were given the same TOEFL test as a posttest. The results indicate that there is no significant difference attributable to the treatment between the two groups.

With the aim of investigating into implementing differentiated instruction in information literacy classes in higher education to understand if quantitative improvements were noted in a differentiated (DI) classroom compared to a nondifferentiated (NDI) classroom, Dosch and Zidon (2014) carried out a study where the same instructor taught in two different sections of the same course and used differentiated instruction in one and non-differentiated instruction in another. The results revealed that the DI group significantly outperformed the

NDI group on the total of the assignments and the exams. Also, the course evaluation showed that the DI group had positive perception towards the differentiated method.

A quasi-experimental study carried out by Jing-Hua Chen and Yi-Chou Chen in 2017 applied differentiated instruction in a college calculus curriculum. 60 participants (30 for the experimental and 30 for the control group) involved in the study. While the control group carried on the instruction using a didactic and teacher-centered method, the experimental group made use of differentiated instruction. The results of the post-test showed that there is a significant difference in calculus achievement between experimental and control groups in favour of the experimental group.

In a 2018 study conducted by Alhasmi and Elyas, the effects of differentiated grammar instruction on female English as a Foreign Language Department first year students based on their cognitive profiles were explored. The study involved two phases: one experimental, which involved a control group and an experimental group, and one qualitative. During the experimental phase, while the control group continued to cover grammar objectives in the traditional way, the experimental group received the same objectives differentiated in the light of their cognitive profiles. The data were gathered through a pre-test and post-test and one-to-one interviews. The findings suggest that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the participants in the experimental group while there is no statistically significant difference between the test results of those in the control group. In addition, one-to-one interviews show that students have positive perception towards the method and the analysis showed three recurrent themes: increased motivation, appropriateness of access, and autonomy.

Lastly, Danzi, Reul and Smith (2018) implemented an action research aiming to

address the following problems observed by the researchers themselves: decreased learner motivation, boredom and frustration. The participants of the study were 21 third grade, 23 fifth grade and 28 eighth grade students. The study, which lasted for three months, made use of tiered assignments, authentic assessment types, and free-time activities all of which were adapted in accordance with the students' needs and interests. The data were gained via student and parent surveys and an observation checklist. The survey results showed that, rather surprisingly, although the students expressed positive feelings about school and the differentiation activities at home, this positive result contradicted with that of the survey answered by the students themselves.

2.7 Summary of Literature

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature on differentiated instruction via presenting the theoretical framework for differentiated instruction with regards to a historical overview, the definition and characteristics of differentiated instruction, four separate differentiation methods and the rationale for differentiated instruction. It also reported examples of studies conducted in Turkey and abroad.

First, this chapter provided a brief history on the emergence and development of differentiated instruction and demonstrated that DI was born as a response to the needs of one room schools (Gundlach, 2012). This historical review was followed by the definition and essential features of DI. According to Tomlinson (2001) DI “means ‘shaking up’ what goes on in the classroom so that students have multiple options for taking in information, making sense of ideas, and expressing what they learn” (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 1). Subsequently, three basic student characteristics, namely readiness, interest and learning profile, were explained with an eye toward presenting them as domains via which teachers can differentiate their instruction.

In addition, flexible grouping is suggested as a method which can be utilized in response to varying student needs and interests. Next, the use of DI in this action research was supported through several arguments. To begin with, DI embraces student differences and responds to varying student needs. Also, it acts a tool to promote democracy in the classroom by providing all students with the same quality instruction and decreases any possible labeling that students may face as a result of their special needs or preferences. Finally, DI is a brain-friendly instructional design method with an ample amount of evidence showing that it supports the basic principles of how people learn (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011).

This action study is designed to examine students' perceptions regarding the use of differentiated instruction and how this instructional method might affect their development of English writing skills. As it also can be seen from the literature review, there are a number of studies investigating differentiated instruction in K-12 contexts; however, there are much fewer studies (Alavinia & Sadeghi, 2013; Alhasmi & Elyas, 2018; Chamberlin & Powers, 2010; Chen & Chen, 2017; Dosch & Zidon, 2014; Ernst & Ernst, 2005) which specifically focus on differentiation in higher education. Furthermore, there are only very few studies (Aras, 2018; Gülşen, 2018; Kaplan Sayı, 2015; Özer, 2016 & Yavuz, 2018) inquiring into the use of differentiated instruction in English language teaching in Turkey and only one of these studies (Özer, 2016) took place in a higher education context.

In short, it is anticipated that the results of this study will fill the gap in the literature by exploring the function DI has over the development of writing skills of students in higher education and that it will contribute to the field of English language teaching. Next chapter presents detailed information on the design and execution of the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

In this chapter, research design, research questions, data sources, data collection instruments, data collection and analysis procedures are presented.

3.1 Overall Design of the Study

This is a qualitative study which aims to investigate the problems students face in EFL academic writing classes, the effects of differentiated instruction on students' EFL academic writing and the perceptions of the students regarding the use of differentiated instruction in EFL academic writing classes at tertiary-level. To reach these aims, the study was designed as an action research. The study was conducted over a 10-week period in the context of a private university located in Ankara, Turkey. 21 second year university students who attended an Academic and Vocational English class participated in the study. Six students studied at the department of Public Relations (PR) while 15 were students of the department of Radio, Television and Cinema (RTC). Figure 1 summarizes the design of the study.

Stringer (2007) defines action research as “a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives” (p. 1). Therefore, this study aims to find out whether differentiating instruction could be an efficient method to address the problems students experience in EFL writing classes. In addition to this definition, there are many other definitions of action research. Despite their differences, these definitions share some commonalities which are summarized by Costello (2003) as follows:

Action research is referred to variously as a term, process, enquiry, approach, flexible spiral process and as cyclic. It has a practical, problem-solving emphasis. It is carried out by individuals, professionals and educators. It involves research, systematic, critical reflection and action. It aims to improve educational practice. Action is undertaken to understand, evaluate and change. (p. 5)

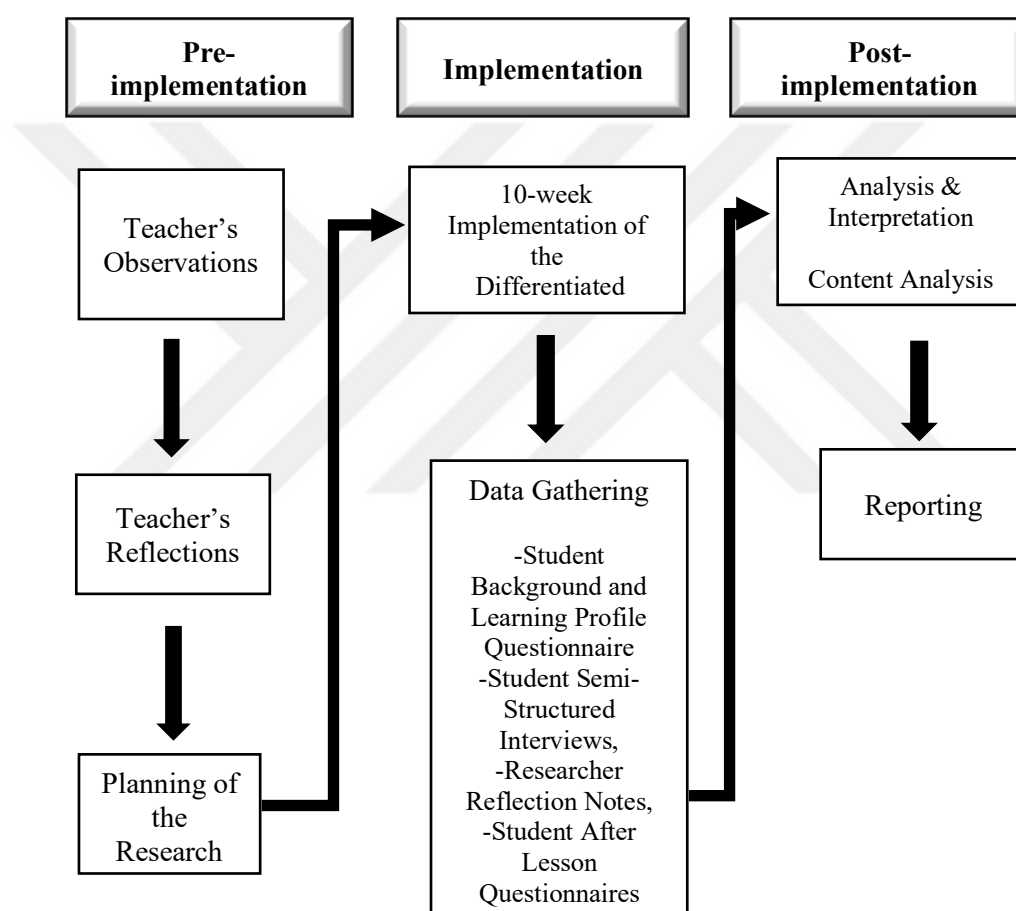


Figure 1. Overall design of the action study

Also, in the context of educational research, action research is referred as a type of study carried out by educators with the aim of improving both their practice and students' learning (Efron & Ravid, 2013). Hensen (1996) maintains that action research enables teachers gain understanding into the specific problems and issues of their classrooms by supporting reflective practice and encouraging teachers to take the responsibility of their craft. Examining these different definitions, it can be said that action research is best suited for this study as it is carried out by an educator, targets to improve in class practice and student learning through aiming to solve a perceived problem.

Despite the fact that action research welcomes all research approaches, namely quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method, researchers can choose the design method based on the aim of their study as “the approach is dictated by the focus of the action research” (Craig, 2009, p.89). Yet still, a qualitative approach to action research is more appropriate in a practitioner- based setting since in a qualitative study the researcher participates in the practicing environment for an extended period of time; there are a variety of readily available data sources in the practicing environment; the researcher has the opportunity to observe the events which naturally occur and therefore offer greater insight; and the researcher is also the practitioner (Craig, 2009).

3.1.1. Action Research and the Current Study

Social psychologist Kurt Lewin is generally credited with being the person founding “action research” during 1930s and 1940s with the aim of bringing about social change (Efron & Ravid, 2013). The method, yet, was adopted from social psychology and introduced to the field of education in an effort of improving educational practices by Corey (1953). Following Corey, in 1970s, Lawrence Stenhouse coined the term “practitioner researcher” and used it to define teachers aiming to improve their practice by carrying out action research

(Efron & Ravid, 2013). The choice of the term “practitioner” was not coincidental as Stenhouse believed that teacher’s work should be researched not by an outsider but “by teachers themselves” (McAteer, 2013). This practitioner emphasis on the conductor of action research is essentially what makes it different from other forms of traditional research where a professional and outsider researcher carries out research “on rather than with practitioners” (McNiff, 2017, p. 10).

The commonly agreed definition of action research states that it is a type of inquiry which is systematic, cyclical, flexible (Ivankova, 2015) and which can be carried out by anyone who wants to investigate into, evaluate and improve their practice. This democratic and inviting nature of action research gave rise to its increasing popularity as a tool for professional learning and improvement across various studies and professions such as business, management and leadership (McNiff, 2017). In the context of education, action research has been well established and developed in particularly teacher education (Ellis & McNicholl, 2015). Bringing solutions to the everyday problems of teachers in addition to improving student learning and teaching lie at the core of educational action research (Sperling & Gay, 2006). With the help of action research, teachers are able to study their own practice in the context of their own schools with their own students and via their own instructional methods. In fact, Koshy (2005) maintains that the quality of education depends on the teachers’ ability to look at their practice from a distance, to reflect on it by determining and evaluating both positive and negative aspects and to make the necessary changes. In other words, the most important way of improving the teacher craft lies in encouraging teachers to be practitioner-researchers.

So as to better understand what action research holds and the unique place it has, a comparison of action research with traditional research is needed. Schmuck

(2009) provides four basic differences between the two research methods: (1)

while action research seeks for practical improvement, traditional research looks for explanations; (2) action research aims for development and change, yet the goal of traditional research is to contribute to a knowledge base; (3) although action research depends on the data collected from individuals and groups in a particular context, traditional research uses objective data from a representative group of participants; (4) action research is interested in local development and change while traditional research tends to make generalizations universally. Table 2 below shows a summary of these differences.

Table 2
Basic differences between action research and traditional research

	Action Research	Traditional Research
searches for...	practical improvement	explanations
aims for...	development and change	knowledge contribution
depends on...	subjective particular group/individual data	objective representative group data
is interested in...	local development	universal generalization

Note. Adapted from “Practical action research: A collection of articles”, by Schmuck, R. A., 2009, Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

There are numerous models proposed for the process of conducting action research. Based on the work of Lewin, Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) put forth a model which includes different spirals consisting of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Figure 2 is a visual representation of the process.

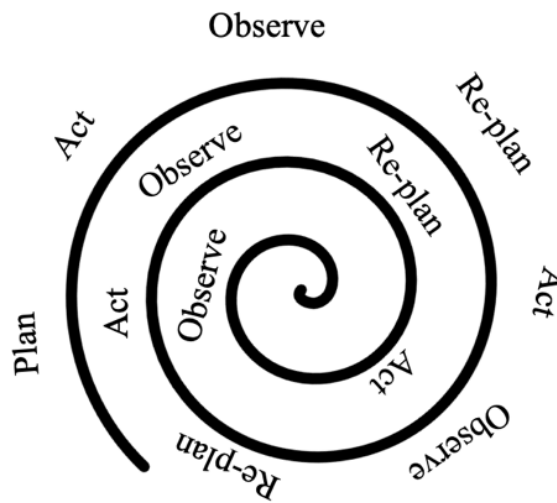


Figure 2. The action research spiral. Adapted from *The Action Research Planner: Doing Critical Participatory Action Research* (19), by S. Kemmis, R. McTaggart, & R. Nixon, 2014, Singapore: Springer. Copyright 2016 by Springer.

However, this model and those alike were criticized by some researchers as being too rigid, prescriptive and in contrast with the flexible nature of action research (Burns, 2003). Agreeing with most of the work of Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), Ebbutt (1985) adds that a spiral model is not the ultimate description of action research and proposes a new model using a series of consecutive cycles which allow the transaction of feedback both within and between the cycles. McNiff (1988), on the other hand, maintains that action research is not that systematic and should have space for creativity. Acknowledging the messiness of this iterative process, she presents another model which highlights the evolutionary aspect of action research and claims that during action research, one can end up at a completely different place than what was expected at the beginning.

In addition to the scholars aiming to provide a framework for action research, there are others opting for a freer approach. For instance, Koshy (2005) states

that in order to carry out action research, the researcher “should adopt the models which suit his or her purpose most or adapt them to fit his or her purpose” (p. 5) rather than strictly following a prescribed one. In addition, McNiff and Whitehead (2002) urge teachers to regard these models only as “guidelines” (p. 52) as they are not by any means a representation of the real-world experiences of practitioners.

Despite the fact that there are various models of action research, the generic process includes four essential stages: (1) determining what to study, (2) gathering data, (3) analyzing and interpreting the data and (4) devising an action plan (Mills, 2007). It should be noted that, however, although these steps give the impression that they advance in a linear fashion, they do not. For this reason, during an action study some of these steps may have to be carried out more than once or their order might be changed (Mertler, 2019). Consequently, this study adopted a more liberal approach and followed the essential steps of action research as guidelines. This initial model of the study evolved into the following:

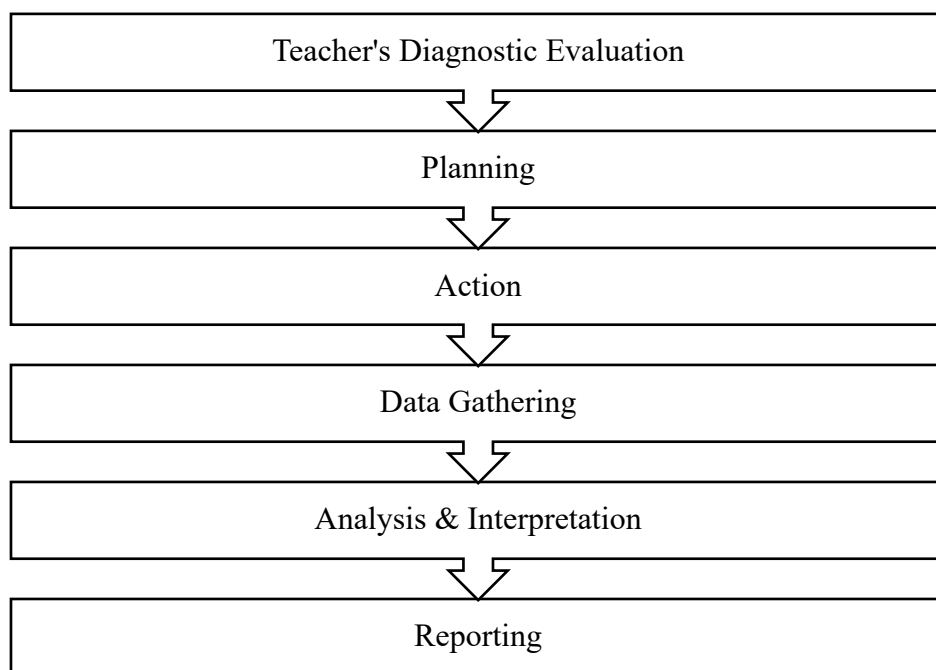


Figure 3. A simple model of the current study.

The first step in almost all types of inquiry, and thus in action research, is selecting an area of focus. That is, determining what to investigate. In educational action research, this can be done by teachers through asking question(s) regarding their practice and/or students' understanding, motivation, behaviour and/or attitude (Stern, Townsend, Rauch & Schuster, 2014). Such questions may stem from a problem that the teacher has observed or from a simple "hunch or a feeling" (Pelton, 2010, p. 8) regarding the investigation topic. Therefore, as the researcher of this study, my observations and feelings about my students' difficulties in EFL writing and the substantial difference among their English levels established the basis of this research and directed it towards an action study within the framework of differentiated instruction.

The next step in the action research process is reviewing the literature on the topic of study. This step is quite crucial since generating new knowledge is "fundamentally dependent on past knowledge" (O'Leary, 2004, p. 66). By reading around a topic and examining the already existing knowledge base, researchers are able to gain insight into the topic and determine any gaps in the literature. The literature research of this study revealed that differentiated instruction is a commonly investigated instructional approach both in Turkey and abroad. However, differentiated instruction studies in Turkey tend to be experimental and quasi-experimental whose subject matters were mostly mathematics and science; were carried out mainly in K-12 contexts and aimed to determine the effects of differentiated instruction on students' academic achievement, learning retention and attitudes towards learning. As a result, being an action research carried out in a higher education context in ELT, this study was expected to fill an important gap in the literature.

Literature search is followed by deciding on the methodology of the study. This means determining the kind of data to be gathered in addition to the manner and the frequency of data collection (Mertler, 2019). Both qualitative and

quantitative data collection methods can be employed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). These might include interviews, questionnaires, field notes, documents and observation. Frankel & Wallen (2003) emphasize the importance of gathering different types of data as this will help the data triangulation, which is “the process of relating or integrating multiple sources of data in order to establish their quality and accuracy” (Mertler, 2019, p. 35). Thus, this study employed four different types of data collection tools: (1) student background and learning profile questionnaire (Appendix C), (2) semi-structured interviews (Appendix D), (3) after lesson questionnaires (Appendix E), and (4) researcher reflection notes (Appendix F).

Having established the data collection method and tools, researchers may continue with the data collection process. This process is systematic and requires ongoing analysis of themes, categories and patterns as the research unfolds (Johnson, 2008). The continuous analysis of data is completed with an overall analysis after all data is collected. Hence, throughout this study, the data was gathered and analyzed before the ultimate analysis conducted at the end. Data collection and analysis naturally leads to data interpretation (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Data interpretation or sense-making intends to “bring together the identified parts into a cohesive understanding of the data’s meaning” (Efron & Ravid, 2019, p. 168). Since this action study utilized qualitative data collection methods, it relied on qualitative coding procedures such as identifying themes, categories, patterns and trends in the data. Choice of codes in qualitative data analysis is based on the specific research questions and aims. During coding, segments of data which may include phrases, sentences paragraphs or pages (Gibson & Brown, 2009) are identified and labeled with the codes which clearly show their meaning (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011). Next, these codes are grouped in emerging categories and themes with an aim of establishing a holistic meaning of the data (Patton, 2015). An example coding table used in this study is presented in Appendix H.

3.2 Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate; (a) perceptions of university students regarding the challenges they experience in writing academic English classes, (b) the effects of differentiated instruction on students' writing academic English skills, and (c) students' perceptions regarding the use of differentiated instruction in an academic English class. In line with these purposes, this study attempts to find out answers for the following research questions:

- 1) What problems do students experience while developing writing skills in an academic English course at university level?
- 2) How does differentiated instruction affect the development of English academic writing skills?
- 3) What do students think regarding the use of differentiated writing instruction in academic English classes?

3.3 Context

This action research was carried out at a private university in Ankara, Turkey. Both English and Turkish are the medium of instruction in this institution and programs are categorized according to the percentage of English courses they offer. For instance, if a program consists of courses carried out only in Turkish, it is called a "100% Turkish" program. On the other hand, if all courses in a program are conducted in English, it is called a "100% English" program, and if a program offers English medium courses which make up 30% of all the courses offered, it is named a "30% English" program. Students studying at the 100% Turkish programs are not required to attend the English preparatory program which lasts for two academic terms, yet those studying at both English medium programs have to either pass a proficiency exam prepared and applied by the institution or attend the preparatory program. Having gained a minimum of 60 points at the English proficiency exam, students are entitled to continue with

their departmental studies. As stated before, all compulsory courses in 100% English programs are carried out in English, yet only 30% of the compulsory courses offered by 30% English programs are conducted in English and these courses are provided by the Academic English Unit at the School of Foreign Languages department.

During their first and second years at the department, students at the 30% English programs must take four compulsory English courses: Academic English I & II, and Academic and Vocational English I & II. Academic English courses are foundational courses mainly aiming to familiarize students with fundamentals of academic English and develop their academic skills such as understanding academic texts and lectures, communicating in debates and writing academically. Students take these courses in classes consisting of students from several other faculties and departments. On the other hand, “Academic and Vocational English I & II” are English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) courses whose major objective is equipping students with field-specific and academic English in addition to developing their general and academic English skills.

This study focused on the writing component of one such ESAP course. Entitled as “CENG 243”, this course is offered to second year students studying at the faculty of communication and at the departments of Public Relations (PR), and Radio, Television and Cinema (RTC). Traditionally, the course is offered for four contact hours (four 50-minute sessions) a week and lasts for 14 weeks. These four hours are divided into two-hour slots and conducted on two separate days.

During the course, course participants are required to use the course pack which is prepared by the course developer. The pack contains academic articles, listening comprehension activities and vocabulary exercises related to both

Public Relations and Radio, Cinema and Television fields. In addition, there is a specific writing booklet attached to the pack which aims to introduce the basic skills for writing an academic essay.

Following CENG 243, students continue with the course CENG 244 which further aims to develop students' skills of reading and understanding academic and field related texts, transferring information for the appropriate audience and task both orally or written, participating in class discussions, presenting ideas both orally and written, and improving professional English language knowledge.

3.4 Data Sources

In the current study, data sources are categorized into two: (a) CENG 243 students as research participants, and (b) documents. Below is an explanation of these sources.

3.4.1. Research Participants

The participants of the current study were twenty-one ($n=21$) second year university students studying at a private university located in Ankara, Turkey. All of these twenty-one students, of which eleven are females and ten are males, were studying at the Faculty of Communication. However, while five of them were students at the Department of Public Relations, sixteen of them were students at the department of Radio, TV and Cinema. Throughout the study, the students were cited using pseudonyms such as S1 or S20 (S stands for Student and the number is a sequence number assigned arbitrarily). Participants were chosen via the convenience sampling method which refers to selecting participants who are “available or volunteer or can be easily recruited and are willing to participate in the study” (Johnson & Christensen, 2010, p. 230). Due

to the fact that not everyone in the population has an equal chance of being selected and that the particular population the sample is derived from is not always obvious, convenience sampling is one of the weakest sampling methods. Therefore, a detailed description of the participants is required in studies employing this sampling method (Johnson & Christensen, 2010).

In the classroom where this action study took place, there were eleven female students ($n=11$) and ten male students ($n=10$). The ages of the participants ranged from 19 to 22 with the average age being 20,42. All students, except for two, attended the English preparatory program at the university and all were second year students. All students had passed the English must courses, namely Academic English I & II, during their first year and had to take the must course Academic and Vocational English I, namely CENG 243, via which the study was conducted. Students had the chance to be exempted from Academic English I & II courses provided that they obtained a minimum of 60 points in the exemption exam. However, with regards to Academic and Vocational English courses, no exemption exam was given. In other words, students had to take these courses regardless of their level of English. Table 3 provides a summary of the students' demographic information.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

This study employed student background and learning profile questionnaire, semi-structured individual interviews, after lesson questionnaires and researcher's reflection notes as data collection tools. Since the main participants of this study were the students who attended the course, data were collected from them via semi-structured individual interviews, student background and learning profile questionnaires and after lesson questionnaires. Below is detailed information on these instruments.

3.5.1. Student Background and Learning Profile Questionnaire

With the aim of deciding what and how to differentiate, teachers should find out what their students' "interests are and what their learning profile is" (Turville, 2008, p. 3). Learning profiles generally include students' learning styles and intelligence preferences (Tuchman Glass, 2009). Therefore, a student background and learning profile questionnaire (Appendix C) including questions on students' backgrounds, interests, learning styles, preferences and expectations from the course was developed by the researcher.

The form consisted of 23 questions. The first two questions sought to understand students' perceptions regarding all courses while the third and fourth specifically focused on English classes. Questions 5 to 8 aimed to find out students' perceptions regarding themselves as learners, characteristics of effective and engaging lessons and of a good teacher. Questions 9 to 12 probed into students' learning styles and preferences. Question 13 investigated into students' views about the role of a teacher inside the classroom and question 14 tried to find out what kind of homework students find effective.

Questions 15 to 21 were focused on students' backgrounds, prominent characteristics, how they defined themselves, their hobbies, extracurricular activities, extra responsibilities, favorite books, movies, singers, sports, quotes, games, celebrities, holidays, television programmes etc. Lastly, question 22 explored students' expectations from the course and question 23 invited them to give more information about themselves if they liked to. Table 3 presents a summary of the demographic information of the students who attended the research.

Table 3
Demographic information of the students participated in the study

ID	Gender	Age	Department
S1	Female	20	PR
S2	Female	21	PR
S3	Female	19	PR
S4	Female	20	PR
S5	Female	20	PR
S6	Male	20	PR
S7	Male	22	RTC
S8	Female	19	RTC
S9	Male	20	RTC
S10	Male	22	RTC
S11	Male	22	RTC
S12	Male	20	RTC
S13	Female	22	RTC
S14	Female	19	RTC
S15	Male	21	RTC
S16	Female	20	RTC
S17	Male	22	RTC
S18	Male	20	RTC
S19	Female	20	RTC
S20	Male	20	B
S21	Female	20	RTC

Note. “PR” stands for “Public Relations” and “RTC” stands for “Radio, TV and Cinema”.

3.5.2. Semi-structured Individual Interviews

This study utilized semi-structured interview approach with the aim of collecting data from the students due to the fact that during the interview participants may provide answers which may require the flexibility of skipping a question or asking additional questions other than the ones already existing in the protocol (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). For this purpose, two semi-structured interview protocols (Appendices C & D) were developed, and the first drafts were reviewed by an expert who was a professor in the department of Educational Sciences at Middle East Technical University. In line with the expert feedback, the questions were revised in order to ensure the content and face validity of the questions and were written in a simple and clear format in avoid any influence on the answers (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2011). Also, they were matched with the research questions to make sure that all questions helped to obtain the relevant data (Bailey, 2007). Both protocols consisted of ten main questions aiming to find out the challenges faced by students while learning writing academic English, their perceptions regarding the use of various DI methods and their perceptions regarding their improvement in writing academic English.

The interviews were carried out in two phases: one in the middle and one at the end of the term. There were 14 and 16 student interviewees in the first and second interview phases respectively. The reason why the numbers of students who attended the interview phases did not match with that of the actual class ($n=21$) is because the interviewees were recruited on a voluntary basis.

On average, each interview lasted around 25 minutes and all were carried out after the administration of both midterm and final exams and the announcement of grades. Because the researcher was also the teacher, this was done purposefully in order to encourage students to share their genuine feelings and perceptions and not refrain from making any negative comments for fear of

receiving a low teacher's evaluation grade.

3.5.3. After Lesson Questionnaires

After each DI writing class(es), students were given a questionnaire (Appendix E) consisting of open-ended questions which directed them to reflect on the lesson. These questionnaires included open-ended questions since qualitative research requires the interviewees to be active participants in the process (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). In addition, open-ended questions encourage participants to answer in their own words and therefore yield valuable insight into their world (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

As each class had a different objective and different activities, the nature of the questions changed accordingly. Still, generally, the questionnaires included inquiries such as: "Today, what was your most favorite activity? Why?"; "What was your least favorite activity? Why?"; "During which activity did you most feel that you learnt? Why?"; "Did I help you and your learning? How?"; "Has there been anything that hindered your learning? If yes, please explain." and "How can I help you and your learning more in the following lessons?".

3.5.4. Researcher Reflection Notes

After each DI writing class, I, as the researcher, noted down my perceptions, experiences and observations regarding the lesson in the form of short notes. I tried to include detailed information on the instruction such as the date of the class, classroom setting, activities and materials used, interesting incidents I observed, conversations I heard and the aspects of the lesson with which I was happy and unhappy. Data gathered through researcher reflection notes encouraged me to think more critically about my instruction and adopt a questioning stance (Moon, 2006). This attitude then aided me to shape the

succeeding DI classes as noted by Farrell (2004). A sample page from researcher reflection notes could be found in Appendix F.

3.6 Procedures

During this study, two procedures were followed: (1) differentiated instruction procedure, and (2) data collection procedure. Below is detailed information on these procedures.

3.6.1. Procedures for Differentiated Instruction

Having received the approval to start the research from Middle East Technical University Ethics Committee, I immediately asked for the approval of conducting the study at the university where I worked. I provided the academic board of the institution with all the relevant documents regarding the research such as the research proposal and the participant consent forms and eventually was given the permission to launch the study (Appendix B).

At the university where I work, the first two weeks are add-drop weeks during which official attendance is not taken. This is not shared with the students and in fact attendance is still taken, yet on a regular paper. Once students complete their first one or two terms at the institution, they realize that the attendance of the first two weeks are not entered into the system, i.e. they are not official, they either never or occasionally come to the classes during this period. The students with which I carried out the present study were all 2nd year students which meant that they were familiar with this unwritten rule. Therefore, in order to start the study, I had to wait for two weeks so that all students who would take the course would not drop the course and come to classes on a regular basis.

After the add-drop weeks, I was able to meet the students who would be

requested to participate in the research. In the first class that I saw them, I explained that I was pursuing a master's degree and was required to complete my master's thesis. I also explained that my study was an action research that required the application of an instructional method and I was planning to obtain data from them provided that they agreed. All students agreed to participate in the study and signed a letter of consent (Appendix G). The letter explained the purpose of the study, what students' roles would be and how the information gathered would be used. In addition, the letter included a statement expressing that the students were free to leave the study at any time. Students signed the letter and then gave them back to me. Having obtained student consent forms, I started the study by applying the student background and learning profile questionnaire which sought to gather data about student backgrounds, interests, learning styles, preferences and expectations (Appendix C). I collected the filled in forms and kept them in a separate file.

Table 4
Original writing instruction syllabus

Week 1	Add-drop week
Week 2	Add-drop week
Week 3	Paragraph writing preassessment
Week 4	Paragraph writing
Week 5	Paragraph writing feedback & essay preassessment
Week 6	Writing a thesis statement Writing an essay outline
Week 7	Feedback on the thesis statements & essay outlines Writing an introduction paragraph
Week 8	Midterm week – No Class
Week 9	Feedback on the introduction paragraphs Writing body paragraphs and a conclusion paragraph (cont.)
Week 10	Feedback on writing body paragraphs and a conclusion paragraph
Week 11	Writing a complete essay
Week 12	Writing a complete essay
Week 13	Essay practice & feedback
Week 14	Essay practice & feedback

This study was carried out through an Academic and Vocational English must course (CENG 243) and focused on its writing component. The course was offered for four contact hours (four 50 minute sessions) per week and aimed to develop students' skills of reading and understanding academic and field related texts, transferring information for the appropriate audience and task both orally and written, participating in class discussions, presenting ideas both orally and written, and improving field-related English and English skills. Due to the fact that the study focused on only the writing component of the course and that there were other components which needed to be covered, the writing classes had to be one or two contact hours per week.

The usual cycle for the differentiated instruction classes consisted of five phases: (1) carrying out an informal pre-assessment on the following writing objective to determine student levels and identify student needs, (2) designing and/or adapting materials through analyzing the results of the pre-assessment, (3) presenting the objective to the students with differentiated materials and via differentiated instruction, (4) application of after-lesson questionnaires and finally (5) taking researcher reflection notes. Figure 4 is a representation of this process.

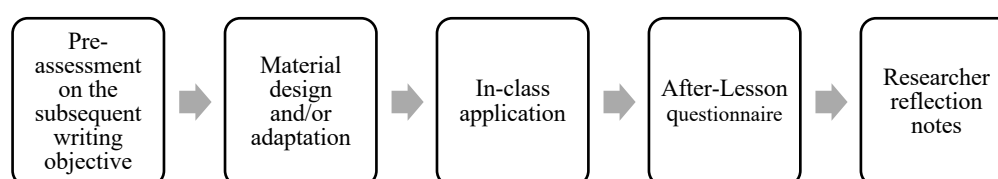


Figure 4. Instructional design for the differentiated instruction class

The main objective of the writing component of the CENG 243 course was to introduce writing an academic essay. Having taken the foundational academic

English I and II courses (ENG 143 and 144) previously, students were assumed to possess paragraph writing skills. However, such assumptions are a part of the traditional classroom. As Bender (2008) argues, the assumptions of a traditional classroom teacher include the following: “(1) They all need the same instruction (2) they are all at the same general instructional level, (3) all of their students will work together in a series of whole class activities, and (4) they will all move through these phases of instruction at the same rough pace” (p. 21). In a differentiated classroom, however, such assumptions are not admissible.

As a result, doubting the assumptions of the traditional classroom, I conducted an informal in-class preassessment on paragraph writing before beginning to teach essay writing. I expected the information I would derive from this assessment to determine student levels, needs and to guide the planning of my instruction (Strickland, 2007). With this aim in mind, I questioned students on the features of a paragraph and the differences between a paragraph and an essay. In addition, I assigned students with a diagnostic paragraph task to be done in class (Appendix L). The answers students gave to my questions and the analysis of student diagnostic paragraphs revealed that most students did not possess the skills to write an effective academic paragraph. Roberts and Inman maintain that “preassessment makes differentiation strategies defensible” (2007, p. 36); Moreover, effective teaching of writing includes preassessing “the students’ strengths, abilities and interests and use the results strategically to plan successful writing experiences” (Chapman & King, 2009, p. 1). Therefore, instead of starting with essay writing, I started with paragraph writing. The preassessment on paragraph writing was not on one single topic yet students were able to choose from four different ones because as also stated by Westphal (2007) choice is a tool for teachers to meet the diverse needs and learning styles of students.

According to the learning outcomes of the previous general academic English classes, students should have been at B1 level (independent user) of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). However, revealing students' correct and incorrect use of level specific vocabulary items and grammar structures, the analysis of the paragraph assignment demonstrated that students' English and writing skills levels varied substantially. In fact, students' written products signaled that while some students could be thought as being at around an intermediate level and above, some were merely novice users. Sample student preassessment paragraphs on the same topic are presented in Appendix M.

In addition to the analysis of the paragraph assignment, student background and learning profile questionnaires revealed that while some students had almost no English background, some others had always been engaged with the language. For instance, some students had attended private schools where English was taught starting from pre-school while some others attended Anatolian High Schools where quality English instruction was provided. Also, one student had studied at an English medium university previously and one was born and raised in the United Kingdom. Student levels varied in a trend that could be grouped in three distinct categories as group A, B and C where A is the most basic and C is the most advanced level.

As a result of this huge gap among student levels, I decided to differentiate the content according to student readiness. Content differentiation entails varying what to teach or how students obtain it (Strickland, 2007). Sustaining the “what to teach” part, as none of the students had mastered paragraph writing, I continued with differentiating the way to reach that content. Taking this into account and as a response to student readiness, I prepared three different paragraph writing booklets in which the main objective remained the same. However, the complexity of the tasks increased and the language advanced as groups progressed from A to C. For instance, one of the objectives of the

paragraph writing class was to practice writing a topic sentence. This objective was the same for all groups, yet each group used specifically differentiated materials to reach it. For instance, group A was presented with a multiple-choice activity which required reading a short and simple paragraph and choosing the most suitable option among three alternatives. Group B was also given a similar task, yet the language used in their paragraphs and alternatives was more complicated. Finally, group C had to produce a topic sentence using their own words as they were given no alternatives. In addition, the language in their paragraphs was much more complex. Sample pages from these booklets could be found in Appendix N.

Throughout the research, my role as a teacher was to guide and help each group while they worked together. This help was in the form of immediate feedback (Shaver & Hunter, 2009). Students were free to ask questions to me whenever they felt the need. While providing feedback, I took the following characteristics of effective feedback into consideration: “(1) the feedback must be timely, (2) be specific, (3) be understandable to the receiver, and (4) allow for adjustment” (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006, p. 77). In other words, the feedback was given on time as it was given in class just after a student has experienced some challenge or made a mistake or misunderstood a concept. Second, it was specific because I focused on one particular challenge or mistake at one time. Third, it was easy to understand for the students since I made sure that I used precise and simple English. Zourou (2011) claims that metalinguistic feedback can be given in students’ native language if effective communication in the foreign language is hard to maintain due to low language levels. Thus, I sometimes made explanations using their and my native language, Turkish. Finally, students were given practice homework on paragraph writing and was asked to submit their work before the next writing class so that I could give them written feedback, as well.

In week five, I started the lesson with a quick wrap-up on the previous lesson in order to help deepen students' understanding. Gregory and Chapman (2007) maintain that such quick revisions provide students with a recalling opportunity. Then, I returned students' practice homework on paragraph writing with specific feedback on them as also suggested by Chapman & King (2009) effective teaching of writing requires explicit, clear and regular feedback. While students examined their feedback, I monitored them and answered their questions. Once all students expressed that they had no further questions or issues regarding paragraph writing, I moved on to the next writing objective. Yet, before doing so I conducted an informal preassessment that I previously prepared and checked students' understanding about the definition of an essay and parts that comprise it (Appendix O.1). This activity, similar to the paragraph activity, was done individually as one of the tenets of preassessment is that it needs to be carried out on a personal basis so as to clearly determine where each student stands (O'Meara, 2010). Later, I assigned students with a diagnostic essay writing task to be done in class (Appendix O.2). Similar to the paragraph writing preassessment task, this task did not force students to write on a single topic yet offered students five different topic alternatives (Westphal, 2007).

The analysis of both preassessment essay tasks assisted me with measuring students' readiness which showed that students lacked organizational essay writing skills. In other words, they wrote haphazardly with almost no sign of an academic essay organization. The essay task also provided more information on student language levels and highlighted the differences that were revealed after the paragraph preassessment even more.

However, one thing which was not planned emerged during the essay writing preassessment. I delivered the diagnostic essay task and asked the students to choose a question and write an essay as a response. Students started working on the task, yet I observed that some students, even the ones with a high level of

English, looked stressed and frustrated. I immediately interrupted the task and asked if there was a problem. Most students reported that they were having problems in terms of finding “what to write”. In other words, they could not generate ideas although they had no problem understanding the questions. As I asked more questions regarding the nature of the problem, it was revealed that students were not familiar with brainstorming techniques. As brainstorming is a crucial step in writing which liberates the mind in order to produce fresh ideas (Walter, 2015), I felt the need to make adjustments in the initial syllabus and present students with “brainstorming strategies” and “idea organization” before “writing an introduction paragraph”. Figure 5 is an illustration of this alteration.

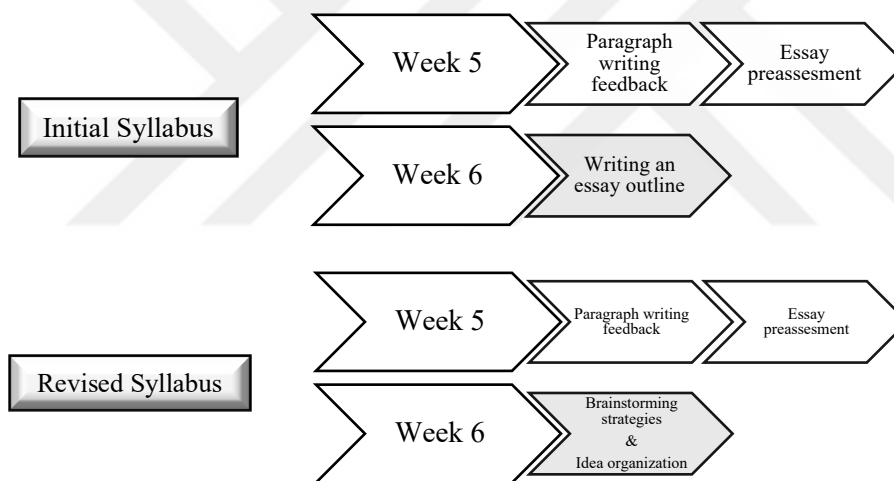


Figure 5. An illustration of the syllabus change done in response to student needs.

As a result, week 6 started with the presentation of three different brainstorming activities namely listing, free writing and mapping in addition to idea organization instead of writing an introduction paragraph. Table 5 shows the change in the flow of the objectives throughout 14 weeks. As students were not

familiar with such strategies, I planned to conduct a whole class lesson on the introduction and practice of each strategy as also stated by Benjamin (2013) whole class activities may help establish the knowledge base on which other tasks will be founded. After this whole-class introduction, students were given exercises on each strategy and worked individually or in pairs depending on their choice. During this stage, I continuously monitored the students and provided guidance and feedback whenever they needed. Sample pages for these activities can be found in Appendix P.

Week 7 started with a wrap-up on brainstorming activities and idea organization. Then, a whole class activity on turning ideas into a thesis statement was carried out. Following this, students were asked to form groups and given activities on writing a thesis statement. These activities, similar to the previous ones, progressed from the most basic to the most advanced. The activity that group A did started with a multiple-choice question in which students chose the best thesis statement and continued with controlled practice tasks which provided the topic and supporting ideas and required students to turn them into thesis statement. The activity designed for Group B also started with a multiple-choice question in which students chose the best thesis statement, yet the language of these statements was more complicated than those in Group A. Following this, students in group B were asked to produce thesis statements on topics given.

They were not provided any supporting ideas. Group C had only one activity which was much more complex than those in Group A and B. This activity was a guided practice and did not include any topics or supporting ideas. Instead, there were long writing prompts and students were required to come up with the topic, the supporting ideas and the thesis statements on their own. Sample pages of the activities are presented in Appendix R. During this activity I constantly monitored the students and provided help and guidance as needed.

Table 5
Altered writing instruction syllabus

Week 1	Add-drop week
Week 2	Add-drop week
Week 3	Paragraph writing preassessment
Week 4	Paragraph writing
Week 5	Paragraph writing feedback & essay preassessment
Week 6	Brainstorming activities and idea organization
Week 7	Writing a thesis statement
Week 8	Midterm week – No Class
Week 9	Writing an essay outline
Week 10	Writing an introduction paragraph
Week 11	Writing body paragraphs and a conclusion paragraph
Week 12	Writing a complete essay
Week 13	Essay practice & feedback
Week 14	Student presentations

At the university where I work, almost all departments have a one-week long midterm period during which students do not attend any classes and only take midterm exams. Therefore, in week 8, there were no English classes.

In week 9, students were presented with the basic essay outline format. Since they were already familiar with the paragraph outline, the transition was smooth. However, instead of showing the format and then moving on to its application, I followed an inductive approach and prepared three different exercises. In these exercises, students were given three different essays which advanced in terms of complexity of the vocabulary and grammatical structures. Working in groups, students examined these essays and filled in an empty essay outline. Sample pages of this activity are presented in Appendix S. Again, my role in this stage included constant monitoring and guidance. Next, I told students that it was time to produce individual work and explained that they were going to find a topic, narrow it down, write a thesis statement and prepare an essay outline. Then I

asked students to think about topics that they are interested in and write them on a piece of paper in 2-3 minutes. Later, I instructed them to choose one of the topics they have written and narrow it down into an essay topic. Once they were content with their topics, I asked them to generate ideas on it by using the brainstorming techniques we covered earlier. At this point, I conducted a quick whole class revision on these techniques and told students that they were free to choose whichever one they liked. As Jensen (1998) put forth, the optimum learning environments are those which offer a variety of choices. Students worked individually or in pairs while I continuously wandered around the classroom, observing, monitoring students and providing feedback. Due to time constraints, students had to complete their work outside the classroom and send them to me before the following week's class so that I could provide more feedback.

Having written their outlines, students were ready to write their essays and the first step was writing the introduction paragraph. However, there were only 12 students in the class the previous week. In other words, 9 students were absent and did not attend the essay outline lesson. Therefore, at the beginning of the week 10 class, I instructed the absent students to form a circle and asked those who attended the previous class if they thought they were ready to start writing their essays or needed a revision. One student expressed that he needed a review, so he joined the absent students' circle, too. While we went over the previous weeks' objective in this circle, other students started writing their introduction paragraphs. Throughout the rest of the class, I divided my observation and guidance time between the two groups. At the end of the class, I assigned all students to finalize their paragraphs and send them to me before the next class.

In week 11, I started the class with delivering student introduction paragraphs back. While students examined their paragraphs and made sense of the feedback I gave, I walked around the classroom and offered constant help. Once students

where all clear about their individual feedback, they continued writing their essay with body and conclusion paragraphs by following the outline they prepared earlier. Again, I continuously moved around the class and offered help as needed.

In weeks 12 and 13, shorter class time was allocated to writing since students needed to perform 5 minutes long in-class presentations. However, because there were 21 students in the classroom the whole presentation cycle took around 6 contact hours and two classes had to be cancelled due to heavy snow. Therefore, during weeks 12 and 13 students wrote essays at home and send them to me via e-mail and were given feedback again through e-mail.

3.6.1.1. Arising Problems and Attempts for Solutions

During this study, some problems emerged, and I tried to address them effectively under existing conditions. Initially, it was planned to conduct two contact hours of writing classes, however, two classes had to be cancelled due to weather conditions and during weeks 14 and 13 six hours of class time had to be devoted to student presentations. This resulted in not being able to allocate two full contact hours but either one or none. Yet, because these problems occurred towards the end of the term students were already familiar with all writing objectives and were in the practice stage. Because writing is a skill which can get written feedback as well, this problem was addressed by assigning students practice homework and providing written feedback via e-mail. However, I made great efforts to provide oral feedback and help during both the actual class time and my office hours. In fact, to compensate for this loss, I arranged meetings with students out of my office hours. Also, the essay preassessment revealed that students lacked brainstorming techniques which was not a part of the original syllabus. As a result, the initial syllabus plan had to be altered so that brainstorming techniques are covered, as well.

3.6.2. Procedures for Data Collection

This study employed four different types of data collection tools: (1) student background and learning profile questionnaire (Appendix C), (2) semi-structured interviews (Appendix D), (3) after lesson questionnaires (Appendix E), and (4) researcher reflection notes (Appendix F).

The data collection procedure started with having students fill out the student background and learning profile questionnaire developed by the researcher (Appendix C) which included 23 questions probing into students' backgrounds, interests, learning styles, preferences and expectations from the course. Despite the fact that there are a number of published tools to assess student's learning preferences, a researcher generated one was preferred as "sometimes it is most economical to begin with common sense and a little teacher ingenuity" (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 71). The results of this questionnaire acted as a basis and guide for the design and implementation of the following writing classes.

After each differentiated writing class, students were given a questionnaire which directed them to reflect upon the lesson. As these classes had different objectives and different activities, the nature of the questions changed accordingly. Still, generally, the questionnaires included questions such as: "Today, what was your most favourite activity? Why?"; "What was your least favourite activity? Why?"; "During which activity did you most feel that you learnt? Why?"; "How did I help you and your learning?"; "Has there been anything that hindered your learning? Please explain."; "How can I help you and your learning more in the following lessons?" Having answered the questions in the written form at the end of the lesson, students handed them back to me and I kept all forms in a separate file to which only I had access.

As for the semi-structured interviews, the first interview cycle was carried out

after the midterm exam, and the second after the final exam. Students who wished to participate in the interviews were invited to both cycles and there were 14 students in the first interview cycle and 16 in the second one. During the interviews, a pre-developed and semi-structured interview protocol was followed. Although I asked the same questions and followed the same question sequence with every participant, I skipped some questions or added probing questions depending on the answers given by the students. All the interviews were recorded, and students gave their consent orally in addition to the written consent which they provided by signing a consent letter at the beginning of the study.

Lastly, after each DI writing class, I, as the researcher, noted down my perceptions, experiences and observations regarding the lesson in the form of short notes. I tried to include detailed information on the instruction such as the date of the class, classroom setting, activities and materials used, interesting incidents I observed, conversations I heard and the aspects of the lesson with which I was happy and unhappy. Data gathered through researcher reflection notes encouraged me to think more critically about my instruction and adopt a questioning stance (Moon, 2006). This attitude then aided me to shape the succeeding DI classes (Farrell, 2004).

3.6.3. Procedures for Data Analysis

This study gathered qualitative data through (1) a student background and learning profile questionnaire (Appendix C), (2) semi-structured interviews (Appendix D), (3) after lesson questionnaires (Appendix E), and (4) researcher reflection notes (Appendix F) and employed content analysis method of the qualitative research paradigm.

The content analysis method was used during the analysis of the student

background and learning profile questionnaire, interviews, the after-lesson questionnaires and researcher reflection notes. Miles and Huberman (1994) propose a model for content analysis which has three components: “data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification” (p. 10).



Figure 6. Qualitative data reduction process. Reprinted from A Step-By-Step Guide to Qualitative Data Coding, by P. Adu, 2019, New York: Routledge. Copyright by Philip Adu.

The first step in the analysis was the transcription of the interviews as data reduction requires written data. Then, the transcribed interviews were compared to the original recordings so that there is no additional or missing data. Following this crosscheck, the interview data was ready to undergo data reduction which refers to selecting, simplifying and/or transforming the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Next, I scoured the raw data meticulously in order to locate the relevant data which is related to the research questions and to detect repeating words or patterns within the data (Auerbach, & Silverstein, 2003). While doing so, such repetitive data was highlighted and labeled using codes, which then were more closely analyzed to form categories and themes (Adu, 2019). Table 6 represents this process and sample pages of this process can be found in Appendix H and I.

Table 6
Sample codes, categories and themes for semi-structured interviews

Codes	Categories	Themes
tenses pronouns	grammar usage problems	
lexicon	vocabulary usage problems	problems regarding academic writing
no attention	not getting enough feedback	

Categorization of the codes starts with the identification of the characteristics of each code, finding shared similarities and grouping them under umbrella descriptors (Adu, 2019; Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Dey, 1993). The same sequence is followed for the production themes. Table 6 provides a sample of the codes, categories and themes used for semi-structured interviews.

The reduced and classified data was then displayed in the form of a coding book (Appendix I) so as to gather the most relevant data into an easily accessible and compact form which frees the researcher from a bulky and overloaded set of data and prepares for the next step: conclusion drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Conclusion drawing refers to the interpretation of the data which then allows for establishing conclusions regarding the study. Verification is the step where these conclusions are supported with reference to other data such as field notes or feedback forms (Gratton & Jones, 2004).

The same procedure was used for the analysis of the student background and learning profile questionnaires, after lesson questionnaires and researcher observation notes. The data collected through these instruments were analyzed throughout the study in order to “refine, discard, generate or extend questions, hypotheses or conclusions” (Gupta & Awasthy, 2015, p. 27). Finally, in the

reporting of the results of analysis verbatim quotations were included as a means to support interpretations (Krippendorff, 2004). These extracts were carefully chosen among those which give rise to interesting points that deserve to be highlighted (Sullivan, 2012).

3.7 Trustworthiness

Both quantitative and qualitative research require “systematic and rigorous processes” to establish the validity of the research (Stringer, 2007, p. 57). While traditional experimental studies conform to a set of established rules to ensure soundness of a study, qualitative research uses a different term, trustworthiness, and a different set of criteria for validity. Although action research can employ both quantitative and qualitative research methods, it is qualitative at its core. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), action research should possess the following attributes to ensure trustworthiness: (1) Credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability, and (4) confirmability.

Similar to the “internal validity” of quantitative research, credibility refers to persuasiveness of the research process, methods and the evidence (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). Put more simply, it means “whether research results are believable” (Karlsen & Larrea, 2016, p. 175). Credibility can be ensured by various ways such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation and referential adequacy materials.

Prolonged engagement describes that the researchers need to spend quality and long time on the research environment. This was valid for the present research since I was able to spend four 50-minute contact hours over 14 weeks on the research site as both the practitioner and the researcher. In addition, prolonged engagement requires the participants to be interviewed in an extended period of time. As Stringer (2007) asserts, brief meetings and interviews with the

participant may not yield enough data to obtain deeper meanings. This study, therefore, aimed to achieve prolonged engagement by conducting 30 semi-structured interviews in two phases. Attended by volunteers, these interviews lasted between 15 and 30 minutes. The second way to instill credibility is persistent observation. Observation can be found in almost all qualitative research methods yet mere presence of a researcher does not suffice. The researcher should be an active observer who not only watches and listens to the participants and the environment but also keeps constant notes of events (Stringer, 2007). Therefore, this study aimed to attain persistent observation with the help of researcher reflection notes which took place just after the actual observation. Triangulation is another procedure which increases the credibility of an action study and can be done by using multiple sources of data (Mills, 2007; Stringer, 2007). Thus, seeking for triangulation, this study employed four different types of data collection tools: (1) a student background and learning profile questionnaire (Appendix C), (2) semi-structured interviews (Appendix D), (3) after lesson questionnaires (Appendix E), and (3) researcher reflection notes (Appendix F). Also, all sorts of data including the voice recordings, researcher observation notes and student questionnaires were properly organized and kept in separate files to be used as referential adequacy materials.

Transferability can be thought as the equivalent of external validity in quantitative research which refers to whether the results of a study can be generalized on a much larger population. However, qualitative research does not aim for generalization, but for “developing new insights and theories” (Flick, 2009, p.31). Therefore, transferability as a way to ensure trustworthiness refers to the applicability of the study in similar contexts and can be done by a “detailed description of the context(s), activities, and events” (Stringer, 2007, p. 59). As a result, this study intended for meeting transferability with the help of an in-depth description of all stages, phases and procedures including data collection and analysis along with participant characteristics and the research context.

Dependability, together with credibility, is one of the main actors in ensuring trustworthiness in action research (Mertler, 2019). It corresponds to reliability in quantitative research and refers to the quality of trust on the results of a study. This trust is established by the use of reliable and valid data collection tools. For instance, the interview questions were first developed by the researcher, yet they were also reviewed by an expert, a professor from the department of Curriculum and Instruction at Middle East Technical University, in order to ensure the content and face validity of the questions. The questions were written in a simple and clear format in order to avoid any influence on the answers (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2011). Also, they were matched with the research questions to make sure that all questions helped to obtain the relevant data (Bailey, 2007). Moreover, as “where an interview is held can affect its quality” (Bailey, 2007, p. 104), the interviews were carried out in a separate room with minimal noise and disruption. The success of the interviews may also greatly affected by the existence or lack of rapport between the interviewee and the interviewer (Grady, 1998). Therefore, I tried to establish appropriate rapport with the interviewees. This was somewhat easy to achieve as both the researcher and the participants were in constant engagement throughout the study. In addition, all interviews were carried out after the administration of both midterm and final exams and the announcement of grades so that students would not refrain from sharing their genuine feelings and perceptions. Lastly, appropriate data analysis methods were selected to analyze the data and triangulation of the results was conducted.

Confirmability assures that an action research can be “reconstructed even if it cannot be repeated” (Coghlan & Miller, 2014 p. 691). It is achieved by internal consistency of the data and the findings (Klein, 2012). This study, therefore, utilized triangulation as a way to increase confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and collected data via different sources. These sources consisted of the participants and the researcher. Also, various data collection tools were employed to triangulate data. For instance, semi-structured interviews, student

questionnaires and researcher observation notes were used to confirm one another. Also, sample pages from the activities used in class and sample student writings were included in the appendices of the thesis.

Trustworthiness could also be enhanced through complying with ethical practice. For this aim, the proposal of this study was presented to the Applied Ethics Research Center at Middle East Technical University to which this thesis would be submitted and obtained the necessary approval. Also, as this study would be conducted at another university, the approval of this university was also needed. Therefore, the academic board of the university was provided with all the relevant documents regarding the research such as the research proposal and the participant consent forms and eventually was given the permission to launch the study (Appendix B). Moreover, all students who took part in the study by either being a member of the course and/or participating in the interviews were asked to fill in a consent form in the form of a letter (Appendix G). The letter explained the purpose of the study, what students' roles would be and how the information gathered would be used. In addition, it included a statement expressing that the students were free to leave the study at any time. Students were not offered any incentives such as gifts or bonus points. In fact, especially before the interviews, they were reminded to be as honest and genuine as possible and that there were no correct answers or answers that the researcher would like to hear. It was stressed that the intention was merely understanding their perceptions. They were also informed that their identity would be anonymous and the data they would provide would be confidential. Finally, both raw data and specimens were only available to the researcher and were kept in a secure place.

3.8 Limitations

This action study has several limitations. To begin with, the content analysis of the data was carried out by the researcher only. However, in order to gain a more objective result, to decrease coder bias and to develop more reliable coding categories, an independent coder could have been employed. Yet, still, considering my role as both the practitioner and the researcher of the present study, the data of this research and the coding categories that emerged from it were analyzed multiple times in order to achieve a more objective result. Also, I paid great attention to the collection and analysis of the data scientifically and as transparent as possible.

Second, for the selection of the participants, this study used “convenience sampling”, one of the weakest sampling methods. Yet, because this study is a qualitative one, the aim of this study was not to generalize the findings but to focus on a specific group of people. Still, as a researcher, I am aware that participants who were recruited are not those who are “reflective of all viewpoints” (Given, 2008).

Third, considering my role as both the practitioner and the researcher of the present study, it can be argued that the students may not have provided completely objective responses. In other words, since the researcher was also the teacher, it is possible that students may have given responses in favour of the use of differentiated instruction. Therefore, both before the interviews and the after-lesson questionnaires, I ensured that students were reminded to be as objective as possible and that there were no right or wrong answers.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings revealed from the student background and learning profile questionnaire, semi-structured individual interviews, after lesson questionnaires and researcher reflection notes. The anonymity of the participants was preserved by using pseudonyms such as S1 which stands for Student-1 while reporting the results. A summary of the results is provided at the end of the chapter. Figure 7 presents an overview of the categories and themes which emerged as the data analysis proceeded.

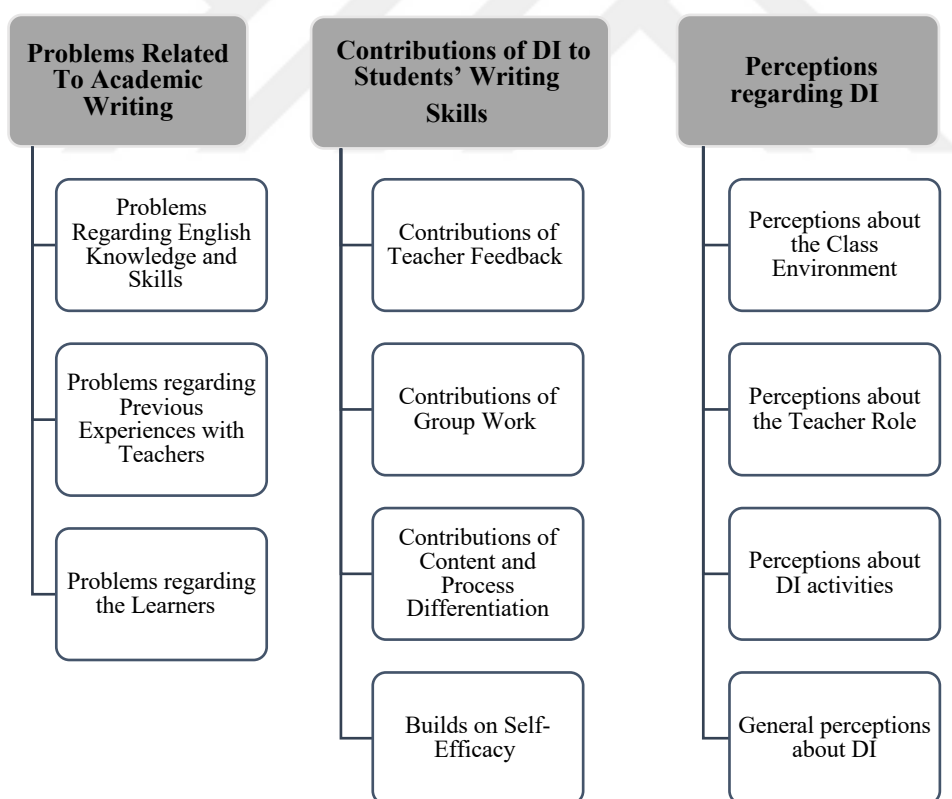


Figure 7. Data analysis categories and themes.

4.1 Problems Related to Academic Writing

Analysis of the data revealed that the problems which students experience with regard to academic writing in English can be categorized into three categories: (1) problems regarding English knowledge and skills, (2) problems regarding previous experiences with teachers and (3) problems regarding the learners.

4.1.1. Problems regarding English Knowledge and Skills

When students were prompted to think about the challenges that they encountered in English academic writing, the most dominant problem was related with the grammar. During the first interview cycle, students ($f=8$) reported having problems with English structure and usage. For example, S1 stated that he had problems building sentences because he did not possess enough knowledge of English grammar. Also, S3 expressed that the main problems he faced were grammar related which even disrupted his speaking skills.

In addition to the grammar, some answers ($f=5$) were centered around the issues related to vocabulary usage and highlighted that students faced challenges with learning, remembering and using vocabulary items. For example, S5 said that he had been having difficulty with vocabulary since the primary school. Lastly, several students ($f=3$) stated that they did not possess enough knowledge regarding the rules and components of an academic paragraph. For instance, S1 defined his paragraph writing skills as greatly lacking.

4.1.2. Problems regarding Previous Experiences with Teachers

Another point that has been commonly reported as a problem regarding academic writing is the lack of teacher feedback ($f=8$). On the one hand, some

students did not recall almost any instances of teacher feedback. In fact, S8 explained why she regarded not getting sufficient teacher feedback as a problem as follows: “In the academic English writing lessons in the previous terms, we could not see our mistakes as our teachers did not give feedback on them.” On the other hand, some students acknowledged getting feedback in the past, yet they stated that the feedback they received lacked both in quality and quantity. For instance, S11 attributed his repetition of making the same mistakes in writing to the inadequate feedback he had been given previously. Another teacher related problem which emerged from the data analysis was teachers’ lack of making use of various instructional methods and having the same expectations for all students. S2, for instance, clearly put it as the following: “Previously, there was one fixed method of instruction and the same things expected from everyone. However, there are people who are both above and under the expected. It’s not an efficient system for all.”

4.1.3. Learner Related Problems

The analysis revealed that some problems experienced by students throughout academic writing in English classes were related with how learners felt during the classes. In that regard, some students ($f=3$) expressed that in previous academic writing classes, they frequently felt lost. They explained this notion of feeling lost as either not knowing what to do and not being sure what is expected of them or simply not understanding the material and moving on to the next material without addressing existing issues. For instance, S6 clearly explained this feeling as follows:

“My major problem was that I could neither ask questions nor receive answers. This was very hard. Many people have this problem both in math and English. It was hard for me to do the homework when I could not understand what I needed to do.”

Although the above-mentioned problem may seem to be related with struggling students more, the students who are high achievers had problems on the other edge of the sword. While the struggling did not find the class easy to comprehend, high achievers often felt not improved. In fact, S7 stated that she did not even feel the need to improve as the material was below her existing level and there was no expectation of improvement for her. She also added that she never felt challenged as even a very simple writing produced by her was welcomed by her teachers and not encouraged to improve.

In addition to feeling not challenged and not improved, high achievers expressed that they often felt that they were sacrificing the quality of their learning as they often needed to wait for others to complete a task or to answer a question. As S7 very clearly puts it: "I used to step back in the classes before. I usually looked at the teacher in the eye signaling my answer and then waited for the others." Lastly, high achievers suffered from being misunderstood and labeled as "know-it-all" either by their teachers or classmates as a result of completing a task early or answering a question too quickly.

To sum up, semi-structured interviews showed that students experienced problems in academic writing classes with regards to: (1) students' English knowledge and skills, (2) the previous experiences with teachers, and (2) the learners themselves. The most common problems cited for English usage and skills is related to the insufficient knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and academic writing skills. The major issues regarding the teachers were found to be absent or poor feedback, lack of instructional variety and the assumption that every learner is the same. Finally, learners reported feeling lost, not improved, not challenged and not understood as problems they experienced in academic writing in English classes.

4.2 Contributions of DI to Students' Writing Skills

The analysis of the data showed that students experienced improvement in their academic English writing skills through the contributions of: (1) teacher feedback, (2) group work, (3) content and process differentiation, and (4) increased self-efficacy.

4.2.1. Contributions of Teacher Feedback

When asked to name the difference between the DI writing classes and traditional ones, a great number of students gave the answer “teacher feedback”. A majority of students put forward the contributions made by detailed and one-to-one teacher feedback as a factor which led to improved writing skills. The analysis of the interviews showed that the most cited benefit of teacher feedback was that it encouraged students to produce better work (f=5). As S3 said: “When I write something and bring it to you, you make suggestions to improve it. This was ignored in the past which demotivated me”. Secondly, four students (f=4) stated that teacher feedback resulted in increased learning retention, helped them recognize their mistakes easily and prevent these mistakes from becoming fossilized. As S7 candidly expressed: “(with) feedback, we see our mistakes. In the previous classes, we could not see our mistakes. Our teacher(s) did not give feedback”. Similarly, S4 stressed the high level of teacher-student communication (feedback) which led to “instant redressal of mistakes”.

Lastly, some students (f=5) stated that having teacher feedback in class increased their motivation as they felt valued, supported and believed in and the lack of such features was what made previous classes inefficient. As S8 recalls:

Last term, our teacher told us that she would give feedback on our writing, but she did not. I was really upset. Then, after a while, she wanted to provide feedback, but I refused. I even did not take that class in the following term.

This was also supported by the results of the data gathered through after lesson questionnaires. The analysis of the questionnaires revealed that some students suggested that “teacher feedback” was the reason why they liked certain activities more than others, while some stated “consulting to the teacher” was a method they used in order to overcome problems they faced during an activity. In addition, some students stated that they felt that learning had taken place as a result of “teacher feedback”.

4.2.2. Contributions of Group Work

The interview data revealed that all students considered the group work aspect of DI as the most important contributor in the improvement of writing skills. Because students were mostly grouped according to their readiness needs determined by pre-tests, most students reported that there was facilitated communication inside the groups due to having similar needs.

Students reported that this ease of communication in the groups naturally led to increased cooperation and collaboration inside the group, which resulted in closer and stronger friendships, increased sense of belonging, increased attendance and increased participation. For example, S2 said that as a result of the friendships he developed in English classes, he now could “ask questions much more easily even in classes other than English”. Similarly, S3 expressed the contribution of enhanced friendships as follows: “When you first come to a class, you don’t know anyone but (group work) makes a lot of contributions to this. It makes me feel at ease and I come to classes willingly”. Also, S6 noted: “In the previous lessons, I used to wait for the others. But now (in these groups), there is no need for me to stand back and make sacrifices. I push myself more”.

The same was supported by the analysis of after lesson questionnaires and researcher observation notes. When asked to give reasons as to why they liked

some DI activities, a majority of students ($f=14$) gave the answer “because of group work or collaboration with friends”. In the same vein, numerous students cited “collaboration with others” as a method they employed to overcome challenges they faced in the class. Likewise, a large number of students thought that “group work” was the factor which led to the development of a sense of learning. Similarly, researcher observation notes included statements about instances where students were observed as working in groups actively and willingly.

4.2.3. Contributions of Content and Process Differentiation

The analysis of the data showed that most students reported experiencing notable contribution as a result of content and process differentiation which mainly centered around liberating students with respect to their readiness, interests and choices and altering the content or process in accordance with student needs.

With regard to the contributions of content and process differentiation, student responses revealed increased interest, motivation, learning, focus, retention and autonomy ($f=8$). S14 clearly asserted feeling increased interest and motivation as the following: “When the topic is limited, I have much difficulty. But if I am free (to choose the topic) I am more enthusiastic”. Similarly, S9 reported that this freedom led him to work harder to produce better work. Also, S12 emphasized the increased learning as follows: “Because I was free to choose the topic I wanted; I was able to understand better”.

Another contribution brought about by content and process differentiation was easier focus. Students reported that once content was related to a topic that they felt comfortable with, they could start writing much more quickly and pay more attention to understanding the rules for form, which in turn resulted in increased learning retention. Also, some students stated that having the freedom

to choose the content created a sense of responsibility which resulted in their becoming more autonomous and therefore learning from their own mistakes in a much more efficient way. In the same vein, student answers showed that process differentiation provided them with increased motivation, participation and autonomy towards the class. S7 emphasizes how process differentiation encouraged her as follows:

Leaving the choices to us is such a beautiful thing. When you ask us which page we want to complete, I look at it and say, “I can do this”. We’re freer. I did not even attend the classes the previous term.

This was also supported by the results of the after lesson questionnaires as “freedom” was among the most repeated reasons students gave to explain why they liked some DI activities. Moreover, freedom over the choice of some practice activities was what most students regarded as the reason behind feeling of learning. All in all, it can be said that providing students with freedom over the content and the process leads to increased interest, motivation, learning, focus, retention and autonomy.

4.2.4. Builds on Self-Efficacy

As stated before, all students felt that their academic English writing skills improved and they attributed this improvement to teacher feedback, group work and content and process differentiation. However, they also expressed increased levels of self-efficacy which was mirrored in three distinct areas: (1) self-confidence, (2) self-correction, and (3) test scores.

In this regard, a majority of students expressed that their self-confidence in the skill increased as a result of improved knowledge regarding the format and language use. For instance, when asked to compare his writing skills before and after differentiated instruction, S5 said: “I was not very good. In fact, I had a lot

of problems with writing. But now, I can write a paragraph (essay) properly. Also, as S2 puts it: “Previously, I used to write using the same structures. But now I use different ones.” Similarly, two students S5 and S17 reported that they were now able to construct more complex sentences which had various structures and deeper content. Lastly, in addition to gaining improved academic knowledge, S9 reported feeling more confident because she overcame a personal obstacle in writing. As she candidly explains:

My writing ability has improved a lot. I had always wanted to write a book but was afraid of it. I think I have improved in terms of vocabulary usage and writing, and I think I should not fear any more. I have overcome a big obstacle.

Indeed, the same student started writing the book she mentioned in the following term and shared a few pages with me. Sample pages from her work are presented in Appendix T. Also, S1 said that he wrote an English essay for another class and attributed his success to what he learnt in the DI class:

I wrote an English essay. It’s not perfect, but I think this class made very big contributions to it in terms of the sentence structure and paragraph content. I applied what we learnt in the essay writing lessons. If I had written it before I took this class, I could have produced a problematic one.

The second area where some students experienced improved self-efficacy was self-evaluation. They stated that their self-assessment abilities developed and that they became able to detect their own mistakes much more easily. Therefore, it can be said that in addition to becoming better at academic English writing, students became more autonomous. This was very candidly and openly expressed by S11:

I can now say that this part is not correct. I can select better sentences. It’s hard for one to find mistakes in themselves (their own work) yet I can find them now. I can see them better now.

Thirdly, some students felt increased self-efficacy as they achieved better writing test scores. For instance, S15 said: “(...) I recently realized I used to

write very badly. In fact, I did not know how to write at all! I even did very good at the exam.”

To sum up, most students expressed increased levels of self-efficacy which was mirrored in three distinct areas: (1) self-confidence, (2) self-evaluation, and (3) test scores. They stated that they felt more confident as a result of improved knowledge regarding the format and language use. Also, their self-assessment abilities developed, and they became able to detect their own mistakes much more easily. Finally, some students felt increased self-efficacy as they gained higher writing test scores.

In conclusion, the analysis of the data showed that most students underwent improvement in academic English writing as a result of (1) one-to-one and in-depth teacher feedback, (2) application of group work, (3) content and process differentiation, and (4) increased self-efficacy in writing skills which was mirrored in three distinct areas: (1) self-confidence, (2) self-evaluation, and (3) test scores.

4.3 Perceptions regarding DI

The data revealed that students’ perceptions regarding the application of differentiated instruction in the classroom can be categorized into three distinct theme which are perceptions with regard to (1) the class environment, (2) the teacher role, and (3) the activities.

4.3.1. Perceptions about the Class Environment

When prompted to reflect on their experiences and feelings related to the class environment, students used the following adjectives repeatedly: fun, warm, safe, free and learning centered.

The most cited adjective to describe DI classes was fun ($f=10$). Students reported that because the DI classes were enjoyable, their interest and motivation towards the class increased, which in turn led to increased attendance and participation.

As S5 noted:

Before this class, I had never written academically and at the beginning I thought “why I am here?”. As I wrote more, I enjoyed it more, especially while writing an essay. At first, I was reluctant but now I come to the classes willingly.

Interestingly, S10 described his increased attendance as “feeling guilty” when he could not attend the classes. In fact, the same is supported by an incident in the researcher reflection notes taken in week 10:

Two students entered the classroom hastily before the lesson started. Taking off their coats, they told me that they were in another district in the city which was 19 kms away and came to school only to attend this class. What is striking about this incident is not that they came from that district but that they each had less than 8 hours of absenteeism. In other words, they could be absent for another 8 hours, yet they still chose to come.

In addition, the data revealed that most students felt that the use of DI generated warm and safe classroom environment in which members felt stress-free and not hesitant to participate. Again, they reported that it is this secure environment which created healthy and effective communication among the members of the classroom which led friendships emerge and develop. S12 highlighted that the friendships he developed in this class continued in other common classes, as well.

Furthermore, some students described DI classes as being “free” where they felt they had control over their choices. S1 recalled feeling extremely bored in previous English classes as they were not free and had to follow the same pattern for learning. Lastly, some students stated that DI classes were efficient where they felt the main aim was to learn not to pass the class. S10, for instance, stated

that he regarded the class environment as not a “lesson environment but a learning one”.

4.3.2. Perceptions about the Teacher Role

In terms of teacher’s role in the DI classroom, most students highlighted that the teacher in the DI classroom was supportive. For instance, S15 indicated that there was a positive change in his attitude towards English classes as a result of the teacher’s attitude: “This was because of you, actually. You approach to students is very good. That’s why my interest increased.” Similarly, acknowledging the effort paid by the teacher, some students stated that because they observed that the teacher was genuinely trying to help them, they felt indebted which increased their motivation. As S12 put it: “I feel like the teacher is trying to do something for us so at least I can do something.” Moreover, students also stated that the teacher was caring, attentive and aware of students’ individual needs. S9 elaborated on this as follows:

You take care of us. You direct us towards what we cannot do. Sometimes we study individually and sometimes as a group. For example, once you gave us a worksheet and told our group to complete side A. I did that side and then looked at the other side. That side was very challenging. Then I said the teacher knows my needs. I liked this a lot.

4.3.3. Perceptions about the DI Activities

Students’ answers with regard to the DI activities were very short and straightforward. The analysis of the data revealed that students had generally positive perceptions with regard to the activities in the DI classroom. For instance, the interview analysis showed that a large group of students were content with DI as an instructional method and wanted it to continue. In addition, the after lesson questionnaires presented students with questions such as “How can I (the teacher-researcher) help you more in the following lessons?” and the

majority of students thought that the continuation of DI activities would assist their learning.

Moreover, students were given a student background and learning profile questionnaire at the beginning of term. When questioned about the kind of impact this questionnaire had on students, their responses repeatedly included the following descriptors: valued, important and special. For instance, S13 said: “It (the questionnaire) made me feel valued and increased my motivation. Most teachers don’t even know our names.” Also, S9 stated that she liked the questionnaire a lot and thought that the teacher is genuinely interested in her. Likewise, S3 elaborated on the initial positive feelings that the questionnaire evoked as follows:

The questionnaire made me develop liking towards you. (I thought) there is someone valuing my wants and ideas. This was good. Someone is interested in me; curious about me. The teacher is doing all these things for me so I should at least pay some effort. This encouraged me to study.

4.3.4. General Perceptions about DI

The qualitative data analysis showed that all students had positive perceptions with regard to use of DI in general. In fact, when asked about whether their perceptions changed after the first interview, all of them answered negatively. In fact, S9 very clearly explained this as follows:

My perceptions have not changed, on the contrary they have become stronger. Every (writing) class was carried out using different DI activities. As a result, I regularly attend the class and take what I needed. I don’t even go to classes that’s not like this.

Similarly, S2 stated that thanks to DI he now believes in himself and his abilities more: “You (through DI) pushed us and supported us so well that we said ‘Yes, we can!’, and saw that English was not that hard. You have removed the barrier on the way to our development.”

However, there were a few instances where some students were either negative or neutral towards the method. For instance, S6 stated that at first she thought that group work would “increase the gap” and added: “I was afraid that we would alienate each other, which had previously happened in other classes. However, at the end this grouping was better as we worked more efficiently.” Also, when asked about student background and learning profile questionnaire S14 answered that it did not evoke any positive or negative feelings.

Consequently, the analyzed data revealed that students’ perceptions regarding DI in the classroom share commonalities which can be grouped into three: (1) the class environment, (2) the teacher role, and (3) the activities. Students’ perceived the DI class atmosphere as being fun, warm, safe, free and learning centered. They also regarded the teacher in the DI classroom as supportive, attentive, active and friendly. Lastly, with regards to the DI activities all students were content and wanted the method to continue.

4.4 Summary of the Results

The analysis of the data gathered through the student background and learning profile questionnaire, semi-structured individual interviews, after lesson questionnaires and researcher reflection notes revealed that students faced some problems in academic English writing; they experienced improvement in their writing skills; and they had positive perceptions towards use of DI in the classroom.

The challenges students had in terms of academic English writing were mainly related to: (1) students’ English knowledge and skills, (2) the teachers, and (2) the learners themselves. The most common problems cited for English usage and skills was insufficient knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and academic writing skills. The major issues regarding the teachers were found to be absent or poor

feedback, lack of instructional variety and the assumption that every learner is the same. Finally, learners reported feeling lost, not improved, not challenged and not understood as problems they experienced in academic writing in English classes.

In terms of the contributions brought about by DI, all students reported undergoing improvement in academic English writing. The reasons for this improvement were as a result of (1) one-to-one and in-depth teacher feedback, (2) application of group work, (3) content and process differentiation, and (4) increased self-efficacy in writing skills which was mirrored in three distinct areas: (1) self-confidence, (2) self-evaluation, and (3) test scores.

Student perceptions with respect to DI were grouped into three: (1) the class environment, (2) the teacher role, and (3) the activities. In terms of the class atmosphere, students reported perceiving the DI class as fun, warm, safe, free and learning centered. The teacher in the DI classroom was viewed as supportive and attentive. Lastly, with regards to the DI activities all students were content, and most wanted the method to continue.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents a discussion of the results which also draws conclusions from them. It concludes with the implications that this study might have for further practice and research.

5.1 Discussion and Conclusions

This action study aimed to investigate; (a) perceptions of university students regarding the challenges they experience in academic English writing classes, (b) the effects of differentiated instruction on students' academic English writing skills, and (c) students' perceptions regarding the use of differentiated instruction in academic English writing classes. Differentiated academic English writing classes designed for this study were held over a 10-week period at a private university.

The analysis of the data revealed students' perceptions regarding the problems they face in writing academic English classes and regarding DI as an instructional method. Below is a detailed discussion and conclusions on these findings.

5.1.1. Students' Problems related to Academic Writing

One major aim of this study was investigating the problems experienced by university students in academic English writing classes. The problems that students experienced can be grouped as: (1) problems stemming from English

knowledge and skills, (2) problems related to teachers and (3) problems related to learners. It was found that in terms of the problems about English knowledge and skills, students commonly experienced challenges with using correct English grammatical structures and vocabulary items in addition to having a lack of knowledge regarding the rules and components of an academic paragraph. This is in line with the results of the studies done by Abdulkareem (2013) which showed that the difficulties students experience in academic writing include lack of grammatical competence. Also, Kızıl and Yumru's (2019) study revealed that a majority of students did not feel confident in their skills for identifying what the content and organization of a paragraph should entail. Nevertheless, this result is interesting because students in this study should all be familiar with the rules and conventions of paragraph writing as each student in the class had to pass two foundational academic English courses during their first year. This might be explained by the low minimum passing grade at the university, which is 50. Obtaining 50 points out of 100 is not challenging for many students and most pass the course without mastering the objectives, particularly writing objectives as they are harder to grasp (Craig, 2012).

In addition, the present study revealed that some of the problems students experienced in academic English writing classes were teacher related due to lack of instructional variety and teacher feedback. This is supported by the study of Ankawi (2015) which found out that poor teaching has a negative effect on students' writing skills and by Huy's (2015) study which showed that 5% of the participant students attribute their writing difficulties to "limited help from teachers" (p. 10).

Moreover, this study demonstrated that students have problems in academic writing classes as some feel lost and do not understand what they are supposed to do. This is supported by the extensive set of studies done by Torrance, Thomas and Robinson in 1992 which focused on the affective aspects of students' writing

difficulties. They found that most struggling students did not know what they should do and what was expected of them. Lastly, this study found out that some high-achievers reported being not challenged, not improved and not understood by their teachers. This finding is supported by Daggett and Kruse (1997) who propose that students who are good at writing are in danger of being “unchallenged by routine writing assignments” (p. 57).

5.1.2. Contributions of DI

The results of this action study revealed that almost all of the participants had positive perceptions with regard to the differentiated writing classes and accepted that DI aided the development of their writing skills in one way or another. The most cited reason for this contribution was timely, one-to-one and detailed teacher feedback. This is expected and supported by various studies seeking the qualities of effective teaching of writing which concluded that teacher feedback was a powerful tool. Hattie and Timperley (2007), for instance, suggest that feedback is a valuable learning and teaching strategy. Similarly, Marzano, Pickering and Pollock (2001) maintain that if feedback is offered at the appropriate time, it is a great tool for improvement. Also, Chapman and King (2005) argue that differentiation helps students as their needs occur and through DI “individuals receive prompt interventions with specific, corrective feedback as they work” (p. 11).

Most students in this study stated that teacher feedback provided by DI resulted in increased learning retention and improved self-correction. This is supported by the argument put forth by Chapman & King (2005) as they believe feedback facilitates monitoring one’s own work and taking control of their own learning.

In this study, although few students did not recall any instances of teacher feedback, a majority of them had previously been given feedback. Nonetheless,

when asked to compare the DI classes with traditional ones, students gave the answer “teacher feedback” repeatedly. This result may be explained by the students’ perceptions as to the lack of quality feedback in previous years. The fact that students appreciated teacher feedback in the DI classroom can be attributed to the nature of feedback in differentiated instruction, which is exclusively aimed at the person, purposeful and personalized (Burnett & Mandel, 2010).

Secondly, most students considered the group work aspect of DI as the most important contributor to the improvement of writing skills. This was a highly popular answer which could be found repetitively in the analysis of the interview cycles, after lesson questionnaires and researcher reflection notes. Generally, students regarded group work as a communication facilitator inside the group which led to the birth and development of friendships. This is in line with the previous studies whose results suggested that groupwork can impact friendship formation (Cooper & Slavin, 2001; Slavin & Cooper, 1999). The reason why most students stated group work as a contributor of DI could be explained by the method’s frequent employment of flexible grouping and the impact of grouping on the social organization of the classroom (Beaumont, 1999). Contrary to the other grouping methods where students either get together with those sitting next to them or choose their own partners, DI makes use of purposeful and flexible grouping. As a result, students are given the opportunity to work with those who may not be in their immediate social circle and consequently gain new friendships or improve the existing ones. As also supported by the study carried out by Avci, Yüksel, Soyer and Balikcioglu (2009), DI leads to “friendship relationships within the class to develop (p. 1082). The present study also showed that these friendships paved the way for increased sense of belonging, attendance and participation. The same was observed in the study conducted by Özer in 2016. In her study, Özer (2016) investigated the effects of thinking-style-based differentiated instruction on academic achievement, attitude and retention

in vocational foreign language classes. She found out that students were positive about the use of differentiated instruction and their interest and participation increased.

Moreover, one interesting finding of the contributions of group work which was particularly designed on the basis of readiness was regarding the high achievers. Such students expressed that in groups where readiness was not a commonality among group members, they often felt the need to stand back and stay silent although they had already mastered a certain skill or knew the answer to a question. They even described this as “sacrificing their learning”. Yet, in groups formed on the readiness basis, they reported being more active and even feeling encouraged to work harder and produce more quality work. The feeling to stand back and not to dominate the group may stem from students’ developed empathic skills. Since empathy needs distance “from subjective experience to the objectivity necessary to assist others towards self-growth” (Kurland & Malekoff, 2002, p. 54), the higher achievers with high levels of empathy may feel the need to stay behind in order not to interfere with others’ learning experiences.

In addition to the contributions brought about by group work, the data revealed that students regarded content and process differentiation as other contributing factors. As a result of these factors, students reported increased motivation, focus, learning, retention and autonomy. These results are all supported by various studies. For example, Beler (2010) conducted a study to find out the effects of DI on students’ learning and class management. He found out that DI had positive effects on the learning of all students and increased their motivation levels. Similarly, Aras (2018) investigated the impact of DI on students’ intrinsic motivation, behaviour and academic achievement and found out that DI had a positive impact on student motivation and behavior. Apart from increased motivation, a study which aimed to identify the effects of DI on students’ reading comprehension skills and learner autonomy conducted by Gülşen (2018)

demonstrated that both variables increased. In the same vein, the participants in the study carried out by Alhasmi and Elyas (2018) with the aim of seeking the effects of differentiated grammar instruction reported increased motivation and autonomy. Also, Demir's (2013) study which investigated into the effects of differentiated instruction on students' achievement, learning retention, and attitude to learning revealed increased achievement and retention levels. Similarly, in a quasi-experimental study, Durmuş (2017) aimed to find out the effects of DI on students' academic achievement and retention of learning compared to a control group. His study demonstrated that differentiated instruction was more effective in increasing learning retention.

The results of this study also showed that as a consequence of DI students experienced increased self-efficacy in several areas. To begin with, students' self-confidence in the writing skill increased. Most students attributed this improvement to developed knowledge regarding the format of academic writing and language use. This result is supported by the literature as well. In the research review published by McQuarrie, McRae and Stack-Cutler (2008), it was found that DI enhanced student self-confidence as "more students had the opportunity to learn and feel successful as learners" (p. 13).

Secondly, students reported increased self-correction abilities. In other words, they became able to detect their own mistakes much more easily. This finding can be interpreted as students experienced increased metacognitive skills because self-correction is a metacognitive regulation process (TEAL Center, 2010). The data also showed that with the help of DI students became more autonomous. Similar to the self-correction concept, autonomy is also a metacognitive skill. As Little (2009) suggests, the relationship between metacognition and learner autonomy is fairly straightforward. As a result, the interpretation regarding students' increased metacognitive abilities can be enhanced. This is supported by Gülşen's (2018) study which found out that as a

result of differentiated reading instruction, students' autonomy levels increased. However, the results of the study conducted by Taş (2013) does not support this as his study revealed no statistically significant difference between the pre and post test results of the students with regards to their metacognitive skills. This contradiction can be explained by the characteristics of the participants in both studies. In the present study, the participants were all university students whose ages ranged between 19 and 22, whereas in Taş's study they were grade 6 students who were around 11 and 12. This age difference may be the cause of the conflict between the results of the two studies since "metacognitive ability improves with age over the course of adolescence" (Weil et al., 2013, p. 269).

Lastly, the results of this study suggested that some students achieved greater writing test scores. This increase in students' academic achievement is supported by various studies (Yabaş, 2008; Özyaprak, 2012; Şaldırdak, 2012; Demir, 2013; Taş, 2013; Atalay, 2014; Camcı-Erdoğan, 2014; Karip, 2016; Özer, 2016; Durmuş, 2017; Kaplan Sayı, 2017; Yavuz, 2018). However, a quasi-experimental study carried out by Aras (2018) found no significant difference between the academic achievement levels of the two groups and is in line with the findings of the studies conducted by Little, McCoach, and Reis (2014) and Ward (2017).

5.1.3. Perceptions of DI

The results of the data analysis revealed that students in the DI classroom perceived it as engaging, entertaining, safe and free. The enjoyment students reported as a result of being in a DI class is supported by Şaldırdak's (2012) experimental study. Similarly, Johnsen (2003) and McAdamis (2001) discovered that use of DI strategies proved to be engaging and kindling student interest. This is probably due to the fact that DI places great importance on student interest and preferences, which in turn "creates a sense of empowerment

for students” (Turville, 2007, p.6). In addition, students regarded DI classroom as safe. This finding is supported by the study of Patterson, Connolly and Ritter (2009, p. 51) which revealed that 87% of the participants “felt more confident to speak up in class and 95% felt more comfortable in class” as a result of the secure classroom environment. In addition to being secure, DI learning environment was seen as free. In other words, students perceived that they were able to make a choice for their own learning. This is reflected in Santangelo and Tomlinson’s 2009 study carried out with university students. The participants in this study were also highlighted their ability to choose class activities and assessments in DI classes.

However, there were limited studies in the literature which presented the freedom aspect of DI as a result of student perception. This may be due to differences in data interpretation and classification. Some researchers, for instance, may have opted for interpreting freedom and related findings as increased motivation since freedom in DI ultimately leads to increased motivation levels, or similarly some may have placed it under the finding increased interest. However, this study purposefully recognized and presented freedom as a result of DI because it was a highly repeated adjective used to describe the class atmosphere. The reason why the participants in this study used the word so repetitively could be due to the frequent utilization of choices as a DI strategy.

Due to the engaging, safe and free instructional environment, students in this study reported high levels of interest and motivation. This is supported by the literature as the two concepts are among the most cited findings of DI studies (Alhasmi & Elyas, 2018; Aras, 2018; Beler, 2010; Coleman, 2001; Hall, 2002; Powers, 2008; Sizer, 1999; Strong et al., 2001 & Tieso, 2001). Recalling the empowerment created by respecting and recognizing student interest and preferences, it can be said that high levels of interest and motivation are expected

as student empowerment “releases bonds of failure and frees children to go on learning (Stone, 1995, p. 296).

Finally, students in this study perceived the instructor and the nature of the teacher-student relationship positively. They described the teacher as supportive and attentive. This might be stemming from the role of the teacher in a DI classroom. As Tomlinson (2001) argues, a DI teacher is intentional about “seeing and reflecting on individuals as well as the group; hunting for insights about the individuals; erasing stereotypes; giving students a voice and building a sense of community in the classroom” (p. 17). All these skills are based on the individual and fosters the sense of respect for the person. Naturally, therefore, teachers implementing DI and acting with DI principles are expected to be regarded positively.

In conclusion, this study showed that it is possible to improve both the quality of writing instruction and students’ writing skills through the use of differentiated instruction strategies. The study revealed that students experienced problems in writing academic English due to several issues related to learners and teachers. It was seen that most of the problems students experienced were either dealt with or eased through the contributions of DI. Among these contributions, the most cited ones were detailed, one-to-one and timely teacher feedback in addition to supportive group work. DI classroom, which students regarded as engaging, safe and unrestricted, paved the way for students to possess increased motivation and participation through helping them become more autonomous.

5.2 Implications for Practice

The results of this action study revealed that students who attended the writing classes conducted via differentiated instruction had favorable views about DI as

an instructional method, that DI made significant contributions to students and that DI helped improve students' academic English writing skills. This study has some implications for practice.

In the light of the results, it can be recommended that differentiated instruction strategies are integrated into the prospective academic English writing classes in this specific university. Curriculum developers in the Academic English Unit at the university may include differentiated instruction in the writing components of the programs which they are responsible for. The inclusion of differentiated instruction strategies could provide students with various domains from which they might benefit both academically and affectively. In addition, as a result of the enhanced student-teacher relationship, teachers might gain increased levels of professional satisfaction.

Furthermore, this study showed that action research is an effective way of overcoming problems regarding school practices as a result of improving students' English skills and gaining favorable student perception. Therefore, this study can pose as an example for practitioners who would desire to detect existing or potential problems in their practice and apply action research in their own contexts with the aim of addressing these problems.

Moreover, it can be suggested that teachers who are aspiring to apply differentiated instruction in their classrooms conduct a pre-assessment stage before designing lessons for an objective. As this study showed, there might be student needs which teachers cannot foresee or which they assume as possessed. In addition to the pre-assessment, teachers could consider administering an open-ended questionnaire which investigates into students' learning profiles and backgrounds. Teachers then can make use of the data they gathered for designing new classes or adapting existing ones as a response to their students' needs.

In addition, as all new skills, effective application of differentiated instruction requires time and practice. Teachers should not refrain from implementing DI in their own contexts, yet they ought to keep in mind that it will require familiarity and experience. Therefore, they should always begin though at a point where they feel comfortable. As Tomlinson also argues teachers need to “begin differentiating instruction for the group you (they) find easiest to with” (2017, p. 64).

Lastly, teachers should always be prepared for early finishers and/or extra struggling students. Even in a carefully assessed and planned class, there might be some students who move ahead or beyond what is expected. In such cases, teachers should have an arsenal of extra yet meaningful and purposeful tasks to assist and foster students’ learning.

5.3 Implications for Further Research

The results of this study have some implications for further research with regards to university students’ perceptions about developing English writing skills and the impacts of differentiated instruction on their skills development.

To begin with, this study was designed as an action study and therefore required the practitioner as the researcher. Yet, to gain more insight into the impacts of the method and to establish a different perspective, this study could be designed as a quasi-experimental one and employ a control group in addition to the group with which the action study was applied. Similarly, the number of participants could be increased, and quantitative data collection tools could be added to the design of the study to so that the study is set up on a stronger basis. In addition, a similar study might be conducted with students from different faculties and departments to see whether students’ academic differences would yield similar results and to evaluate the applicability of the method in such a context.

Secondly, this study made use of differentiated lesson plans and activities all of which designed or adapted by the teacher researcher. As a result, they required a lot of time and effort. Further research, therefore, might include creating an archive of pre-prepared and ready-to-use differentiation materials on a specific subject-matter in a given discipline.

To conclude, it is expected that the above-mentioned implications of this action study will yield greater insight into future differentiated instruction research and issues about its implementation.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

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Sayı: 28620816 / *SM*

08 EKİM 2018

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Prof.Dr. Ali YILDIRIM

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız yüksek lisans öğrencisi Burcu ÇETİN'in "Farklılaştırılmış Öğretim Yoluyla Öğrenme: Bir Akademik İngilizce Sınıfında Eylem Araştırması" başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay **2018-EGT-140** protokol numarası ile **22.10.2018 - 31.06.2019** tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN

Başkan V

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL

Üye

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR

Üye

Doç. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI

Üye

Doç. Dr. Zana ÇITAK

Üye

Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK

Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Pınar KAYGAN

Üye

APPENDIX B: INSTITUTION APPROVAL FORM

BAŞKENT ÜNİVERSİTESİ
YABANCI DİLLER YÜKSEKOKULU
YABANCI DİLLER BÖLÜM BAŞKANLIĞINA
ANKARA

Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim bölümünde sürdürmekte olduğum yüksek lisans eğitimim kapsamında bir araştırma yürütmekteyim. Araştırmamın amacı farklılaştırılmış öğretim yöntemiyle işlenen İngilizce akademik yazma derslerinin öğrencilerin akademik başarısına etkisini belirlemektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda 2018 yılı güz dönemi boyunca vereceğim CENG 243 kodlu dersin İngilizce akademik yazma bileşenini farklılaştırılmış öğretim yöntemi aracılığıyla işlemek istiyorum. Araştırma önerim, veri toplama ve analiz yöntemlerim ile kullanılması planlanan tüm formlar ektedir.

Durumu bilgilerinize sunar, gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

21.09.2018

Burcu Çetin

UYGUNDUR

Doç. Öğr. Üyesi Ahmet R. ULUŞAN
Yabancı Diller Bölüm Başkanı

APPENDIX C: STUDENT BACKGROUND AND LEARNING PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

Öğrenci Bilgi Formu

Adın-Soyadın:

Yaşın:

Bölümün:

Bu anketi hangi ders için dolduruyorsun?:

1. Okulda en sevdiğin ders veya aktivite hangisi? Neden?
2. Okulda en sevmediğin ders veya aktivite hangisi? Neden?
3. İngilizce derslerinin en sevdiğin kısmı hangisi? Neden?
4. İngilizce derslerinin en sevmediğin kısmı hangisi? Neden?
5. Sence sen nasıl bir öğrencisin?
6. Öğretmenler ilgini çekmek için ne yapabilir?
7. Lütfen çok iyi öğrendiğini düşündüğün bir dersi anlat. Sence o dersi o kadar iyi yapan neydi?

8. Şimdi de çok sevdiğin ve işini çok iyi yaptığını düşündüğün bir öğretmenini anlat. Onu bu kadar sevdiren ve iyi yapan neydi?
9. Tek başına mı, küçük gruplarda (2-3 kişilik) ya da büyük gruplarda (3 kişiden fazla) çalışmayı mı seversin? Neden?
10. Derslerde görsel öğelerin kullanımı hakkında ne düşünüyorsun?
11. İngilizce dersinde hangi konular ilgini çeker?
12. İngilizce dersinde ne tür materyaller ilgini çeker?
13. Sence sınıf içinde ve dışında öğretmenin rolü ne olmalıdır?
14. Ne tür ödevleri yaptığında daha çok öğrendiğini düşünüyorsun?
15. Arkadaşlarınla vakit geçirmek dışında, boş zamanlarında ne yapmayı seversin? Neden?

16. Okul dışında herhangi bir takıma, kulübe ya da organizasyona katılıyor musun? Evetse, bunlar hangileri?
17. Okul dışında herhangi başka bir sorumluluğun var mı? (Örneğin, part-time bir işte çalışıyor olabilirsin.)
18. Lütfen kendini 3 kelime ile tanımla.
19. Kendinle ilgili gurur duyduğun bir şeyi yazar mısın? (Bir başarı, karakter özelliği vs.)
20. Kendinle ilgili değiştirmek istediğin bir şeyi yazar mısın? (Bir alışkanlık, huy vs.)
21. Lütfen favorilerini yaz. (Birden çok cevap verebilirsin.)

Kitap	
Yazar/Şair	
Film/Dizi	
Şarkıcı/Grup	
Tartışma konusu	
TV programı	
Oyun	
Spor	
Tanınmış kişi	

Yemek-Tatlı	
Telefon uygulaması	
Açık hava aktivitesi	
Kapalı alan aktivitesi	
Tatil şekli	
Özdeyiş	
Şarkı sözü	

22. Bu dersten beklentilerin nelerdir?

23. Söylemek istediğin başka bir şey var mı?

APPENDIX D: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

B.1. After Midterm Interview Questions

Öğrenci Görüşme Formu 1

Tarih:

Saat:

Görüşülen Numarası:

Araştırma Soruları:

1. Üniversite düzeyinde İngilizce akademik yazma dersinde öğrenciler ne tür problemlerle karşılaşılıyorlar?
2. Farklılaştırılmış öğretim öğrencilerin akademik yazma becerilerini geliştirmelerine herhangi bir katkı sağlıyor mu? Sağlıyor ise ne tür ve nasıl bir katkı sağlıyor?
3. Öğrencilerin İngilizce akademik yazma dersinde farklılaştırılmış öğretimin kullanılmasıyla ilgili algıları nelerdir?

Merhaba, bildiğiniz gibi Başkent Üniversitesi'nde öğretim görevlisi olarak çalışmaktayım. Farklılaştırılmış öğretimin İngilizce akademik yazma becerisine etkileri hakkında bir araştırma yapıyorum ve sizinle İngilizce akademik yazma becerisinin çeşitli boyutları ile ilgili duygu ve düşüncelerinizi öğrenmek için görüşmek istiyorum. Bu görüşmeyi öğrencilerle yapıyorum çünkü öğrencileri araştırmam için en güvenilir, gerçek ve uygulanabilir geribildirim verecek bireyler olarak görüyorum. Bu araştırmada ortaya çıkacak sonuçların İngilizce akademik yazma derslerinin geliştirilmesine katkıda bulunacağını umuyorum.

Bana görüşme sürecinde söyleyeceklerinizin tümü gizlidir. Bu bilgileri araştırmacıların dışında herhangi bir kimsenin görmesi mümkün değildir. Ayrıca, araştırma sonuçlarını yazarken görüştüğüm bireylerin isimlerini kesinlikle rapora yansıtmayacağım. Başlamadan önce bu söylediklerimle ilgili

belirtmek istediğiniz bir düşünce ya da sormak istediğiniz bir soru var mı? Görüşmeyi izin verirsiniz kaydetmek istiyorum. Bunun sizce bir sakıncası var mı? Bu görüşmenin yaklaşık 20 dakika süreceğini tahmin ediyorum. İzin verirsiniz sorulara başlamak istiyorum.

Görüşme Soruları

1. Hangi liseye gittiniz?

Sonda: Lisede İngilizce dersleri aldınız mı?

Okulunuzun İngilizce'ye yaklaşımını nasıl tanımlarsınız?

2. Okul dışında İngilizce ile ilişkiniz nasıl? İngilizceyi içeren hangi aktiviteleri yapıyorsunuz? Neden?

Sonda: İngilizce programlar izliyor musunuz? İngilizce okumalar yapıyor musunuz? Bunlar neler? Neden bunları okuyor/izliyorsunuz?

3. Dil öğrenmek kolay olmayabiliyor. İngilizce öğrenirken ne tür problemler ya da zorluklarla karşılaşıyorsunuz?

Alternatif:

İngilizce derslerinde sizi neler endişelendiriyor? Neler zor geliyor?

4. Şimdi İngilizce derslerinin farkı bileşenleri (okuma, yazma, dinleme ve konuşma) hakkında konuşalım. Bunlardan hangisini en çok seviyorsunuz? Neden?

Hangisini en az seviyorsunuz? Neden?

5. İngilizce akademik yazmayı ilk ne zaman öğrendiniz?

Sonda: O zamanki duygu ve düşüncelerinizi tarif edebilir misiniz? O zamandan bu zamana bu duygu ve düşünceler değiştiler mi? Değiştilerse nasıl ve neden değiştiler?

6. Birlikte işlediğimiz İngilizce akademik yazma derslerimizi düşün lütfen ve farz edelim ki yan şubeden bir arkadaşınız size şunu sordu: “Sizin hocanız yazma derslerinde farklılaşmış öğretim diye bir şey yapıyormuş. Bunun diğer derslerden farkı ne?” Nasıl anlatırdınız?
7. Farklılaştırılmış öğretimle işlenen yazma derslerinin sevdiğiniz yönleri neler?
8. Farklılaştırılmış öğretimle işlenen yazma derslerinin sevmediğiniz yönleri neler?
9. Hatırlarsanız fikir üretimi tekniklerini işlediğimiz derste, fikir üretme safhasında dilediğiniz tekniği seçebilmişsiniz. Bu nasıl bir deneyimdi?
10. Dönem başındaki yazma becerinizi ve şimdiki yazma becerinizi düşündüğünüzde ne gibi farklılıklar görüyorsunuz?
Sonda: 1 ile 10 arasında bir rakam vererek ifade edebilirsiniz.
11. Belirtmek istediğiniz bir düşünce ya da sormak istediğiniz bir soru var mı?

B.2. After Final Interview Questions

Öğrenci Görüşme Formu 2

Tarih:

Saat:

Görüşülen Numarası:

Araştırma Soruları:

1. Üniversite düzeyinde İngilizce akademik yazma dersinde öğrenciler ne tür problemlerle karşılaşılıyorlar?
2. Farklılaştırılmış öğretim öğrencilerin akademik yazma becerilerini geliştirmelerine herhangi bir katkı sağlıyor mu? Sağlıyor ise ne tür ve nasıl bir katkı sağlıyor?
3. Öğrencilerin İngilizce akademik yazma dersinde farklılaştırılmış öğretimin kullanılmasıyla ilgili algıları nelerdir?

Merhaba, bildiğiniz gibi Başkent Üniversitesi'nde öğretim görevlisi olarak çalışmaktayım. Farklılaştırılmış öğretimin İngilizce akademik yazma becerisine etkileri hakkında bir araştırma yapıyorum ve sizinle İngilizce akademik yazma becerisinin çeşitli boyutları ile ilgili duygu ve düşüncelerinizi öğrenmek için görüşmek istiyorum. Bu görüşmeyi öğrencilerle yapıyorum çünkü öğrencileri araştırmam için en güvenilir, gerçek ve uygulanabilir geribildirim verecek bireyler olarak görüyorum. Bu araştırmada ortaya çıkacak sonuçların İngilizce akademik yazma derslerinin geliştirilmesine katkıda bulunacağını umuyorum.

Bana görüşme sürecinde söyleyeceklerinizin tümü gizlidir. Bu bilgileri araştırmacıların dışında herhangi bir kimsenin görmesi mümkün değildir. Ayrıca, araştırma sonuçlarını yazarken görüştüğüm bireylerin isimlerini kesinlikle rapora yansıtmayacağım.

Başlamadan önce bu söylediklerimle ilgili belirtmek istediğiniz bir düşünce ya da sormak istediğiniz bir soru var mı?

Görüşmeyi izin verirsiniz kaydetmek istiyorum. Bunun sizce bir sakıncası var mı?

Bu görüşmenin yaklaşık 20 dakika süreceğini tahmin ediyorum. İzin verirsiniz sorulara başlamak istiyorum.

1. Midterm öncesi görüşmeyi düşünürseniz, fikirlerinizde herhangi bir değişiklik oldu mu?

Sonda: Evet ise, ne gibi değişiklikler oldu?

2. Midterm sonrasında essay yazmayı öğrendik ve bu süreçte bazı metotlarla derslerimizi işledik. Örneğin essay pratiğini için istediğiniz herhangi bir konuda yapabildiğiniz. Sence bu nasıl bir deneyimdi?

Sonda: Belirli ve sabir bir konu olmaması ve özgür olmanız nasıl bir deneyimdi?

Böyle olmasaydı nasıl bir deneyim olurdu?

3. Yine midterm sonrası essay öğrendiğimiz haftanın devamındaki dersimizde, ‘Ben Essay yazmayı tam anlamadım’ diyenler bir grup olsun; ‘Ben anladım hazırım’ diyenler pratikle devam etsin.’ demiştik. Bu nasıl bir deneyimdi?

Sonda:

Böyle olmasaydı nasıl bir deneyim olurdu?

4. Hatırlarsanız siz essay hakkında hiçbir şey bilmeden size bir essay yazdırdım. Sonr bu essayleri size geri vermedim. Essay yazımını öğrendikten ve bir essay daha yazdıktan sonra ilk yazdığınız essayleri size geri verdim ve karşılaştırmanızı istedim. Bu nasıl bir deneyimdi? Neler hissettin?

Sonda:

İki essayin arasındaki fark size kendi gelişiminizle ilgili neler söyledi?

5. Farklılaştırılmış öğretimin sevdiğiniz ve sevmediğiniz yönleri neler oldu?

6. Belirtmek istediğiniz bir düşünce ya da sormak istediğiniz bir soru var mı?



APPENDIX E: STUDENT AFTER LESSON QUESTIONNAIRE

Tarih: 12.10.18

3. Hafta

Bugünkü derste:

- en çok ne yaparken keyif aldın? Neden?
/ / / / /
- en çok ne yaparken zorlandın? Neden? Bu zorluğun üstesinden gelmek için ne yaptın?
/ / / / /
- en çok hangi aktivitede öğrendiğini hissettin? Neden?
/ / / / /
- sana ve öğrenmene nasıl bir yardımım dokundu?
- öğrenmeni zorlaştıran herhangi bir şey oldu mu? Olduysa, lütfen ne olduğunu açıkla.
- Sonraki derslerimizde sana ve öğrenmene nasıl daha çok katkıda bulunabilirim?

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE RESEARCHER REFLECTION NOTES

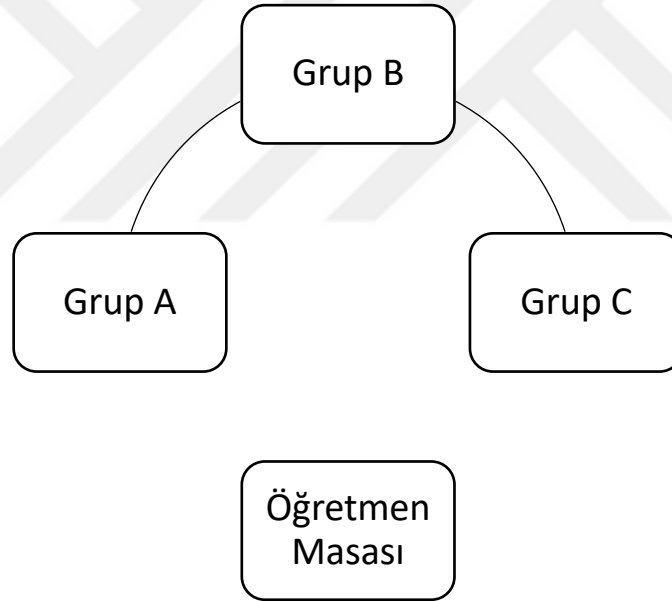
After Lesson Reflection 1

Week 3
Writing

12.10.2018 Friday

Objective: Paragraph

Derste 17 öğrenci vardı. Dersin başında öğrencilere writing error code kağıtlarını dağıttım ve feedback verirken kullandığım error code'ları açıkladım. Tek tek her bir kodu, anlamını ve örneğini analiz ettikten sonra öğrenciler bir hafta önce yazdıkları paragraflar ile single point rubriclerini aldılar. 5 dakika kadar paragraflarını ve feedbackleri inceleyen öğrenciler daha sonra rubriclerin üzerinde yazan harfe göre (A, B & C) 3 farklı gruba ayrıldı. Sınıfta şu şekilde oturdular:



Her grup daha önceden hazırlamış olduğum ve hem dilin kullanımı hem de egzersizlerin karmaşıklığı açısından kolaydan zora doğru (A-B-C) giden çalışma kitapçıklarıyla çalışmaya başladı. Onlar egzersizleri yaparken ben sürekli hem tüm grupları hem de tek tek öğrencileri gözlemledim, sorularına cevaplar verdim ve takıldıkları noktalarda yardımcı oldum.

İlk başta A ve B gruplarındaki bazı öğrenciler bu gruplamadan biraz rahatsız

olup, kağıtlarının çok kötü olduğunu ve o yüzden bu gruplarda olduklarını düşündüler. Ancak onlara bunun iyilik, kötülükten ziyade ihtiyaçları doğrultusunda yapılan bir gruplama olduğunu açıkladım. Ayrıca, paragraflarına istinaden 132abul132 olduğum single point rubric'lere bakmalarını ve orada kağıtlarının bazı maddelerinin “good” ya da “you got this” bandında olduğunu ancak bazı maddelerin “Almost there” bandında olduğunu söyledim.

Çalışmaya başladıktan sonra 132abul132ve tutumu olan öğrenciler de özellikle tam olarak takıldıkları noktaları açıkladığımda, daha olumlu oldular ve daha çok soru sormaya, sorduğum sorulara cevap vermeye ve doğru cevaplar vermeye başladılar. Ayrıca, gözlemlediğim kadarıyla oldukça on-task'lardı. Sadece A grubundan 3 öğrenciyi 1'er kere telefonla ilgilendikleri için uyardım ki onlar bile bütün taskları yaptılar.

C grubundaki öğrencilerden biri (Ebru) B grubunda olsa daha iyi olabilirdi. C grubu ona biraz fazla zorlayıcı geldi ilk etapta ama benim yardımım ile o da taskları yaptı.

Genel olarak derste tüm öğrenciler aktifti ve sıkıldıklarına dair bir işaret almadım. İsteyen tek isteyen arkadaşıyla çalıştı ve güzel fikir alışverişlerinde bulundular. Örneğin, ben bir egzersiz hakkında feedback verirken B grubundan bir öğrenci (Erce), grup arkadaşlarına “Demiştım size” dedi ve güldüler. Ayrıca C grubundan Dilara ve Aleyna ilk kez zorlandıklarını daha önceki İngilizce yazma derslerinde “Aman yapmış olalım” diye yaptıklarını ama bu seferki egzersizlerin onlara çok iyi geldiğini söylediler.

Dersin bende bıraktığı genel etki oldukça olumlu. Öğretmeni biraz yoran bir ders olsa da öğrencilerin olumlu tepkisi ve öğrenmiş olmaları her şeye değer. Üstelik bu tarz farklılaştırılmış materyallerin yazma dersi gibi kendini tekrar edebilen derslerde bir kere oluşturulup sonrasında tekrar tekrar kullanılabileceğini gördüm ki bu da öğretmenin işini diğer derslerde oldukça kolaylaştıracaktır.

APPENDIX G: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

Araştırmaya Gönüllü Katılım Formu

Bu araştırma, ODTÜ Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim programı Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Burcu Leblebicier tarafından Prof. Dr. Ali Yıldırım danışmanlığındaki yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Bu form 133abu araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

Çalışmanın Amacı Nedir?

Araştırmanın amacı, farklılaştırılmış öğretim yöntemi ile işlenen yazma derslerinin öğrencilerin akademik başarılarına etkisini belirlemektir.

Bize Nasıl Yardımcı Olmanızı İsteyeceğiz?

Araştırmaya katılmayı 133abul ederseniz, yazma derslerini CENG 243 dersini aldığınız bir dönem boyunca farklılaştırılmış öğretim yöntemi ile işleyeceksiniz. Bu yöntem ile yazma derslerinin içeriği, süreci ve/veya ürünü sizin ilgi alanlarınıza, öğrenme stillerinize ve/veya hazırbulunuşluk seviyelerinize göre farklılaştırılacaktır. Bu farklılaştırmayı yapabilmek için dönem içerisinde ve sonunda ilgi alanlarınızı, öğrenme stillerinizi ve/veya hazırbulunuşluk seviyelerinizi ve yöntem ile ilgili duygu ve düşüncelerinizi belirlemek amacıyla bazı kısa soruları cevaplamanız, görüşme veya değerlendirmeler (yazılı/sözlü) yapmanız istenilecektir. Sözlü görüşme ve değerlendirmeler daha sonra içerik analizi ile değerlendirilmek üzere kayıt altına alınacaktır.

Sizden Topladığımız Bilgileri Nasıl Kullanacağız?

Araştırmaya katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Çalışmada sizden kimlik veya kimlik belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir.

Cevaplarınız tamamıyla gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacı tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Katılımcılardan elde edilecek bilgiler toplu halde değerlendirilecek ve bilimsel yayımlarda kullanılacaktır.

Katılımınızla ilgili bilmeniz gerekenler:

Çalışma genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular veya uygulamalar içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz çalışmadan ayrılmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda araştırmacıya çalışmadan çıkmak istediğinizi söylemek yeterli olacaktır.

Araştırmayla ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz:

Araştırma sonunda, bu çalışmayla ilgili sorularınız cevaplanacaktır. Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için Eğitim Bilimleri bölümü öğretim üyelerinden Prof. Dr. Ali Yıldırım (E-posta: aliy@metu.edu.tr) ya da yüksek lisans öğrencisi Burcu Leblebicier (E-posta: e166790@metu.edu.tr) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.

(Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

İsim Soyad

Tarih

İmza

---/---/---

APPENDIX H: SAMPLE INTERVIEW CODING

Araştırmacı:

Bütün dönemi değerlendirmeni istiyorum nasıldı bu dersler, nasıl değerlendirirsin?

Öğrenci: Diğer writing derslerine göre daha aktifti. Daha etkileşimli ve iç içeydik. O samimiyeti yakaladık. Bir şeyleri yapabildiğini fark edince insan daha da üzerine gidiyor. Bunu fark etmemizi sağladı dersler. O samimiyeti yakalayınca mutlu olduk. Mutlu olunca da geleyim bu derse dedim. Önceden böyle olmuyordu. Kafada bir şablon belirliyorduk. Yazıyorduk bitti.

More active
interactive
Warmer
Increased attendance

Araştırmacı:

Derslerin samimi olmasında farklılaşmış eğitimin katkısı oldu mu?

Öğrenci: Tabi ki. Bundan önce tek başına bir şeyler üretmeye çalışıyordum. Tek düşüncem İngilizce dersini geçmekti. Şu an hani öğrenmek istedim. Benim açımdan çok iyiydi. Ben İngilizce bunu yapabilirim dedim. 3 yıl görmeme rağmen ilk defa bunu sağlayanın da farklılaştırılmış eğitim olduğunu düşünüyorum. Önceden bu ders benim önümde engel aşayım bitsindi. Hocalarımızda bu kafadaydı. Verinler rahat etsinler kafasındaydılar. Ama şu an o kafada değilim. Daha düzgün ve daha olgun cümleler kurabiliyorum. Çaba sarf ediyorum. Önceden yazayım doğruysa doğrudur yapayım geçeyim derdim.

Focus on improvement
on learning not grades
not on passing the classes

Araştırmacı:

Bu farklılaştırılmış öğrenme yöntemlerini kullandığımız yazma derslerini düşün. Çok etkili olduğunu düşündüğün ne var?

Öğrenci: Grup çalışmaları. Ben normalde tek çalışmayı seven biriyim ama writing İngilizce olduğu için grupça çalışarak bilmediğim bir şeyi yanımdakine sorarak etkileşim içinde oldum. Akılda da kalıyor. Önceden bir yere yazmadan aklımda kalmazdı. Anlamına baksam bile haftaya derste düşünürdüm neydi bu diye.

Group work
Increased communication
collaboration
learning retention

Araştırmacı:

Ortak bir grupta bir şeyleri paylaşmanın samimiyet yarattığını söyledin. Bunun nasıl bir katkısı oldu?

Öğrenci:

Hiçbir payda da buluşmadığımız insanlarla ortak yanlışlarımız sayesinde bir payda da buluştuk ve bu o insanla yakınlaşmamızı sağladı ve bir yanlış geçince bir samimiyet kurduk. Bu yönden benim için gayet etkiliydi. Ben yine o insanla konuşurum ama yanlışımı söyleyecek çok az kişi tanıyorum. Ama önceden 5 kişiyi tanıyor 15 kişi tanımiyorsun. Bu yüzden bir şey söylesem gülerler mi elalem ne der kaygısı oluyordu. Bu metotla öğrenme kaygısı azalıyordu. Merak uyandırıyor. Ben bir şey yapayım ve doğru olduğuna inanayım olarak düşünüyorum. Bazen yanlış olsa da yazıyordum. Çünkü diyordum ki bundan feedback alacağım ve doğrusunu öğreneceğim.

Common mistakes/needs →
developed friendships

Less anxiety
More curiosity

Helpful feedback

Araştırmacı:

Grup çalışmalarını yanınızda oluyordum ve feedback veriyordum bu konuda ne düşünüyorsunuz?

Öğrenci: En etkili feedbackleriniz oluyordu zaten. Yanlış hemen fark edip, “Hah!” deyip hemen düzelterek tekrar gösteriyorduk. Akılda kalıcı şekilde oluyordu. Biz daha önce feedback almadık. Aldıysak bile çok nadir. Ama şimdi bir şey yazıp farklı birinin görmesi...Akılda kalıcı oluyor.

Feedback → most effective
Increased learning
retention

Araştırmacı:

İhtiyaçlarınıza göre aldığınız feedbackler değişti. Bunun hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?

Öğrenci: Değer gördüğümüzü gördük. Bunun nedeni, benim feedbackimle en yakın arkadaşımın bambaşkaydı. Benim için çok zor olan şeyin onun için kolay olduğunu fark ettik. Zaten gruplar da buna göre ayrıldığı için beraber altından kalkmaya çalıştık. Beraberlik oldu. Tek yaparken canım sıkılsa bile grupla sıkılmadı. Hem eğlenip hem de akılda kalmasını sağlıyordu.

Feeling valued

Group work
Collaboration

Having fun and sense of learning
Increased learning retention

Araştırmacı:

Essay yazarken sizi konu seçmede özgür bıraktım. Onun hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz ?

Öğrenci:

Kendi istediğin, sevdiğin konuda bir şey yazma daha iyi.

Kendi sevdiğim konu olunca açıklayıcı cümleler kurdum. interest based topic → better

Yanlış bile olsa doğrusunu öğreniyorsun.

Araştırmacı: Siz essay öğrenmeden önce size bir essay yazdırdım. Aldım ve geri verdim. Essay yazmasını öğrendik. Sonra son hafta size ilk yazdıklarınızı geri verdim. İlk yazdığın essayi aldığında ne hissettin? Ne düşündün?

Öğrenci: Dedim ki essay zor bir şey

değilmiş. Sadece düzen. Yapabildiğimi

hissettim. Kendimi daha üstünü

yazmaya zorladım. İlk essayimde aklıma

ne geldiyse onu yazmışım.

Okuduğumda cümlelerin yerini

değiştirmem gerektiğini fark ettim.

Increased self-efficacy

self-correction

sense of accomplishment

Araştırmacı: Bu sana ne gösterdi gelişiminle alakalı?

Öğrenci: Burası olmamış şurası yanlış

diyebiliyorum artık. Daha doğru cümleler

seçebilirim. Bir insanın kendisinin

de hata bulması çok zordur. Ama ben

buluyorum artık. Artık daha iyi göre

biliyorum.

Increased self-correction

self-evaluation

Araştırmacı: Dönem bitti şöyle bir genel düşündüğünde dersleri senin İngilizce'ye bakiş açını değiştirdi mi? Nasıl?

Öğrenci: Önceden sadece İngilizce bir

bölümde okuyorum bunu vermem

gerek diye düşünüyordum.

Hayatımın her yerinde İngilizce

olacak biliyorum ama üstüne

gidebileceğim ve seveceğim bir

ortam yoktu. İlk önce o oluştu. Ve

İngilizce hayatımda olması gerek.

Yurtdışına gitmek istiyorum.

Konuşmak istiyorum. İngilizce

düşünemiyordum. Bunu nasıl

yapacağımı gördüm. Farklı bir

kahbın dışına çıkabildim. Ben

beğendim bu dersi ilk defa mutlu

ayrıldım. Diğerlerinde D alayım

geçeyim mantığındaydı. Şimdi ise iyi

ya böyle devam ederse yurtdışına

positive attitude

increased sense of learning

self-efficacy

gidebilirim diyorum. Kendimi
tamamen aşmış olurum.
Şu an bir seviyedeyim ama istediğim
seviye değil.
O seviyeye gelebileceğimi derste
anladım.

Araştırmacı: Son olarak eklemek, söylemek istediğin bir şey var mı?

Öğrenci:

Bence tüm İngilizce dersleri böyle olmalı. DI should continue
Hazırlık bile.

Araştırmacı: Teşekkür ediyorum.



APPENDIX I: SAMPLE INTERVIEW CODING BOOK

Problems Regarding Academic Writing
1. Grammar usage problems 2. Vocabulary usage problems 3. Not getting (enough) feedback 4. One type of instruction 5. The same expectations for all 8. Feeling not improved/challenged 9. Feeling lost and behind 10. Feeling obliged 11. Having low motivation 13. Feeling self-sacrificing 15. Feeling misunderstood by teachers and classmates

APPENDIX J: SAMPLE AFTER LESSON QUESTIONNAIRE CODING

Bugünkü derste:

S13

- en çok ne yaparken keyif aldın? Neden?

Aleyna ile beyin fırtınası yaparken keyif aldım. Onunla konuyu tartışıp en iyisini? yapmaya çalıştık çünkü,
Beyin fırtınası grup çalışması

- en çok ne yaparken zorlandın? Neden? Bu zorluğun üstesinden gelmek için ne yaptın?

Aktiviteleri düşünürken zorlandım. Üstesinden gelmek için arkadaşım ile tartıştım.
Grup çalışması, ilettim

- en çok hangi aktivitede öğrendiğini hissettin? Neden?

En çok topic sentence aktivitesini yaparken öğrendiğimi hissettim çünkü arkadaşım ile düşündük ve sürekli en iyisini bulmaya ve yazmaya çalıştık.
topic sentence

- sana ve öğrenmene nasıl bir yardımın dokundu?

Kendimi yazımda daha da geliştirebileceğimi gördüm.

- öğrenmeni zorlaştıran herhangi bir şey oldu mu? Olduysa, lütfen ne olduğunu açıkla.

Olmadı,

Daha zorlayıcı çalışmalar

- Sonraki derslerimizde sana ve öğrenmene nasıl daha çok katkıda bulunabilirim?

Yine grup çalışmaları ve beni zorlayacak çalışmalar ile.

APPENDIX K: SAMPLE AFTER LESSON QUESTIONNAIRE CODING BOOK

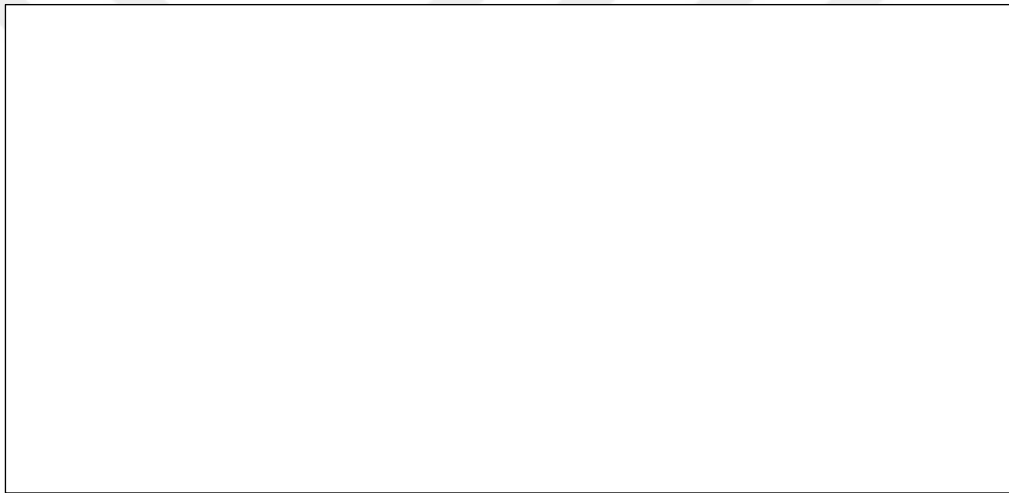
Date: 12.10.2018 Week 3	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
Question	Answer	Answer	Answer	Answer	Answer
1. Which activity did you enjoy the most? Why?	Group Work collaboration	Recognizing mistakes Feedback	x	Was able to do the task. increased confidence	collaboration
2. Which activity was the most challenging? Why? How did you overcome it?	Vocab and grammar	x	x	Group Work feedback	Learning has taken place
3. During which activity did you feel that you learnt? Why?	x	x	Recognizing mistakes Feedback	Was able to do the task. increased confidence	x
4. How did I help you and your learning?	Feedback	Feedback	Feedback	Feedback Easy communication	Feedback Recognizing mistakes
5. Has there been anything hindering your learning? If so, please explain.	no	no	no	no	no
6. How can I help you more in the following lessons?	DI should continue	DI should continue	DI should continue	DI should continue	A repeat lesson DI should continue

APPENDIX L: PARAGRAPH WRITING PRE-ASSESSMENT

Paragraph Writing Pre-Assessment

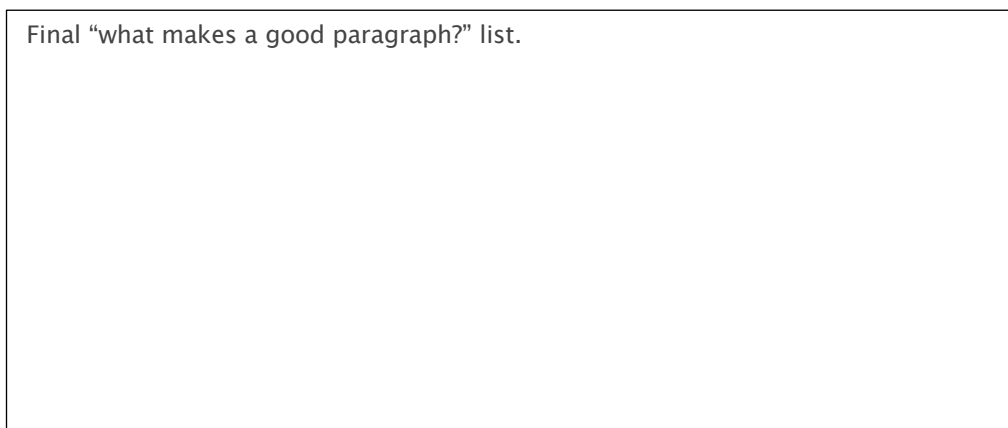
Name: _____ Date: _____

1. List all the things that make a “good” paragraph.



2. In your groups share your list. Tick next to the same items and discuss the different items. As a group, create a final “what makes a good paragraph?” list.

Final “what makes a good paragraph?” list.



Write a paragraph (around 120 words) on one of the questions below.

- What is your favorite YouTube channel? Explain why.
- Do you think football players gain too much money? Why?
- Do you agree with the following statement: “A good singer should be a role model for the society”? Why?
- Do you agree with the following statement: “Students should not be given homework”? Why?

APPENDIX M: SAMPLE STUDENT PREASSESSMENT PARAGRAPHS

Student 1:

My favorite computer game's PlayerUnknown Battlegrounds. PUBG is an online war game and online games. This game goes through a map. The playground is constantly shrinking and players fight; the end. The game is played as solo, two people and four people. I like computers games in my children. RW

Student 2:

Baris Ören is my favorite YouTube channel and in my free time, I can watch his videos for hours. There are some reasonable points to explain why I am addicted to him so much. Firstly, we have common interests with him. His videos are about art, design, technology, literature and cinema. Secondly, he is a very successful storyteller. I can't see anything wrong with his speaking, mimics and gestures. Also, he is very creative and intelligent. He is an award winner and director at the creative agency he founded. On the other hand, he is a good father. Last year he read 10.000 books with his little son. To sum up, I think everyone can find something interesting in his channel because he is more successful than others.

APPENDIX N: DIFFERENTIATED MATERIALS ON PARAGRAPH WRITING

Group A

Choosing a Topic Sentence

Instruction: Work alone or with a partner. Read each paragraph and the three sentences that follow it. Choose the best topic sentence for the paragraph and write it on the line.

PARAGRAPH 1

..... He was the captain of two sports teams at our high school. He was our best wrestler and our best tennis player. He is also a good swimmer and a fast runner. He runs every day to stay in shape. Sometimes Kai and I play ping pong together. Kai usually wins. He is good at ping pong too.

- a. Kai is a great friend.
- b. My friend Kai and I like sports.
- c. My friend Kai is good at sports.

PARAGRAPH 2

..... For example, butterflies called Painted Ladies fly all the way from Europe to Africa. They also fly from Australia to New Zealand. Monarch butterflies fly from Canada to Mexico. This trip can be 3,000 miles long. It is amazing how far some butterflies can fly.

- a. Butterflies are beautiful.
- b. Some butterflies are great travelers.
- c. Butterflies live in many parts of the world.

Adapted from Fundamentals of Academic Writing (p. 6-8), by L. Butler, 2007, White Plains, NY: Pearson Education Copyright 2007 by Pearson Education.

Group B

Choosing a Topic Sentence

Instruction: Read the paragraphs. Circle the letter of the best topic sentence for each one and write it on the line.

PARAGRAPH 1

Living in a foreign country has a number of benefits. First, living in a foreign country helps you learn another language faster than studying it at school. Second, you can learn directly about the history, geography, and culture of a country. Third, you become especially knowledgeable about different cultures and different ways of living. Fourth, living in a foreign country makes you appreciate your own country more.

- a. Living in foreign country helps you learn.
- b. Everyone should live in a foreign country for a while.
- c. Living in a foreign country has a number of benefits.

PARAGRAPH 2

_____. Some colleges and universities in the United States are private. Private colleges and universities do not get money from taxes, so they are usually more expensive. Other colleges and universities are public; that is, the citizens of each state pay some of the costs through their taxes. As a result, public colleges are cheaper for students to attend. No matter which type of college you attend—public or private—you can get a good education.

- a. There are two main types of colleges and universities in the United States.
- b. Public colleges and universities get money from taxes.
- c. There are many colleges and universities in the United States.

Adapted from First Steps in Academic Writing (p. 41), by A. Hogue, 2008, White Plains, NY: Pearson Education Copyright 2008 by Pearson Education

Group C

Writing Topic Sentences

Instruction: Read each paragraph. Then write a good topic sentence for it. Be sure to end each topic sentence with correct punctuation.

PARAGRAPH 1

Young people tend to buy them because they want to look “cool” to their friends. It is much easier for young person to impress other people with a fast sports car than with your father’s minivan. Wealthy people, however, enjoy sports cars because they want to show others that they have status in their community. I have never seen a doctor or lawyer driving around in an old station wagon. Finally, sports cars appeal to adventurers. Adventurers are people who like to take risks on the road. Whatever the reasons, I think sports cars are here to stay.

PARAGRAPH 2

One is size. Most modern reptiles are small. Dinosaurs were much, much larger than any reptile that we have on Earth today. Second, the legs of most reptiles today are on the sides of their body. However, dinosaurs’ legs were on the bottom of their body. In this way, dinosaurs could stand up on their back legs. Third, today’s reptiles use the environment to control their body temperature. In contrast, dinosaurs controlled their own body temperature. They did not depend on their surroundings. While reptiles and dinosaurs may seem very similar, they are actually quite different.

APPENDIX O: ESSAY WRITING PREASSESSMENT TASKS

O.1 Concept Check Task

ESSAY WRITING

Read the text below and write the most suitable word in the blanks.

introduction good organization longer
divide complex conclusion topic

An essay is a piece of writing several paragraphs long. It is about one _____(1), just like a paragraph. However, because the topic of an essay is too _____(2) to discuss in one paragraph, you need to _____(3) it into several paragraphs, one for each major point. Then you need to link the paragraphs together by adding a(n) _____(4) and a(n) _____(5).

Writing an essay is no more difficult than writing a paragraph. It's just an essay is _____(6). The principles of _____(7) are the same for both, so if you can write a _____(8) paragraph, you can write a good essay.

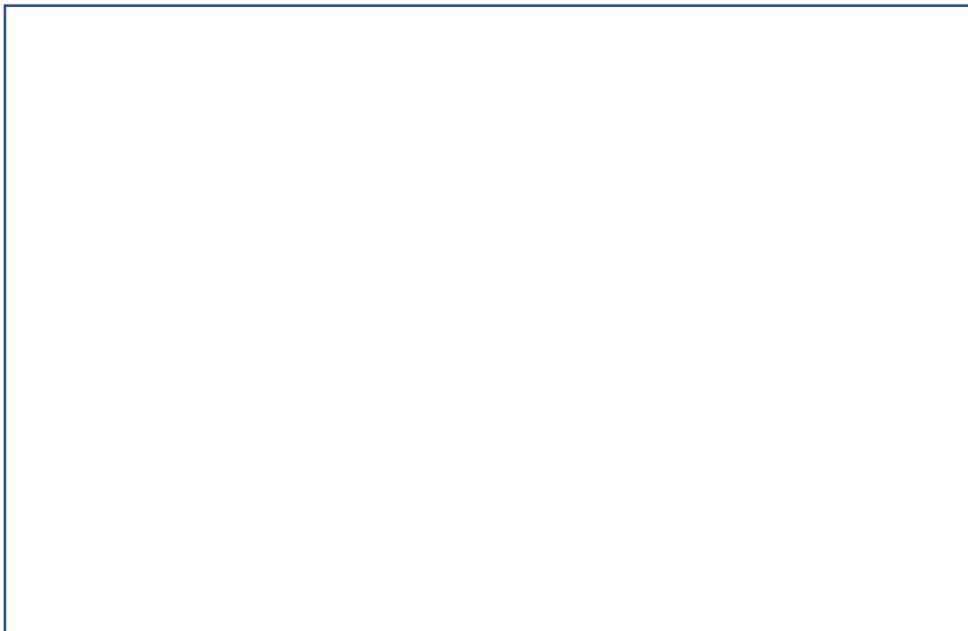
O.2 Diagnostic Essay Task

Essay Writing Preassessment

Name: _____ Date: _____

Write an essay (around 250 words) on one of the questions below.

- What is your favorite book or movie, and why should people read or watch it?
- Would you rather be very beautiful/handsome or very smart? Why? Explain.
- Imagine that you can be friends with anyone in the world. Who would you be friends with? Why?
- What are the most important subjects that students should study in college to prepare them for the future? Why?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of social media? Why?



APPENDIX P: SAMPLE BRAINSTORMING TASKS

Pre-Writing

A. Generating Ideas

I. Brainstorming Techniques

1. Listing
2. Freewriting
3. Mapping

1. Listing

Instruction: Write single words, phrases or sentences that are connected to your topic. Look at the list a student made when brainstorming ideas to write about her topic. “What should I study at university?”

- History—learning about the past
- Maths (too difficult, not, interesting?)
- What job do I want later?
- English for work? Travel?
- Writing?
- Science—biology, chemistry
- I don’t like physical
- Journalism
- I like reading—literature?
- Art—drawing, painting, sculpture
- Photography?
- Studying / homework
- Friends / social life

Task 1: Work alone, with a partner or a small group. Choose one of the topics below and list as many ideas as you can in 5 minutes.

1. Should students be required to take English classes?
2. Should students be able to grade their teachers?
3. Why do people like to watch rich people on TV and in the movies?
4. Can video games be educational?
5. Do violent video games make people more violent in real life?
6. What local problems do you think your mayor should try to solve?

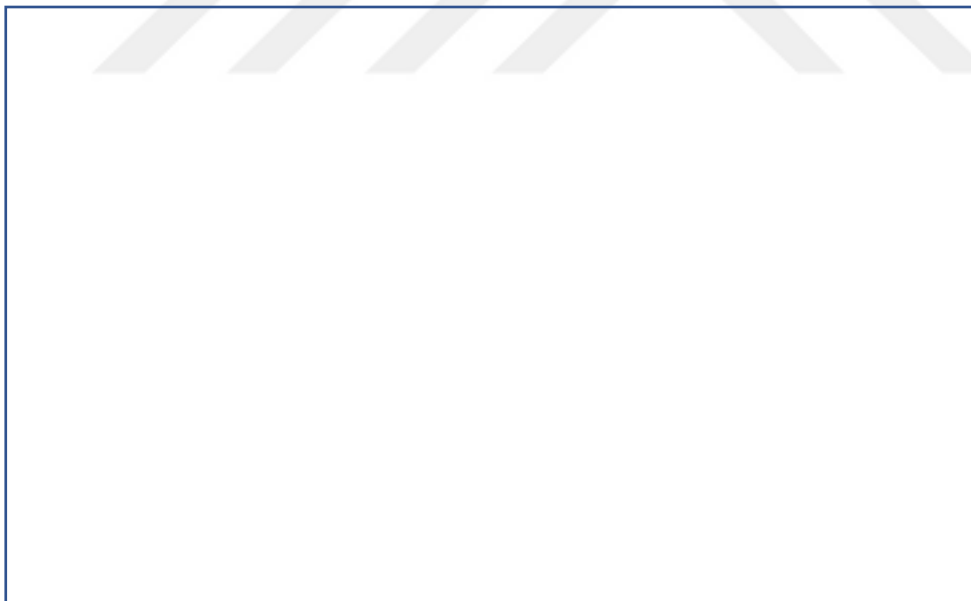
2. Freewriting

When you free write, you write whatever comes into your head about your topic, without stopping. Most freewriting exercises are short—just five or ten minutes. Freewriting helps you practice fluency (writing quickly and easily). When you freewrite, you do not need to worry about accuracy (having correct grammar and spelling). Don't check your dictionary when freewriting. Don't stop if you make a mistake. Just keep writing!

Here is an example of student's freewriting:

There are too so many subjects to study at university; it is difficult to choose one. I've always had good marks in maths, but I don't like it very much. I don't like physical physics or any science very much. Writing---I've always liked writing. Would journalism be a good course to take? Newspapers have pictures, too, so maybe photography would be good. I'm maybe definitely looking forward to meeting new friends at university. And what about reading? Reading is a part of any course, but literature includes a lot of reading and it probably includes a lot of writing, too.

Task 2: Choose another topic in Task 1 on page 1 and practice freewriting for 5 minutes. Don't forget: Do not stop, erase or go back. Just write as much as you can.

A large empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for the student to practice freewriting. It occupies the lower half of the page.

Adapted from Academic Writing from Paragraph to Essay (p. 6-8), by D. E. Zemach and L. A. Rumisek, 2005, Oxford: Macmillan Copyright 2005 by Macmillan.

APPENDIX R: SAMPLE THESIS STATEMENT WRITING TASKS

R.1 Thesis statement writing task for group A

Task 1: Which is the best thesis statement for the following topic?

1. Research question: How does junk food affect healthy?

Focus of the research question: Effects

Answer to the research question (Sub-topics): Poor nutrition

Weight gain

Inability to concentrate

A: Eating junk food results in poor nutrition, weight gain, and inability to concentrate.

B: Junk food and health food are different in several ways.

C: Every culture has its own junk food.

Task 2: Write the thesis statement for each of the topics below:

Topic 1: Education is important to have.

Supports: 1. It could enable one to get a better paying job.

2. It makes a person a more interesting individual.

3. It makes a person a more informed citizen.

Thesis Statement:

Topic 2: Bowling is a sport for everyone.

Supports: 1. It is not limited to any age group.

2. It can be played at any time.

3. It does not require any expensive equipment.

Thesis Statement:

Topic 3: Young children require a lot of care.

Supports: 1. You must provide for their physical needs.

2. You must provide for their emotional needs.

3. You must help them grow mentally.

Thesis Statement:

R.2 Thesis statement writing task for group B

Task 1: Choose the best thesis statement in the following pairs.

A: I want to show how cardiology has changed in the last 20 years.

B: The advances in cardiology over the last 20 years significantly impacted the field of medicine.

A: People are living longer than ever due to better diets, a cleaner environment, and improved medical care.

B: The average person can now expect to live longer.

A: Learning new skills can be difficult and frustrating.

B: Learning to write takes work, patience, and determination.

A: Although universities offer courses in many European languages, many professors and students see the need to offer Arabic, Chinese, and Hindi as well.

B: Many professors and students believe there is a need for university courses in Arabic, Chinese, and Hindi.

A: In order to create a successful commercial, it is important to consider the target audience, placement, and media.

B: Nike's "Just do it" advertising campaign was created in 1998.

Task 2: Write the thesis statement for each of the topics below.

Topic 1: Young children require a lot of care.

Supports: 1.
2.
3.

Thesis Statement:

Topic 2: Driving a car is an important responsibility.

Supports:

1.
2.
3.

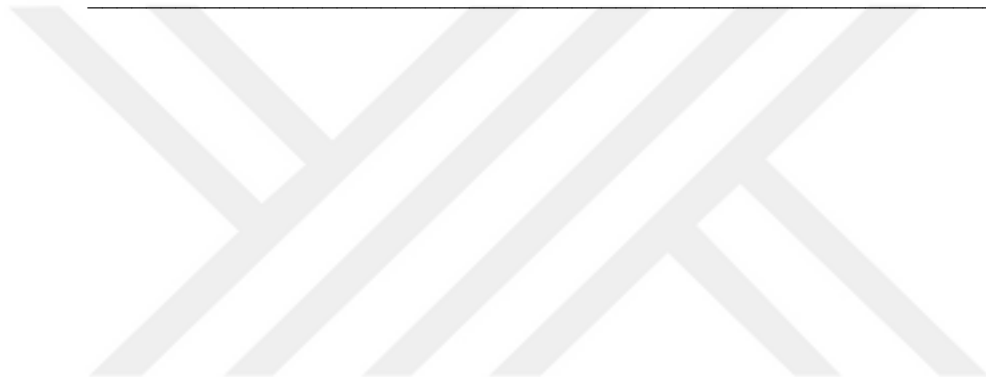
Thesis Statement:

Topic 3: Your school has some extra money to spend. It could be spent on a computer lab, new sports equipment, a cafeteria, or something of your choice. Write about what you would choose and why.

Supports:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Thesis Statement:



Adapted from Thesis Statement Worksheet [PDF file], by University of Ontario (n.d).
Retrieved from <https://shared.uoit.ca/shared/departments/student-life/student-learning-centre/tip-sheets/eal-tip-sheets/thesis-statement-uoit-slc.pdf>

R.3. Thesis statement writing task for group C

Task 1: Write the thesis statement for each of the prompts below.

Writing Prompt: Educators often discuss whether high school sports have a positive influence on students. Some educators think high school sports do have a positive influence because the lessons learned from athletic competition add to the lessons learned in the classroom. Other educators think high school sports do not have a positive influence because the emphasis on sports often overshadows student achievement in other areas. In your opinion, do high school sports have a positive influence on students?		
The topic	What you believe	3 supports
Thesis:		

Writing Prompt: The state of Illinois has been locked in a debate for several years as to whether the driving age should be raised from 16 to 18. Some people feel that 16-year-olds lack the responsibility and maturity to handle the significant privilege of driving. Others argue that 16-year-olds use their licenses for much more than social events. In your opinion, should the driving age be raised from 16 to 18?		
The topic	What you believe	3 supports
Thesis:		

Writing Prompt: Some people believe that university students should be required to attend classes. Others believe that going to classes should be optional for students. Which point of view do you agree with? Use specific reasons and details to explain your answer.		
The topic	What you believe	3 supports
Thesis:		

Adapted from Thesis Statements [PDF file] (n.d). Retrieved from https://5y1.org/info/writing-prompt-worksheet-pdf_5_72e434.htm

APPENDIX S: SAMPLE ESSAY OUTLINING TASKS

S.1. Essay outlining task for group A

Task: Analyze the essay below and fill in the outline on page 2.

THE BEST PET TO HAVE

"A dog is man's best friend." This saying has some truth, but dogs are not people's only animal friend. For many people, a cat is their best friend. Cats are excellent house pets because they are good friends, civilized members of the household, and easy to care for.

To begin with, people like cats as they are friendly, playful and can be trained. Many cats are friendly. They usually snuggle up and ask to be petted or scratched under the chin. If they are not feeling friendly, cats are generally quite playful. They love playing with balls, feathers, or anything hanging from a string. Also, just like with dogs, cats can be trained to avoid unwanted behavior or perform tricks by using rewards and punishments,

In addition to being a good friend, cats are civilized animals since they are silent. Unlike dogs, cats do not bark or make other loud noises. Most cats don't even meow very often. They are generally very quiet. Cats also don't often have "accidents." Mother cats train their kittens to use the litter box, and most cats use it successfully. Even stray cats usually understand how to use a litter box when they see the box and use it regularly.

Lastly, one of the most attractive features of cats is their ease of care. Cats do not have to be walked. They get plenty of exercise in the house, and they use the litter box. Cleaning a litter box is quick and easy. Cats also take care of their own grooming. Bathing a cat is almost never necessary because cats clean

themselves. In addition, cats can be left home alone for a few hours. Unlike some pets, most cats do not destroy the furnishings at home. They are happy to be alone until their owners return.

To conclude, in many ways, cats are the ideal house pet because they make good friends, are civilized and low maintenance. People who have a small living space or less time for pet care should appreciate these characteristics of cats.

Adapted from Five Paragraph Essay [PDF file] (n.d). Retrieved from https://www.fwcs.k12.in.us/images/schools/Wayne/useruploads/5_paragraph_essay.pdf

S.2. Essay outlining task for group B

Task: Analyze the essay below and fill in the outline on page 2.

THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IN OUR AGE

Stress is one of the biggest and most important problems of this age because it usually affects our life in a negative way. In the past people had an easy life and did not feel stress so much, but today life is getting harder day by day because of increasing stress and the effects of stress are felt in several areas of life. In my opinion, stress has an impact on three areas of people's life: their psychology, work life and health.

Firstly, people who are stressed may have psychological problems. To start with, these people are generally pessimistic, and they usually see the negative sides of events. This is the reason why they are unhappy. Also, if a person is stressed, they want to be alone. It is difficult to have friends for them. Besides, extreme stress threatens people's life. For example, research suggests that stressed people tend to commit suicide more than other people.

Secondly, being stressed affects people's work life negatively. Stress generally makes people feel so tense. Stressed people might be offensive to their colleagues so they can hurt their feeling unintentionally. Moreover, stressed people cannot concentrate on anything. They can be bored with everything easily and it affects their success in their jobs. Furthermore, those who are stressed cannot make right decisions at work. When people are under stress, they cannot consider a point effectively, decide in hurry and make mistakes in their jobs.

Lastly, stress affects people's health. In fact, stress is the main reason of many diseases. It can cause health problems such as aches and heart attacks. Also, stress can cause physical problems like hair loss, feeling tired and losing

or gaining weight. In addition, it can even damage the brain by causing the loss of some cells. According to scientists, this can occur in the hippocampus part which collects our memories in our brain. This is the cause of the beginning of Alzheimer disease.

As you can see, stress is the cause of malfunction for humans in their lives and this condition affects the psychology, work life and health of people. I strongly believe being stressed is very dangerous and it brings us only unhappiness. We should do our best to avoid it.

Adapted from Sample Essay [PDF file] (n.d). Retrieved from <https://erasmus.yasar.edu.tr/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/ERASMUS-LANGUAGE-EXAM-Writing-Sample-Essay.pdf>

S.3. Essay outlining task for group C

Task: Analyze the essay below and fill in the outline on page 2.

Body Language

Communicating effectively in a new country and in a new tongue requires more than just learning the language. Nonverbal communication, including body language, is equally important. A person's facial expressions, bodily gestures, and physical attitude transmit powerful messages that go beyond words. Therefore, anyone who intends to live, work, or study in another country should learn the body language of that culture, including the acceptable ways to use the face, gesture with the body, and make physical contact.

First, let's consider how people use the human face to communicate. Research shows that people everywhere reveal basic emotions, such as happiness, sadness, excitement, and confusion, through facial expressions. However, the amount of emotion people are comfortable showing varies from place to place. Take, for example, the extremely expressive faces of people in Italy and Spain. They are in constant motion and reveal feeling as much or as quickly. Eye contact is a big part of facial expression, too. In United States, speakers use their eyes to connect with others; People will look directly into a speaker's eyes to show interest. However, if listeners stare at speaker with unblinking eyes, this can mean that they are bored, distracted, angry, or defensive. In some Latin American cultures, looking down instead of important of making direct eye contact is a show of respect.

The gestures that people make with their heads, shoulders, arms, and hands are another important means of communicating. In most—but not all—countries, shaking the head from side to side means “No” and nodding the head up and down means “Yes” In Bulgaria, the reverse is true. Nodding means “No” and shaking the head from left to right means “Yes.” A shrug, with the shoulders raised and the hands extended with the palms up, has various meaning in Western cultures. It often shows uncertainty but can also mean “I’m not interested.” In many cultures, the thumbs up

gesture mean acceptance and approval. However, in places such as Iran and Iraq, the thumbs up are an insult. Similarly, in North America and many European countries, raising the hand with the thumb and index finger together so that they form the letter O means “everything is OK.” However, in France and Belgium, the gesture means “zero” or “worthless.” In Japan, the same gesture symbolizes money, and in Russian, Brazil, and Turkey, it is an insult. Clearly, typical gestures that people use every day can cause major misunderstandings depending on where and how they are used.

In addition to facial expressions and gestures, physical contact or the lack of it, is a key aspect of body language. Interestingly, people from the United States are thought of as open and friendly, but their body language may give the opposite message. Americans often seem cold and remote to people from other cultures because they prefer to keep their distance. They like to have approximately two to three feet of personal space around them. When individuals from other countries come too close, Americans tend to step back until they have enough distance to feel comfortable again. In addition, Americans will briefly shake and then release the right hand of a man or woman that they are meeting for the first time. They rarely kiss someone in public unless they have a close relationship with the person. In addition, unless they are romantically involved, Americans rarely hold hands in public. A lack of awareness about the rules of physical contact can give the wrong impression of Americans and have a negative effect on cross-cultural communication.

In short, body language is an important form of communication that varies from place to place. When people travel, they should not presume that the rules for body language in their home culture apply everywhere else. In fact, just as people focus their attention on grammar and vocabulary to master a language, they should devote time and energy to learning the body language of a new country or culture

S.4. Essay Outlining Chart

ESSAY OUTLINE
Introduction:
Thesis Statement:
Body Paragraph 1
Topic Sentence:
Supporting Idea 1:
Details/Examples
Supporting Idea 2:
Details/Examples
Supporting Idea 3:
Details/Examples
Body Paragraph 2
Topic Sentence:
Supporting Idea 1:
Details/Examples
Supporting Idea 2:
Details/Examples
Supporting Idea 3:
Details/Examples
Body Paragraph 3
Topic Sentence:
Supporting Idea 1:
Details/Examples
Supporting Idea 2:
Details/Examples
Supporting Idea 3:
Details/Examples
Conclusion:

APPENDIX T: SAMPLE STUDENT BOOK PAGES

START

In life, we all have moments where we just turn around and say; what was that? Or we have moments that we turn around to regret at that time. But after some time comes and goes, those regrets and reactions become memories, stories for us to look back and laugh at. We laugh at the memory for a couple of minutes and we forget about it and carry on, with life. And no, I'm not a fifty-year-old person that loves to play golf, in fact I don't know life and what will happen from now on. What I can assure you is that I probably know more about life than you. And I can imagine your confused faces. First, I'm saying that I don't know anything about life but then I'm assuring you that I know about life, more than you do, and I'm aware that it doesn't make any sense at all. And that is life, isn't it? Does it have to make a sense? There are good people and bad people. We are born, and we are dead. No one is above anyone, we all taste the same sky, and we all feel the same sun. We all pray to upwards to the sky, we all go six feet down to the same place when we die. We are all the same, just different by our preferences and appearances. It's as easy and as simple as that. There is a life cycle going on which differs from life to life. That's where something called a "Turning Point" comes in. It's a very different situation. Your life changes around. It turns and you don't have a choice, you accept it. Somehow, we all have that too. I'm only nineteen and this is where my life turned upside down.

TERRORISM

Just before I start with the serious and horrifying stuff, there is a word I'd like to share with you:

TERRORISM

Now, you all heard it from the news or the politicians trying to "end" it. The World is against it.

When you Google the definition you get something like this;

Terrorism: The unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims.

If I have to be honest, this definition is a lie. You might be thinking that I am probably crazy because Google knows everything right? I'm sorry but this is my definition:

TERRORISM: A political game. Act of ruining people's life's, caused by the conflict between politicians that want more and more and act as if humans are their little puppets that they can play around with and kill whenever, wherever, however they want. Mostly using religions to separate people easily and more effectively.

But I feel like you are not convinced enough so I'd like to use Peter Joseph's words to describe it more;

“The true terrorists of our world do not meet at the dock at midnight, or scream “Allah Akbar” before some violent action. The true terrorists of our World wear 5000-dollar suits and work in the highest positions of finance, government and business.”

I hope that this can make you think about some stuff that you talk about, without knowledge. I am sure most people think that the majority of the terrorists are Muslims blah blah blah...believe me terrorists come in all shape, size and religions. For some reason, Muslims are linked with them where in reality, all religions want peace and love. So that makes a point, terrorists don't have a religion! Open your eyes people! Terrorists are nor human nor animals. They are nothing. They are pieces of nothing, trying to damage the bond we have with each other as humans. We are letting them.

We should stick together more. From my experience, I see that our religions are important for us in our lives. Terrorism has been using this strategy for years, using religion against people, making people believe that it is somehow connected with a religion, and that separates people. People become enemies, people hate each other, people start to tell on each other when all we have to do is protect and be there for each other.

Sadly, we aren't doing this but hopefully we will.

Another unfortunate thing about terrorism is, it is spreading everywhere. It could be very close to you or it could be very far from you. We never know when it is coming. As I was thinking about writing for years, for a reason being scared to speak up, a lot of devastating events in the world happened such as street bombings, concert bombings, school shootings and many many more that we cope with. All these hit me really hard, seeing people and young people suffer because I know how it feels. So finally, I gained my courage to write what I know, what I did and how I coped because if I keep this to myself, I'd be a selfish person. I am better than that. I hope you enjoy reading and I hope that I can be there for you and help you.

11/09/11

Every year, even if it has been eight whole years, I find myself crying at night on 11/09/11. I can't help it and I don't want to hide it too. I cry because I remember. Over many years I was ashamed of the whole situation, thinking it was completely insane but it's nothing to be ashamed of.

APPENDIX U: TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

1. Farklılaştırılmış ğretim Yntemi, Alanyazın, Bu alışmanın nemi, Amacı ve Araştırma Soruları

1,75 milyar insanın konuştuęu bir dil olan İngilizce (British Council, 2013) dnyanın her yerinde ve hayatın her alanında byk nem tařıtmaktadır. İngilizceyi iyi biliyor olmak farklı temel becerilerin gelişimini gerektirir. Gallagher'a (2006) gre bu becerilerden biri olan yazma zor bir beceridir. Ayrıca, Trkiye ve dnyada yapılan bazı arařtırmalar yazmanın acil mdahale gerektiren az gelişmiş bir beceri olduęunu (Bartlett, 2003; Defazio, Jones, Tennant & Hook, 2010; Odell and Swersey, 2003) ve bireylerin bu beceriyi etkin bir şekilde uygulayamadıklarını (Tiryaki, 2012; Tok ve nl, 2013; Topuzkanamış, 2014) gstermektedir. Ayrıca, Stein, Dixon ve Isaacson (1994) çoęu yazma becerisi yetersizliklerinin, bu becerinin ğretimine olduka az zaman ayrılmasından ya da ğrenme deneyimlerinin ğrencilerin ihtiyaları doęrultusunda tasarlanmamasından kaynaklandığını ne srmektedir. Bu sebeple, bu eylem arařtırmasının temel amacı, ğrencilerin eřitli farklılıklarını gz nnde bulunduran bir yntem olan farklılaştırılmış ğretim yntemi ile işlenen İngilizce yazma derslerinin bu becerinin geliştirilmesinde etkili olup olmadığını ve ğrencilerin bu ynteme ilişkin algılarını arařtırmaktır.

Farklılaştırılmış ğretimin nc isimlerinden Carol A. Tomlinson'a (2014) gre ğrenciler hazırbulunuřluk seviyeleri, kiřisel ilgileri ve dnyayı deneyimleme ve yorumlama tercihleri aısından eřitlilik gsterirler. Bu nedenle bu ğretimin uygulandıęı sınıflarda ğretmenler, etkili ğrenmenin gerekleşmesi iin ğretim yntemlerini ğrenci ihtiyaları doęrultusunda farklılaştırırlar. Bu farklılaştırma ierik, sre ve/veya rn temelli olabilir (Tomlinson ve Parrish, 2013) ve ğrencilerin hazırbulunuřluk seviyeleri, ilgileri ve ğrenme profilleri doęrultusunda gerekleştirilebilir (Tomlinson, 2001).

Hazırbulunuşluk, öğrencilerin bilgi ve becerileri ile yapmaları beklenen görevler arasındaki eşleşmeye işaret eder. Tomlinson ve Imbeau'nun (2010) da tanımladığı gibi hazırbulunuşluk “bir öğrencinin belirli bir bilgi, kavrayış ve beceriye olan o anki yakınlığıdır” (p. 16). Verilen görev ile öğrenci hazırbulunuşluğu arasında iyi bir eşleşme olması için, görev öğrencinin yapabileceği seviyeden biraz üstte olmalıdır. Öğrenme hedefi öğrenci hazırbulunuşluğuna göre değişmese dahi, zorluk ve karmaşıklık derecesi öğrencinin mevcut durumuyla uyum içinde olmalıdır (Cooper, 2010). Öğrenci hazırbulunuşluğu genellikle bir konuya başlamadan önce yapılan bir ön-değerlendirme ile ölçülür (Strickland, 2007). Bu değerlendirmenin sonuçları öğretmenlere esnek şekilde plan yapma olanağı sağlar.

Tomlinson'a (2001) göre öğrenci katılımını sağlayan iki temel faktör vardır: öğrenci ilgi alanları ve seçimi. Bütün öğrencilerin aynı ilgi alanlarına sahip olmaması, öğretmenleri farklılaştırılmış öğretime götürür. Tomlinson ve Allan (2000) farklılaştırma süreci içerisine öğrenci ilgi alanlarını dahil etmek için şunları önermektedir:

- Ortak bir ilgi alanında yetişkinleri ya da ön bilgiye sahip akranları danışman olarak kullanmak,
- Öğrencilerin bir konuyu araştırmaları ya da öğrendiklerini ifade etmeleri için pek çok alan sağlamak,
- Geniş bir yelpazedeki materyal ve teknolojiye erişim sağlamak,
- Öğrencilere görev ve ürün konularında, öğrenci tasarımlı seçenekler de dahil olmak üzere, seçim hakkı tanımak,
- Öğrencileri ilgi alanlarındaki önemli konu ve prensipleri araştırmalarını ya da uygulamalarını desteklemek.

Hazırbulunuşluk ve ilgi alanlarına ek olarak, farklılaştırma öğrenme profili aracılığıyla da yapılabilir. Öğrenme profili, bireylerin en iyi öğrendiklerini hissettikleri yöntemler için kullanılan bir terim olarak adlandırılabilir. Etkili sınıf

içi öğrenmenin amacı tüm öğrencilere iyi birer öğrenme deneyimi sağlamaktır. Bu sebeple, öğrenme profiline göre öğretim yöntemlerinde farklılaştırma yapan öğretmenler, öğrencilerinin kendileri için en uygun öğrenme yöntemini bulmalarını amaçlar.

İlgili alanyazın incelendiğinde, dünyada yürütülen farklılaştırılmış öğretim çalışmalarının çoğunun, yöntemin teorik ve pratik yönleriyle ilgili olarak öğretmenlerin algılarını ve yeterlik seviyelerini incelediği görülmektedir. Ancak, öğrenci kazanımları ve algıları üzerine yürütülen bazı çalışmalar da bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmalar hem anaokulundan 12. sınıfa kadar olan bağlamlarda hem de yüksek öğretim bağlamlarında gerçekleştirilmiş olup, konuları da matematikten, İngilizceye ve siyaset bilimine kadar uzanan bir çerçevededir (Howard & Tracey Ernst, 2005; Powers, 2008; Chamberlin and Powers, 2010; Martinez, 2011; Alavinia and Sadeghi, 2013; Dosch and Zidon, 2014; Chen & Chen, 2017; Alhasmi & Elyas, 2018; Danzi, Reul and Smith; 2018).

Türkiye’de yürütülen pek çok çalışmanın ise çoğunlukla deneysel ya da yarı-deneysel olduğu ve anaokulundan 12. sınıfa kadar olan bağlamlarda gerçekleştirildiği görülmektedir. Ayrıca, bu çalışmaların çoğunun alanı matematik veya fen bilimleridir (Yabaş, 2008; Beler, 2010; Özyaprak, 2012; Şaldırdak, 2012; Demir, 2013; Taş, 2013; Atalay, 2014; Camcı-Erdoğan, 2014). Dil öğretimi konusunda ve özellikle İngilizce öğretimindeki çalışmalar yine anaokulundan 12. sınıfa kadar olan bağlamlarda yürütülmüş olup (Aras, 2018; Gülşen, 2018; Kaplan Sayı, 2015; Yavuz, 2018), yüksek öğretimde gerçekleştirilen sadece bir çalışma (Özer, 2016) bulunabilmektedir. Genel olarak, Türkiye’deki çoğu çalışma farklılaştırılmış öğretim yönteminin öğrencilerin akademik başarısına, öğrenme kalıcılığına ve öğrenmeye yönelik tutumlarına olan etkisini araştırmıştır. Buna ek olarak, bazı araştırmalar farklılaştırılmış öğretim yönteminin öğrencilerin yaratıcılıklarına, bilişüstü becerilerine, öz-yeterlik ve özerklik seviyelerine olan etkilerini araştırmıştır.

Farklılaştırılmış öğretim yönteminin dayandırıldığı temellerden birinin öğrenci ve bağlam çeşitliliği olduğu düşünüldüğünde, yöntem kapsamındaki ilgili alanyazında boşluk olduğu görülmektedir. Bu durum, yeni çalışmaların gerekliliğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu sebeple bu çalışma, bir eylem araştırması olarak, öğretmenin mesleki gelişimine ve öğrencilerin öğrenme deneyimlerine katkı sağlaması, daha önce çalışılmamış bir örneklem grubu olan akademik ve mesleki İngilizce dersi alan üniversite 2. sınıf öğrencilerini ele alması, sonuçların tamamen öğrencilerin algılarının üzerine kurulması ve farklı veri toplama araçlarının sağladığı üçgenlemeye yer vermesi açısından önem taşımaktadır ve bu anlamda alanyazına katkı sağlayacaktır.

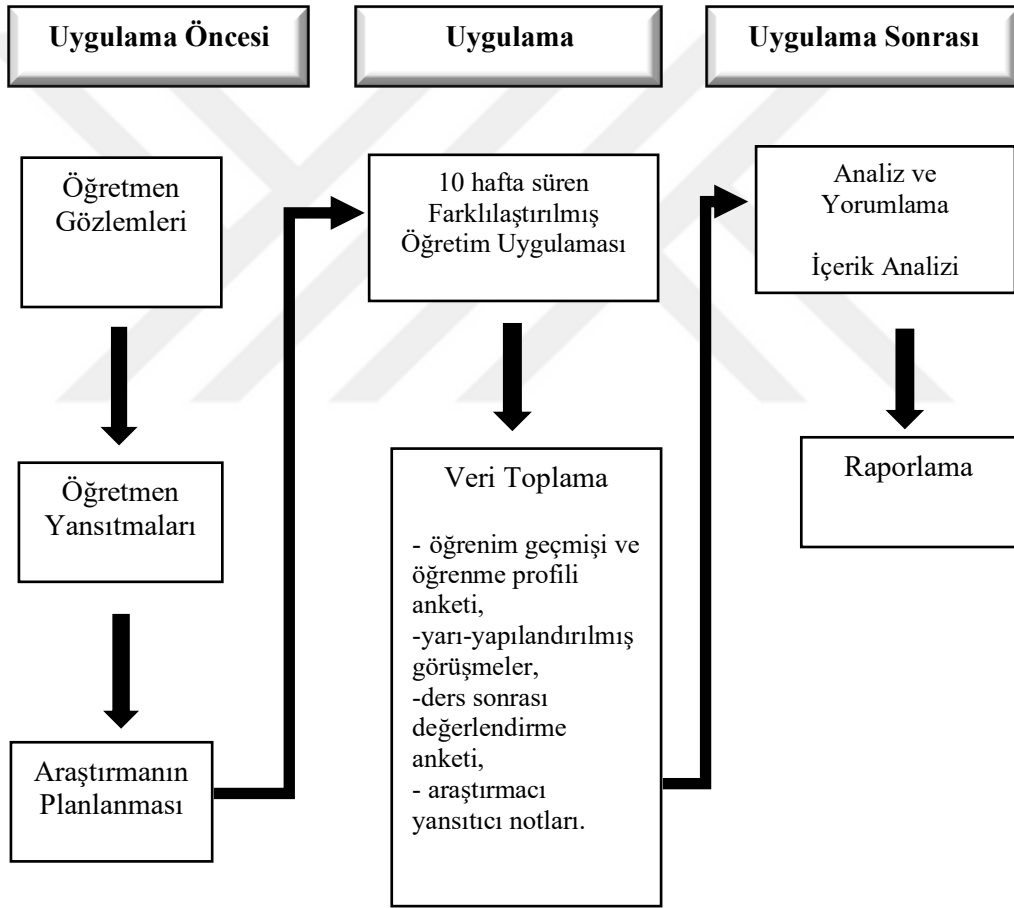
Bu çalışmanın amacı bir vakıf üniversitesinin iletişim fakültesindeki Halkla İlişkiler (Hİ) ve Radyo, Televizyon ve Sinema (RTS) bölümlerinde okuyan ve bir akademik ve mesleki İngilizce dersi alan 21 ikinci sınıf öğrencisinin, farklılaştırılmış öğretimle işlenen yazma derslerine ve bu derslerin öğrencilerin yazma becerilerine olan etkisine ilişkin algılarını incelemektedir. Araştırma soruları aşağıdaki gibidir:

- 1) Öğrenciler üniversite seviyesindeki bir İngilizce yazma dersinde yazma becerilerini geliştirmede ne gibi sorunlar yaşamaktadırlar?
- 2) Farklılaştırılmış öğretim İngilizce akademik yazma becerilerinin gelişimini nasıl etkilemektedir?
- 3) Öğrencilerin İngilizce akademik yazma derslerinde farklılaştırılmış öğretimin kullanılmasıyla ilgili algıları nelerdir?

2. Yöntem ve Uygulama Süreci

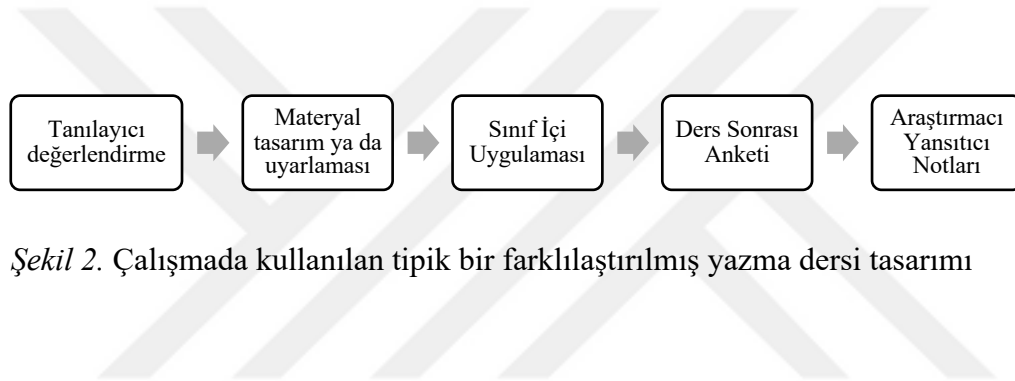
Bu çalışma bir eylem araştırmasıdır ve örneklemini Türkiye’deki bir vakıf üniversitesinin iletişim fakültesindeki Halkla İlişkiler (Hİ) ve Radyo, Televizyon ve Sinema (RTS) bölümlerinde okuyan ve bir akademik ve mesleki İngilizce

dersi alan 21 ikinci sınıf öğrencisi oluşturmaktadır. Bu örneklem, eylem araştırmasının doğası gereği uygulayıcının yani bu bağlamda öğretmenin çalıştığı okuldaki ve sınıftaki öğrencilerdir. Nitel yöntem kullanılan çalışmada, veriler (1) araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen öğrenim geçmişi ve öğrenme profili anketi, (2) yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler, (3) ders sonrası değerlendirme anketi ve (4) araştırmacı yansıtıcı notları aracılığıyla toplanmış ve elde edilen verilerin analizinde de yine nitel bir yöntem olan içerik analizi metodu kullanılmıştır. Şekil 1 çalışmanın genel bir tasarımını göstermektedir.



Şekil 1. Eylem araştırmasının genel tasarımı.

Tipik bir farklılaştırılmış yazma dersi ise şu modeli takip etmiştir: (1) öğrencilere hedeflenen beceri ile ilgili tanılayıcı bir değerlendirme testi uygulanması, (2) materyallerin hedef değerlendirme testi ve öğrenci profili doğrultusunda doğrudan kullanılması ya da uyarlanması, (3) materyallerin sınıf içinde öğretmen rehberliğinde uygulanması, (4) ders sonrası öğrencilere dersle ilgili düşüncelerini belirttikleri açık uçlu bir anketin uygulanması ve (5) ders sonrası araştırmacının derse ilişkin düşüncelerini ve hislerini yansıtıcı notlar şeklinde ifade etmesi. Şekil 2 bu modeli özetlemektedir.



Şekil 2. Çalışmada kullanılan tipik bir farklılaştırılmış yazma dersi tasarımı

10 hafta süren çalışma kapsamında, araştırmacı tarafından çeşitli farklılaştırılmış İngilizce akademik yazma dersleri tasarlanmış ve uygulanmıştır. Çalışma başlamadan önce, öğrencilere farklılaştırılmış öğretim ile ilgili detaylı bilgi verilmiş ve araştırmaya gönüllü olarak katılmak isteyen öğrencilerden katılım formunu imzalamaları rica edildikten sonra uygulama süreci başlamıştır.

Çalışmanın ilk evresinde, öğrencilere araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen bir *öğrenim geçmişi ve öğrenme profili anketi* uygulanmıştır. Anket sonuçları, öğrencilere yönelik demografik ve biyografik bilgilere ek olarak, farklılaştırılan yazma derslerinin dayandırıldığı ve öğrenim profilini belirleyen “grup çalışmasını bireysel çalışmaya tercih etme”, “iyi bir öğrenme ortamının özellikleri” ya da “iyi bir öğretmenin özellikleri” gibi verileri sağlamıştır. Çalışmanın sonraki evresinde, öğrencilerin akademik yazma hazırbulunuşluk

seviyelerinin ilk tespiti olan *tanılayıcı paragraf yazma aktivitesi* uygulanmıştır. Paragrafların analizi, öğrencilerin dilbilgisi ve kelime bilgisi açısından basitten gelişmişe doğru üç farklı seviye oluşturulabilecek kadar değişkenlik gösterdiğini ve öğrencilerin hiçbirinin yeterli seviyede akademik paragraf yazma bilgi ve becerisine sahip olmadıklarını ortaya koymuştur. Çalışmanın yürütüldüğü dersin hedefinin öğrencilere akademik kompozisyon yazma becerisini kazandırmak olmasına ve çalışmaya katılan öğrencilerin daha önce almaları gereken derslerde akademik paragraf yazma becerisini edinmiş olmaları gerekmesine rağmen tanılayıcı aktivitenin sonucunda var olan yazma dersi izlencesi değiştirilmiş ve paragraf yazma dersi eklenmiştir.

Bunu takiben yapılan derste, öğrenciler hazırbulunuşluklarına göre başlangıç, orta ve orta üstü olmak üzere üç gruba ayrılmıştır. Dersin amacı olan akademik paragraf yazma becerisini edinme sabit tutulmuş ancak gruplara önceden araştırmacı tarafından üç farklı seviyede tasarlanan ve basitten karmaşığa doğru ilerleyen paragraf yazma kitapçıkları verilmiştir. Buna göre, başlangıç grubuna basit düzeyde kelime ve dil bilgisi yapılarına sahip kitapçık verilirken, orta ve orta üstü gruplara daha karmaşık kelime ve dil bilgisi yapılarına sahip kitapçıklar verilmiştir. Ders süresince, öğrenciler gruplar hâlinde aktiviteler üzerinde çalışırken araştırmacı devamlı olarak sınıfta dolaşmış, öğrencilerin sorularını yanıtlamış, anlık geribildirim vermiş ve yol göstermiştir.

Beşinci hafta, araştırmacı tarafından önceden hazırlanan ve öğrencilerin bir kompozisyonun tanımı ve onu oluşturan bölümler hakkındaki anlayışlarını ölçen bir tanılayıcı aktivite yapılmıştır (Ek O.1). Daha sonra öğrencilere sınıfta yapılmak üzere bir kompozisyon yazma ödevi verilmiştir (Ek O.2). Her iki tanılayıcı değerlendirme aktivitesinin analizi öğrencilerin akademik kompozisyon yazma becerilerinin oldukça düşük olduğunu göstermiş ve öğrencilerin dili kullanma becerileri hakkında daha fazla bilgi sağlayıp, paragraf ön değerlendirmesinden sonra ortaya çıkan farklılıkları vurgulamıştır. Ancak, bu süreçte planlanmayan bir durum ortaya çıkmıştır. Buna göre, öğrenciler sınıfta

kompozisyon yazma ödevlerini yerine getirirken bazı öğrencilerin, hatta İngilizce seviyesi yüksek olanların bile stresli görüldüğü gözlemlenmiş ve bu duruma öğrencilerin “ne yazacaklarını bulma” konusunda yaşadıkları sorunun yol açtığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Bir başka deyişle, öğrencilerin beyin fırtınası tekniklerine aşina olmadığı görülmüştür. Beyin fırtınası, taze fikirler üretmek için zihni özgürleştiren önemli bir adımdır (Walter, 2015). Bu nedenle, başlangıçtaki yazma izlencesine “beyin fırtınası stratejileri” ve “fikir organizasyonu” dersleri eklenmiştir.

7. hafta, beyin fırtınası faaliyetleri ve fikir organizasyonu konularını ele alınmış ve ortaya çıkan fikirleri tez cümlesine dönüştürmeye yönelik bir bütün sınıf etkinliği gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bunu takiben, öğrenciler paragraf yazma aktivitesinde olduğu gibi üç farklı gruba ayrılmış ve gruplara basitten karmaşığa doğru ilerleyen aktivite kitapçıkları dağıtılmıştır. Aktivitelerin örnek sayfaları Ek S'de sunulmaktadır. Bu etkinlik sırasında öğrencileri sürekli izledim ve gerektiğinde yardım ve rehberlik sağladım. Ders süresince, öğrenciler gruplar halinde aktiviteler üzerinde çalışırken araştırmacı devamlı olarak sınıfta dolaşmış, öğrencilerin sorularını yanıtlamış, anlık geribildirim vermiş ve yol göstermiştir.

Bu çalışmanın yürütüldüğü üniversitede, hemen hemen tüm bölümlerin bir hafta süren ara sınavları vardır ve bu süre boyunca öğrencilerin derslere devam etmemekte ve sadece ara sınavlara girmektedirler. Bu nedenle, 8. haftada herhangi bir İngilizce dersi işlenmemiştir.

9. haftada öğrencilere temel kompozisyon taslak formatı sunulmuştur. Paragraf taslağına zaten aşina olduklarından, geçiş sorunsuz olmuştur. Derste, öğrencilere kelime dağarcığının ve dilbilgisi yapılarının karmaşıklığı açısından basitten zora doğru ilerleyen üç farklı kompozisyon verilmiştir. Gruplar halinde çalışan öğrenciler bu kompozisyonları inceleyip, boş bir kompozisyon taslağı doldurmuşlardır. Bu etkinliğin örnek sayfaları Ek T'de sunulmaktadır. Daha

sonra öğrencilere bir konu bulup, daraltıp, bir tez cümlesi yazarak bir kompozisyon taslağı hazırlamaları söylenmiştir. Öğrencilerden daha önce ele alınan beyin fırtınası tekniklerini kullanarak fikir üretmeleri istenmiştir. Bu noktada, bu teknikler üzerinde hızlı bir bütün sınıf revizyonu yapılmış ve öğrencilere istedikleri tekniği seçmekte özgür oldukları söylenmiştir çünkü Jensen'ın (1998) da ortaya koyduğu gibi, optimum öğrenme ortamları çeşitli seçenekler sunan ortamlardır. Bireysel veya ikili gruplar halinde çalışan öğrenciler, kısıtlı zaman nedeniyle, çalışmalarını sınıf dışında tamamlayıp, takip eden dersten önce yazılı geri bildirim almak üzere araştırmacıya elektronik posta yoluyla iletmişlerdir.

10. haftada, kompozisyon ana hatlarını hazırlayan, öğrenciler denemelerini yazmaya giriş paragrafı ile başlamışlardır. Ancak, 11. haftada sınıfta sadece 12 öğrenci bulunmaktaydı. Başka bir deyişle, 9 öğrenci yoktu ve deneme taslağı dersine katılmamıştı. Bu nedenle, bu derste, önceki derste bulunmayan öğrencilere bir daire oluşturmaları söylenmiş ve önceki derse katılan öğrencilere ise denemelerini yazmaya hazır olup olmadıkları veya bir revizyona ihtiyaç duyup duymadıkları sorulmuştur. Bir öğrenci, gözden geçirmeye ihtiyaç duyduğunu ifade etmiş, bu yüzden önceki derste bulunmayan öğrencilerin arasına katılmıştır. Bu grup önceki dersin hedeflerine yönelik çalışırken, diğer öğrenciler giriş paragraflarını yazmaya başlamıştır. Dersin sonunda, tüm öğrenciler paragraflarını bitirmeleri ve bir sonraki dersten önce araştırmacıya elektronik posta ile göndermeleri için görevlendirilmiştir.

11. hafta, öğrencilere geri bildirimli giriş paragraflarını dağıtılarak başlamıştır. Öğrenciler paragraflarını ve geri bildirimleri incelerken, araştırmacı sürekli sınıfta dolaşmış gerektiğinde yardım etmiştir. Öğrenciler bireysel geribildirimleri hakkında netleştikten sonra, daha önce hazırladıkları taslağı takip ederek gövde ve sonuç paragraflarını yazmaya başlamışlardır. Bu süreçte de araştırmacı sürekli olarak sınıfta dolaşmış ve gerektiğinde yardım etmiştir.

12. ve 13. haftalarda, öğrencilerin sınıfta 5 dakika süren sözlü sunum yapmaları gerektiğinden ve sınıfta 21 öğrenci olduğundan sunum döngüsünün tamamı 6 saat kadar sürmüştür ve şiddetli kar yağışı nedeniyle iki dersin iptal edilmesi gerekmiştir. Bu nedenle, 12. ve 13. haftalarda öğrenciler kompozisyonlarını ve pratik kompozisyonlarını sınıf dışında tamamlayıp, elektronik posta ile araştırmacıya göndermiş ve yine aynı yöntemle geri bildirim almışlardır.

3. Veri analizi

Bu araştırmada veriler (1) araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen öğrenim geçmişi ve öğrenme profili anketi, (2) yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler, (3) ders sonrası değerlendirme anketi ve (4) araştırmacı yansıtıcı notları aracılığıyla toplanmış ve tüm veriler içerik analizi metoduyla analiz edilmiştir. Miles ve Huberman (1994) içerik analizi için üç bileşenden oluşan bir model önermektedir: “veri azaltma, veri görüntüleme ve sonuç çıkarma / doğrulama” (s. 10).

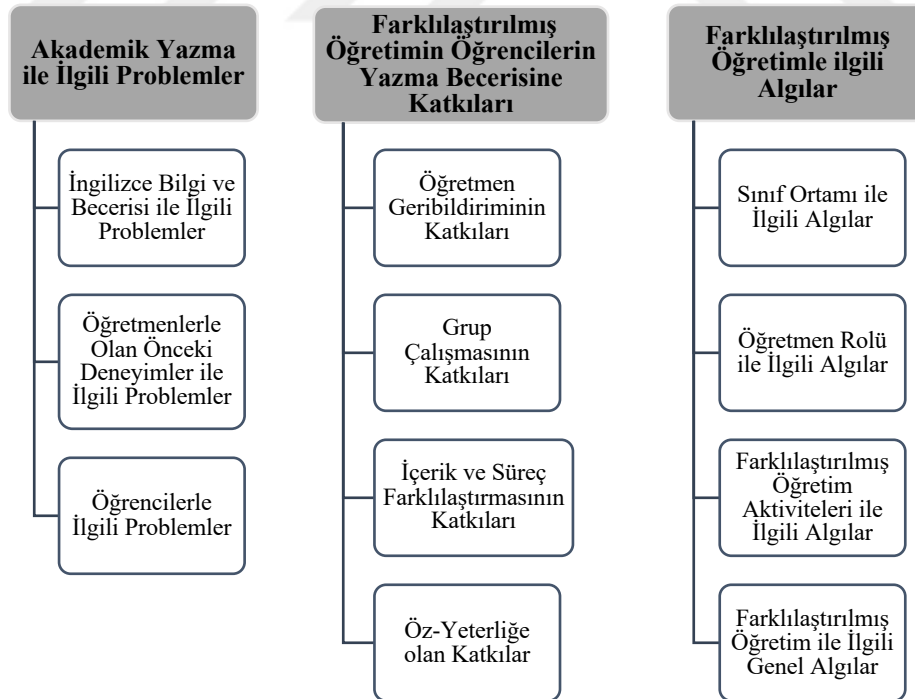
Buna göre, analizin ilk adımı olan verilerin azaltılması yazılı veriler gerektirdiğinden görüşmelerin transkripsiyonudur. Bunun ardından görüşme verileri, verilerin seçilmesi, basitleştirilmesi ve / veya dönüştürülmesi anlamına gelen veri azaltmaya hazırdı (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Daha sonra, araştırma soruları ile ilgili verileri bulmak ve veriler içinde tekrarlanan kelimeleri veya kalıpları tespit etmek için ham veriler titizlikle incelenmiştir (Auerbach ve Silverstein, 2003). Bunu yaparken, tekrarlanan veriler vurgulanmış ve daha sonra kategoriler ve temalar oluşturmak için kodlar kullanılarak etiketlenmiştir (Adu, 2019). Bu işlemin örnek sayfaları Ek H ve J'de bulunabilir. Kodların sınıflandırılması, her bir kodun özelliklerinin tanımlanması, paylaşılan benzerliklerin bulunması ve bunların şemsiye tanımlayıcıları altında gruplandırılması ile başlar (Adu, 2019; Charmaz, 2014; Creswell ve Poth, 2018; Dey, 1993).

Azaltılmış ve sınıflandırılmış veriler daha sonra, sonuç çıkarma yani çalışmaya ilişkin sonuçların belirlenmesi ve doğrulama yani bu sonuçların gözlem notları

veya geri bildirim formları gibi diğer verilere referansla desteklenmesi adımlarını izler (Gratton ve Jones, 2004). Son olarak, analiz sonuçlarının raporlanmasında sözlü alıntılar, yorumları desteklemek için bir araç olarak dahil edilmiştir (Krippendorff, 2004). Bu alıntılar, vurgulanmayı hak eden ilginç noktalara yol açanlar arasından dikkatle seçilmiştir (Sullivan, 2012).

4. Bulgular ve Tartışma

Bu eylem araştırması; (a) üniversite öğrencilerinin akademik İngilizce yazma derslerinde yaşadıkları zorluklara ilişkin algılarını, (b) farklılaştırılmış öğretimin öğrencilerin İngilizce akademik yazma becerileri üzerindeki etkilerini ve (c) öğrencilerin İngilizce akademik yazma derslerinde farklılaştırılmış öğretimin kullanımına ilişkin algılarını öğrenmeyi amaçlamıştır. Verilerin analizi, öğrencilerin akademik İngilizce dersleri yazarken karşılaştıkları problemleri ve farklılaştırılmış öğretim yöntemi ile ilgili algılarını ortaya koymuştur. Aşağıda bu bulgular, ayrıntılı bir tartışma ve sonuçlar bulunmaktadır.



Şekil 3. Veri analizi kategorileri ve temaları

Bulguların raporlanmasında katılımcıların anonimliği sonuçları raporlarken Öğrenci-1 anlamına gelen Ö1 gibi takma adlar kullanılarak korunmuştur. Şekil 3, veri analizi ilerledikçe ortaya çıkan kategorilere ve temalara genel bir bakış sunmaktadır.

4.1 Akademik Yazma ile İlgili Problemler

Bulgular, öğrencilerin akademik yazma derslerinde şu konularda problem yaşadıklarını göstermiştir: (1) öğrencilerin İngilizce bilgi ve becerileri, (2) öğretmenlerle olan önceki deneyimleri ve (3) öğrencilerin kendileri. İngilizce kullanımı ve becerileri için belirtilen en yaygın problemler, dil bilgisi, kelime bilgisi ve akademik yazma bilgi ve becerilerinin eksikliğidir. İngilizce bilgi ve becerileri ile ilgili problemler açısından, öğrencilerin akademik paragrafın kuralları ve bileşenleri hakkındaki bilgi eksikliğinin yanı sıra, doğru İngilizce dilbilgisi yapılarını ve kelime dağarcığı öğelerini kullanma konusunda zorluklar yaşadıkları bulunmuştur. Bu, Abdulkareem (2013) tarafından öğrencilerin akademik yazmada yaşadıkları zorlukların dil bilgisel yeterlilik eksikliğini içerdiğini gösteren çalışmaların sonuçları ile uyumludur. Ayrıca, benzer şekilde Kızıl ve Yumru'nun (2019) çalışması, öğrencilerin çoğunun bir paragrafın içeriğinin ve organizasyonunun neyi gerektirdiğini belirleme becerilerine güvenmediğini ortaya koymuştur.

Öğretmenlerle olan önceki deneyimlerle ilgili öne çıkan sorunların eksik veya yetersiz geribildirim, öğretim yöntemi çeşidi azlığı ve her öğrencinin aynı olduğu varsayımı olduğu bulunmuştur. Bu, Ankawi (2015)'nin düşük kaliteli öğretimin öğrencilerin yazma becerileri üzerinde olumsuz bir etkiye sahip olduğunu tespit eden çalışması ve Huy (2015)'un katılımcı öğrencilerin %5'inin yazma güçlüklerini “öğretmenden gelen yetersiz yardım” ile ilişkilendirdiğini gösteren çalışması tarafından desteklenmektedir (s.10).

Son olarak, öğrenciler, İngilizce yazma derslerinde kaybolmuş, gelişmemiş,

zorlanmamış ve anlaşılmaz hissettiklerini bildirmişlerdir. Bu, Torrance, Thomas ve Robinson tarafından 1992'de yürütülen ve öğrencilerin yazma güçlüklerinin duygusal yönlerine odaklanan ve yazmada zorlanan öğrencilerin çoğunun ne yapmaları gerektiğini ve onlardan ne beklendiğini bilmediklerini keşfeden çalışma tarafından desteklenmektedir. Son olarak, bu araştırma, bazı başarılı öğrencilerin zorlanmadıklarını, gelişmediklerini ve öğretmenleri tarafından anlaşılmadıklarını ortaya koymuştur. Bu bulgu, yazmada iyi olan öğrencilerin “rutin yazma ödevleri tarafından zorlanmama” tehlikesi olduğunu öne süren Daggett ve Kruse (1997) tarafından desteklenmektedir (s. 57).

4.2. Farklılaştırılmış Öğretimin Öğrencilerin Yazma Becerisine Katkıları

Verilerin analizi, öğrencilerin (1) öğretmen geribildirimi, (2) grup çalışması, (3) içerik ve süreç farklılaştırması ve (4) öz-yeterliği artırması yoluyla akademik İngilizce yazma becerilerinde iyileşme yaşadıklarını göstermiştir.

4.2.1. Öğretmen Geribildiriminin Katkıları

Farklılaştırılmış öğretim ile işlenen yazma dersleri ile geleneksel olanlar arasındaki farkı belirtmeleri istendiğinde, çok sayıda öğrenci “öğretmen geribildirimi” cevabını vermiştir. Örneğin, Ö3 bu durumu şöyle ifade etmiştir: “Bir şey yazıp size getirdiğimde, onu geliştirmek için önerilerde bulunuyorsunuz. Bu, beni motive eden ancak geçmişte göz ardı edilen bir şey.” Ayrıca, öğrenciler öğretmen geri bildirimlerinin öğrenmenin kalıcılığını artırdığını, hatalarının kolayca fark edilmesine yardımcı olduğunu ve bu hataların fosilleşmesini önlediğini belirtmiştir. Ö7'nin samimi bir şekilde ifade ettiği gibi: “Geribildirimle, hatalarımızı görüyoruz. Önceki sınıflarda hatalarımızı göremedik. Öğretmenlerimiz geri bildirimde bulunmadı”. Son olarak, öğrenciler, sınıfta öğretmen geribildirim almanın, kendilerini değerli, desteklenmiş ve inanılmış hissetmelerine yol açtığını ve bu durumun da motivasyonlarını artırdığını belirtmiştir.

Ö8'in bunu şöyle hatırlamaktadır:

Geçen dönem, öğretmenimiz bize yazımızla ilgili geri bildirimde bulunacağını söyledi, ama vermedi. Gerçekten üzüldüm. Sonra, bir süre sonra geri bildirimde bulunmak istedi, ama reddettim. Sonraki dönem o dersi almadım bile.

Bu aynı zamanda ders anketlerinden sonra toplanan verilerin sonuçlarıyla da desteklenmiştir. Anketlerin analizi, bazı öğrencilerin “öğretmen geri bildirimi” nin bazı aktiviteleri diğerlerinden daha fazla sevmelerinin nedeni olduğunu öne sürerken, bazıları “öğretmene danışmak” ın bir dönemde karşılaştıkları sorunların üstesinden gelmek için kullandıkları bir yöntem olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, bazı öğrenciler öğrenmenin “öğretmen geribildirimi” sonucunda gerçekleştiğini hissettiklerini ifade etmişlerdir.

Bu, etkili yazma öğretiminin niteliklerini arayan ve öğretmen geri bildiriminin güçlü bir araç olduğu sonucuna varan çeşitli çalışmalarla desteklenmektedir. Örneğin, etkili öğretim üzerine binden fazla çalışmayı analiz eden Hattie (1996), geri bildirimin değerli bir öğrenme ve öğretim stratejisi olduğu sonucuna varmıştır. Benzer şekilde, Marzano, Pickering ve Pollock (2001), uygun zamanda sunulan geri bildirimin, iyileştirme için harika bir araç olduğunu iddia eder. Ayrıca Chapman ve King (2005) farklılaştırmanın öğrencilere ihtiyaçları ortaya çıktığında yardımcı olduğunu ve “bireylerin çalışırken belirli, düzeltici geribildirimlerle hızlı müdahaleler aldıklarını” iddia etmektedir (s. 11).

Bu çalışmada, az sayıda öğrenci öğretmen geribildirimi örneğini hatırlamamış olsa da, çoğunluğuna daha önce geri bildirim verilmiştir. Bununla birlikte, DI sınıflarını geleneksel sınıflarla karşılaştırmaları istendiğinde, öğrenciler tekrar tekrar “öğretmen geribildirimi” cevabını verdiler. Bu sonuç, öğrencilerin önceki yıllardaki kalite geri bildirimlerinin eksikliğine ilişkin algıları ile açıklanabilir. Öğrencilerin DI sınıfındaki öğretmen geri bildirimlerini takdir etmeleri, sadece kişiye yönelik, amaçlı ve kişiselleştirilmiş, farklılaştırılmış öğretimde geri bildirimin doğasına atfedilebilir (Burnett ve Mandel, 2010).

4.2.2. Grup Çalışmasının Katkıları

Verilerin analizi, tüm öğrencilerin farklılaştırılmış öğretimin grup çalışması yönünün yazma becerilerini geliştirmede en önemli katkıda bulunduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Öğrenciler çoğunlukla tanılayıcı değerlendirmelerle belirlenen hazırbulunuşluklarına göre gruplandırılmış ve öğrenciler gruplardaki bu iletişim kolaylığının grup içinde daha fazla işbirliğine, bunun da daha yakın ve daha güçlü arkadaşlıklar, daha fazla aidiyet duygusu ve daha fazla katılım ile sonuçlandığını belirtmişlerdir. Örneğin, Ö3 gelişmiş arkadaşlıkların katkısını şu şekilde ifade etmiştir: “Bir sınıfa ilk geldiğinizde kimseyi tanımıyorsunuz ancak (grup çalışması) buna çok katkıda bulunuyor. Kendimi rahat hissetmemi sağlıyor ve derslere isteyerek geliyorum”. Ayrıca Ö6 şunları ifade etmiştir: “Önceki derslerde, diğerlerini beklerdim. Ama şimdi (bu gruplarda) geride durmam ve fedakârlık yapmama gerek yok. Kendimi daha fazla zorluyorum”. Bu bulgu, grup çalışmasının arkadaşlık oluşumunu etkileyebileceğini ve öğrencilerin ilgi ve katılımlarını arttırdığını öne süren önceki çalışmalarla uyumludur (Cooper ve Slavin, 2001; Slavin ve Cooper, 1999; Avcı, Yüksel, Soyer ve Balıkcıoğlu, 2009; Özer, 2016).

Ayrıca, hazırbulunuşluk temelinde tasarlanan grup çalışmalarının ilginç bir katkısı, başarılı öğrenciler ile ilgilidir. Bu tür öğrenciler, hazırbulunuşluğun grup üyeleri arasında bir ortaklık olmadığı gruplarda, belirli bir beceriye zaten sahip olmalarına veya bir sorunun cevabını bilmelerine rağmen çoğu zaman geri durma ve sessiz kalma ihtiyacı duyduklarını ifade etmiş ve bu durumu “fedakârlık yapmak” olarak nitelendirmişlerdir. Bununla birlikte, hazır olma temelinde oluşturulan gruplarda, daha aktif olduklarını ve hatta daha çok çalışmaya ve daha kaliteli iş üretmeye teşvik edildiklerini bildirmişlerdir. Geri durma ve gruba hükmetmeme duygusu, öğrencilerin gelişmiş empati becerilerinden kaynaklanabilir. Empati, “özel deneyimler ile başkalarının kendilerini geliştirmesine yardımcı olmak için gerekli olan nesnellik arasında mesafe gerektirdiğinden” (Kurland ve Malekoff, 2002, s.54), yüksek empati

düzeyine sahip daha başarılı öğrenciler, başkalarının öğrenme deneyimlerine müdahale etmemek amacıyla geri durmayı tercih edebilmektedirler. Ayrıca, öğrenciler artan motivasyon, odaklanma, öğrenme, kalıcılık ve özerklik deneyimlemiştirler. Bu sonuçların hepsi çeşitli çalışmalarla desteklenmektedir (Belç, 2010; Aras, 2018; Gülşen, 2018; Alhasmi ve Elyas (2018), Demir, 2013; Durmuş, 2017).

4.2.3. İçerik ve Süreç Farklılaştırmasının Katkıları

Araştırma süresince içerik ve süreç farklılaştırması, öğrencileri hazırbulunuşluk seviyeleri, ilgi alanları ve seçimleri açısından özgürleştirmeye ve içeriği veya süreci değiştirmeye odaklanmıştır. İçerik ve süreç farklılaşmasının katkıları ile ilgili olarak öğrenci cevapları artan ilgi, motivasyon, öğrenme, odaklanma, kalıcılık ve özerklik olduğunu göstermiştir. Öğrenciler, içeriklerin kendilerini rahat hissettikleri bir konuyla ilgili olduklarında, çok daha hızlı yazmaya başladıklarını ve yazma kurallarını anlamaya daha fazla dikkat edebildiklerini; bunun sonucunda da öğrenmenin arttığını bildirmişlerdir. Ayrıca, bazı öğrenciler içeriği seçme özgürlüğüne sahip olmanın, daha özerk olmalarına ve dolayısıyla kendi hatalarından çok daha verimli bir şekilde öğrenmelerine yol açan bir sorumluluk duygusu yarattığını belirtmiştir. Aynı şekilde, öğrenci cevapları süreç farklılaşmasının onlara artan motivasyon, katılım ve sınıfa karşı özerklik sağladığını göstermiştir. S7, süreç farklılaşmasının onu nasıl teşvik ettiğini şöyle vurgulamaktadır:

Seçimleri bize bırakmak çok güzel bir şey. Bize hangi sayfayı doldurmak istediğimizi sorduğunuzda, ona bakıp “Bunu yapabilirim” diyorum. Daha özgürüz. Bir önceki dönem derslere gitmiyordum bile.

Bu sonuç alanyazın tarafından da desteklenmektedir. Örneğin, McQuarrie, McRae ve Stack-Cutler (2008) tarafından yayınlanan araştırma incelemesinde, farklılaştırılmış öğretimin “daha fazla öğrenci öğrenme ve öğrenme konusunda başarılı hissetme fırsatı bulduğu” için öğrencinin özgüvenini arttırdığı bulunmuştur (s. 13).

4.2.4. Öz-Yeterliğe olan Katkılar

Daha önce belirtildiği gibi, tüm öğrenciler akademik İngilizce yazma becerilerinin geliştiğini hissettiler ve bu gelişmeyi öğretmen geribildirimini, grup çalışması ve içeriği ve süreç farklılaştırmasına bağladılar. Bununla birlikte, öğrenciler üç farklı alandaki öz-yeterlik seviyelerinde artış olduğunu ifade ettiler: (1) kendine güven, (2) kendini düzeltme ve (3) test puanları. Buna göre, öğrenciler biçim ve dil kullanımıyla ilgili gelişmiş bilgilerin bir sonucu olarak kendilerini daha güvenli hissettiklerini belirttiler. Ayrıca, öz-değerlendirme yeteneklerinin geliştiğini ve hatalarını daha kolay tespit edebildiklerini söylediler. Bu bulgu, öz değerlendirme bilişötesi bir süreç olduğundan öğrencilerin bilişötesi becerilerde ilerleme kaydettikleri şeklinde yorumlanabilir (TEAL Center, 2010). Öz-değerlendirmeye benzer şekilde, özerklik de bilişötesi bir beceridir ve Little (2009) 'in da önerdiği gibi, bilişötesi ile öğrenen özerkliği arasında açık bir ilişki vardır. Bu bulgu, Gülşen (2018) ve Taş (2013) tarafından yürütülen çalışmaların sonuçlarıyla da uyumludur.

Son olarak, bazı öğrenciler sınavlarda daha yüksek puan aldıkları için artan öz-yeterlik seviyelerinden bahsetmişlerdir. Öğrencilerin akademik başarılarındaki bu artış çeşitli çalışmalarla da desteklenmektedir (Yabaş, 2008; Özyaprak, 2012; Şaldırdak, 2012; Demir, 2013; Taş, 2013; Atalay, 2014; Camcı-Erdoğan, 2014; Karip, 2016; Özer, 2016; Durmuş, 2017; Sayı, 2017; Yavuz, 2018).

4.3 Farklılaştırılmış Öğretimle ilgili Algılar

Veriler, öğrencilerin sınıfta farklılaştırılmış öğretim uygulamalarına ilişkin algılarının, (1) sınıf ortamıyla ilgili algılar, (2) öğretmen rolüyle ilgili algılar (3) etkinliklerle ilgili algılar ve (4) genel algılar olmak üzere dört ayrı tema altında kategorize edilebileceğini ortaya koymuştur.

Sınıf ortamıyla ilgili deneyimlerini ve duygularını yansıtmaları istendiğinde, öğrenciler şu sıfatları tekrar tekrar kullanmışlardır: eğlenceli, sıcak, güvenli, özgür ve öğrenme merkezli. Ayrıca, öğretmenin sınıfındaki rolü açısından, çoğu öğrenci öğretmenin destekleyici olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Mesela Ö15, öğretmenin tutumunun bir sonucu olarak İngilizce derslerine karşı tutumunda olumlu bir değişiklik olduğunu belirtmiştir: “Bu aslında sizin sayenizde. Öğrencilere yaklaşımınız çok iyi. Bu yüzden ilgim arttı.” Ayrıca öğrenciler, öğretmenin öğrencilerin kişisel ihtiyaçlarını önemseydiğini, özen gösterdiğini ve farkında olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Farklılaştırılmış öğretim sınıfında bulunmanın zevk verici olması Şaldırdak’ın (2012) deneysel çalışması tarafından desteklenmektedir. Benzer şekilde, Johnsen (2003) ve McAdams (2001), farklılaştırılmış öğretim stratejilerinin kullanımının öğrencilerin ilgisini çektiğini bulmuşlardır. Sınıfın güvenli bir ortam olarak algılanması katılımcıların % 87’sinin “sınıfta söz almak konusunda daha güvenli ve % 95’inin sınıfta daha rahat hissettiklerini” ortaya koyan Patterson, Connolly ve Ritter (2009, s. 51) çalışması tarafından desteklenmektedir. Güvenli olmasının yanı sıra farklılaştırılmış öğretim ortamı özgür olarak da görüşmüştür. Bu, Santangelo ve Tomlinson’un üniversite öğrencileri ile yürüttüğü 2009 çalışmasında yansıtılmaktadır.

İlgi çekici, güvenli ve özgür öğretim sınıf ortamı nedeniyle, bu çalışmadaki öğrenciler yüksek düzeyde ilgi ve motivasyon yaşadıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bu bulgu, alanyazın tarafından desteklenmektedir, çünkü iki kavram farklılaştırılmış öğretim çalışmalarının en çok değinilen bulguları arasındadır (Alhasmi ve Elyas, 2018; Aras, 2018; Beler, 2010; Coleman, 2001; Hall, 2002; Powers, 2008; Sizer, 1999; Strong vd., 2001 ve Tieso, 2001). Son olarak, bu çalışmadaki öğrenciler öğretim elemanını ve öğretmen-öğrenci ilişkisinin doğasını olumlu algılamış ve öğretmeni destekleyici ve ilgili olarak nitelendirmişlerdir. Bu, öğretmenin farklılaştırılmış öğretim sınıfındaki rolünden kaynaklanıyor olabilir.

Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma farklılaştırılmış öğretim stratejilerini kullanarak hem yazma öğretiminin kalitesini hem de öğrencilerin yazma becerilerini geliştirmenin mümkün olduğunu göstermiştir. Çalışmada öğrencilerin, öğrencilerin kendileriyle ve öğretmenlerle olan önceki deneyimleriyle ilgili çeşitli konular nedeniyle akademik İngilizce yazma becerilerinin ediniminde problem yaşadıkları ortaya çıkmıştır. Öğrencilerin yaşadığı sorunların çoğunun farklılaştırılmış öğretimin katkılarıyla ortadan kaldırıldığı ya da hafifletildiği görülmüştür. Bu katkılar arasında en çok alıntı yapılanlar destekleyici grup çalışmasına ek olarak ayrıntılı, bire bir ve zamanında öğretmen geribildirim olmuştur. Öğrencilerin ilgi çekici, güvenli ve özgür olarak kabul ettikleri farklılaştırılmış öğretim sınıfı, öğrencilerin daha özerk olmalarına yardımcı olarak motivasyon ve katılımlarının artmasına yol açmıştır.

Bu çalışmanın sonuçları doğrultusunda, farklılaştırılmış öğretim uygulamalarının kurum ve ülke çapında yaygınlaştırılması önerilebilir. Ayrıca, sınıflarında farklılaştırılmış öğretim uygulamak isteyen öğretmenlerin, ders öncesinde bir ön değerlendirme yapmaları tavsiye edilebilir. Ön değerlendirmeye ek olarak, öğretmenler öğrencilerin öğrenme profillerini ve geçmişlerini araştıran açık uçlu bir anket uygulayabilir ve daha sonra yeni dersler tasarlamak veya mevcut dersler öğrenci ihtiyaçlarına cevap vermek üzere düzenlemek için bu verileri kullanabilirler. Ek olarak, tüm yeni beceriler gibi, farklılaştırılmış öğretimin etkili bir şekilde uygulanması zaman ve pratik gerektirir. Öğretmenler farklılaştırılmış öğretimi kendi bağlamlarında uygulamaktan kaçınmamalı, ancak aşinalık ve deneyim gerektireceğini akıllarında tutmalıdırlar.

Bu araştırma bir eylem araştırması olarak tasarlandı. Ancak, yöntemin etkileri hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinmek ve farklı bir bakış açısı oluşturmak için benzer araştırmalar yarı deneysel olarak tasarlanabilir, eylem araştırmasının uygulandığı gruba ek olarak bir kontrol grubu da kullanılabilir, katılımcı sayısı

artırılabilir ve çalışmanın tasarımına nicel veri toplama araçları eklenebilir. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin akademik farklılıklarının benzer sonuçlar verip vermeyeceğini görmek ve yöntemin bu bağlamda uygulanabilirliğini değerlendirmek için farklı fakülte ve bölümlerden öğrencilerle de benzer bir çalışma yapılabilir.

Bu araştırmada, hepsi öğretmen araştırmacı tarafından tasarlanan veya uyarlanan farklılaştırılmış ders planları ve etkinliklerinden yararlanmıştı ve bu sebeple çok zaman ve çaba harcanmıştır. Bu nedenle, ilerideki araştırmalar, belirli bir disiplinde belirli bir konu üzerinde önceden hazırlanmış ve kullanıma hazır farklılaşma materyallerinin bir arşivinin oluşturulmasını içerebilir.

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Bölümü / Department : Eğitim Bilimleri

TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English) :

Learning through Differentiated Instruction: Action Research in an Academic English Class

TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE: Yüksek Lisans / Master

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