

**Developing writing skills and promoting peer-feedback through project-based learning
in a young learners’ EFL classroom**

Evdokia Skarkala Rouka, *Teacher of English, M.Ed in TEFL, evdokia_ska@hotmail.com*

Dr Alexandra Anastasiadou, *Tutor Hellenic Open University, Education Coordinator for EFL,
alexanastasiadou@yahoo.gr*

Abstract: The present paper explores the impact of process writing and peer feedback (PF) by means of project-based learning (PBL) on Greek EFL students’ writing performance. In addition, it aims to shed light on students’ attitudes towards peer feedback and writing in the context of PBL prior to and after the implementation of two project based process writing lessons focusing on peer feedback. Specifically, a class of six 12-year old students of a private language school took part in the study, which used a mixed-methods research design, in an attempt to investigate the potential of PBL as an educational framework that can foster student engagement in EFL writing. Due to the learners’ unfamiliarity with process writing and peer feedback, the teacher provided them with adequate practice in order to acquaint them with these approaches. The findings indicate that students’ writing performance can improve through process writing in a PBL context. Moreover, it was disclosed that students were hesitant towards the technique of peer feedback showing a preference for teacher feedback, demonstrating a positive attitude towards process writing and project-based learning, though.

Keywords: writing skills, peer feedback, PBL, EFL students

1. Introduction

The traditional approach to writing, where students are asked to produce texts mainly for the instructor, focusing on structure and accuracy, deprived of an authentic context (Hyland, 2009) can result in low-achieving and demotivated writers. This situation is prevalent in the private language institutions in Greece, where writing instruction is shaped by the pressure to prepare the students appropriately for the exams in order to acquire the much-desired first certificate in English. As a result, a negative washback effect is created and students are negatively disposed towards the practice of writing skills. This writing anxiety that Greek EFL learners experience (Gkonou, 2011) can be overcome through enjoyable writing instruction that will lower their ‘affective filter’ (Krashen, 1982). In light of these, peer feedback employed in process writing in the context of PBL could meet the challenges mentioned by promoting writing for a real audience and a real life purpose.

Taking the above into account, the present research paper will deal with the creation of two projects in an attempt to improve the students’ writing performance by engaging them in the real process of writing as well as enhance their autonomy and develop positive attitudes through peer feedback and project based learning.

2. Literature review

2.1. Process writing

A lot of attention has been lately drawn to the process-based writing approach, a method that considers writing a problem solving activity which requires the creation of multiple drafts through a recursive process. Silva (1990) emphasized the non-linear process that writers go through when they discover and rearrange their ideas. Regarding FL writing instruction, Kolade (2012) agreed with White & Arndt’s (1991) stance that process writing can promote students’ engagement in developing and constructing their ideas in a positive environment where the errors are treated effectively, rendering it a sound pedagogical approach. Hedge (1994) went a step further to recognize the equal importance of both the form and the procedure, encompassing the writers’ FL competence as well as their preferences. Similarly, Hyland (2009) acknowledged that both the process and the end product are of equal value as long as they complement each other.

As for practicing FL writing with young learners, it has been reported to be a rather demanding task (Mc Quitty, 2014; Wong, 2010). As a result, process-based writing can be an effective tool in teaching young learners how to develop and compose ideas (Raimes, 1993), by engaging them in the recursive nature of writing. Giannakopoulou (2002) identified a number of principles concerning young learners’ practicing writing within the process approach. These principles could be summarized as follows: young learners need to engage in purposeful and authentic writing tasks that will trigger their thinking and provide them with the opportunity to collaborate with their peers, supported by the more competent ones as well as by rich comprehensible input. Equal importance is attributed to the writing process and the final product and emphasis is laid on revision which at the same time requires the provision of feedback.

2.1.1. Peer Feedback in process writing

Despite the fact that teacher feedback normally takes place in the revision stage of process writing, peer feedback has also gained ground as an alternative method that can yield positive results. A number of studies have dealt with the employment of peer feedback in process writing (Anastasiadou, 2015; Al-Jamal, 2009; Chang, 2015; Chong, 2016; Farrah, 2012; Lin & Chien, 2009; Paulus, 1999) since it is thought to be an effective approach of enhancing

students’ writing performance (Bijami et al. 2013; Gielen et al., 2010; Li et al., 2012; Yu & Wu, 2013) and quality of writing (Hu, 2005; Yang et al., 2006).

Several authors have tried to establish what peer feedback is. It has to do with a process whereby students communicate their thoughts and feelings concerning their peers’ work (Liu and Carless, 2006). More specifically, it is a method that enables students to comment on each other’s work regarding its content (Alnasser and Alyousef, 2015). Going a step further, Chang (2015) claims that peer feedback involves students’ exchange of comments between their drafts on both local (punctuation, vocabulary and grammar) and global (organization, structure, cohesion) level.

The theoretical underpinnings supporting the use of peer feedback are those that emphasize the importance of social interaction. Vygotsky’s (1978) *Social Constructivism* and *sociocultural theory* hold that learning occurs when students actively interact with more knowledgeable people in authentic situations, thus, building up their existing knowledge (Brodhal et al., 2011). The Vygotskian notion of *scaffolding* plays a primary role as well, as it maintains that students can achieve higher with the help of their peers’ feedback. As a result, peer feedback and peer interaction is of paramount importance when it comes to students’ development of learning as they allow them to enhance their knowledge and skills through social sharing. Finally, *collaborative learning* theory supports the adoption of peer feedback in the EFL classroom as according to a number of researchers (Butler, 1981; Gebhardt, 1980; O’Donnell, 1980), encouraging students to edit their work collaboratively with their fellow students enables them to improve their own editing and writing skills.

The benefits of employing peer feedback in EFL writing instruction are numerous and have to do with improving students’ writing competence, cognitive development and positive attitudes towards writing. As many studies have revealed, peer feedback can contribute to students’ better writing performance (Jacobs, 1987; Plutsky & Wilson, 2004; Ruegg, 2015; Topping et al., 2000; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Yang et al. 2006). By responding to each other’s draft, they learn to identify strengths and weaknesses in their own writing, thereby learning from each other (Widodo, 2013). Moreover, the practice of peer feedback instills autonomy and independence into students (Maarof et al., 2011; Widodo, 2013; Yang, et al., 2006) as the classroom environment is student-dominated. Furthermore, students become responsible (Gielen, et al., 2010) and their critical thinking is developed (Berg, 1999; Yang et al., 2006) as they are encouraged to negotiate meaning, giving explanations and clarifications concerning their intended meaning. In addition, not only does writing anxiety fade away but feelings of excitement and enthusiasm are also created (Yastibas & Yastibas, 2015), thus students become positively disposed towards practicing writing. Finally, creating the sense of an authentic audience is an added benefit of peer feedback that is reported to motivate learners (Keh, 1990; Rollinson, 2005; Widodo, 2013) and increase their self-confidence.

Despite the numerous benefits, peer feedback has also received much criticism in the relevant literature. It was reported that students consider their peers incompetent to provide them with feedback, due to their lack of experience and expertise (Strijbos et al. 2010). Another criticism concerned the quality of peer feedback which focuses mainly on surface-level errors (grammar and spelling) rather than on the content (Van Steendam et al., 2014). Furthermore, peer feedback was rejected by many students as it was said to generate feelings of discomfort and embarrassment, especially in teacher-centered contexts. Finally, it was reported (Zheng, 2012) that during peer-feedback, many students become passive and do not try to offer any solution to the existing problems, thus, adopting a peripheral role. These observations make the implementation of peer feedback training more than vital in order to familiarize students with the practice.

2.2. Project Based Learning

Project Based Learning can be a rather effective method, utilized to provide the writing classroom with a real purpose making it student-centered and giving motivation to the learners who often experience anxiety due to their high affective filter (Krashen, 1982). PBL can be defined as an instructional mode that focuses on a theme or a task, where participants work collaboratively to create an end-product going through an inquiring process, thus, acquiring learning (Legutke and Thomas, 1991). The interaction that takes place among students throughout the process is relevant to the Young Learners’ pedagogy as it constitutes one of its key elements (Cameron, 2001). In addition, the child-centered approach is prevalent in PBL as according to Piaget’s theory (Cameron, 2001.), problem solving tasks enable children to learn.

Designing a PBL framework is not an easy task for the instructor who needs to be flexible and take a number of aspects into account. The learners’ age, linguistic competence, proficiency level and interests need to be considered (Fried-Booth, 2002). A three-phase process has been suggested for the effective implementation of the project (*ibid.*):

a) The planning stage:

In this stage, the topic of the project is decided and there are awareness raising tasks to activate students’ background knowledge. The main aim of the projects, as well as its objectives are identified and relevant tasks are designed.

b) The Implementation stage:

This stage involves the group formation and allocation of responsibilities among participants. The students carry out the tasks usually engaging in collaborative learning (Byrne, 1988).

c) The presentation and evaluation stage:

This stage includes the presentation of the final product to the audience as well as its evaluation by the teacher.

A number of key features characterize the PBL framework. First of all, a learning to learn approach is encouraged (Shafaei et al., 2007), as students practice their problem solving and inquiry skills. At the same time, learners simulate adult-like situations, thus, developing lifelong learning skills. Integration of technology is another asset of the PBL framework as it promotes students’ collaboration and interaction. In addition, PBL encourages the adoption of alternative assessment methods such as observation, self- and peer-assessment, group and individual presentations (Mac-Donald & Savin-Baden, 2004). Finally, collaboration among students is incited, as they realize the importance of group work, allocation of duties and information sharing working together to create a joint outcome.

The pedagogical benefits of PBL in EFL teaching are numerous. It has been reported that PBL enhances students’ social and cooperative skills (Alan & Stoller, 2005; ChanLin, 2008) and at the same time develops their critical thinking skills (Shafaei et al., 2007; Mergendoller & Thomas, 2000). Students’ confidence and independence are also boosted during the inquiry process as they build up their knowledge (Bell, 2010; Fried-Booth, 2002; Mergendoller & Thomas, 2000). Motivation and enjoyment as well as increased self-esteem and positive attitudes throughout the lesson have been reported in PBL as students relate classwork to everyday life. Consequently, student autonomy becomes a vital element in the FL classroom as learners develop a positive attitude towards the lesson and are eager to participate in and bring their ideas and experience into the classroom as long as PBL responds to their needs and preferences, providing them with stimulating learning opportunities (Bell, 2010; Helle et al., 2006; Stoller, 1997; Thomas, 2000).

2.2.1. PBL and EFL writing

There is a lot of evidence in the literature that PBL can be rather conducive to enhancing students’ writing capacity. A number of central elements in PBL such as providing ample time for composition, a real audience, an original reason for writing, meaningful feedback and access to comprehensible input, have also been included in Hadaway et al’s (2002) proposal of their techniques for improving EFL students’ writing skills. Moreover, a number of empirical studies have shown the connection between PBL and better EFL writing skills. Praba et al. (2018) revealed that young students can develop their writing skills provided that they are actively engaged in the writing process. Another research suggested that students’ enthusiasm, creativity and confidence can increase through PBL thus making them more productive in writing (Astawa et al., 2017). In another study, Abbasian et al. (2017) showed that an experimental group of EFL learners who received PBL writing instruction outperformed the control group, while Thitivesa (2014), suggested that students develop their academic skills in a meaningful, communicative context which is why PBL is ideal for

applying writing conventions. Since research on enhancing young learners’ writing skills through the PBL method is to the best of our knowledge limited in scope, the present paper intends to give further insight on this issue.

Considering the fact that immersing learners in collaborative learning tasks, student centeredness is promoted and students become responsible of acquiring knowledge (Myers, 1991), PBL was opted for, as an educational framework that can encourage learners to practice their writing skills collaboratively. In addition, it was considered wise to replace lecture-driven, traditional writing instruction with meaningful, contextualized tasks, following the process-based writing approach in order to accommodate different learning needs. Emphasis was laid on the experience of revising as it is a skill that learners will be able to transfer to more demanding tasks at more advanced levels of their education (Zouganeli, 2004).

3. Research design

3.1. The study

As stated before, the main purpose of the study, which was part of a greater research, was to examine whether process based writing and peer feedback implemented within the PBL framework can release students’ anxiety towards EFL writing and improve their writing performance. In this line, the research questions articulated were the following:

1. Can the students' writing performance improve through process-based writing by means of a project?
2. What are the students' attitudes towards the practice of peer feedback?

3.2. The teaching context

A case study was carried out in a private language school in Western Macedonia, Greece and addressed the class of six 12-year old students with the aim of ameliorating their writing skills. The students’ level of English is B1 and they belong to Kachru’s (1985) expanding circle, that is, they are learning English as a foreign language.

The coursebook used in the lesson contains a number of communicative tasks to practice the four skills and specifically regarding writing, it adopts a text-based approach which according to Hyland (2009) lays emphasis on features such as genre, accuracy, cohesion and coherence, using model texts or guided composition tasks in order to raise structure awareness of the different types of writing.

3.3. Data collection instruments

A ‘mixed-methods research design’(Hanson et al. 2005) was followed in the present study, which involved gathering both qualitative and quantitative data. Collecting both forms of data can lead to more valid results and conclusions compared to the results obtained from one type of data.

In particular, a pre- and a post-writing test were administered to the students to measure any emerging change in their writing performance after the implementation of process writing within a PBL context. Both tests were of the same difficulty and their content was selected based on the requirements in the CEFR for level B1 while the marking scheme was inspired by B1 assessment scales by Cambridge English Language Assessment. The tests were graded by two teachers in order to ensure higher subjectivity.

Needs analysis was carried out in order to gather information about the students’ attitudes towards English, the four skills and different EFL topics. It was a tightly structured questionnaire containing only close-ended questions to ensure higher consistency concerning the respondents’ understanding of the questions (Colosi, 2006).

Apart from the needs analysis, in the present case study, the students completed a pre- and post-questionnaire in order to trace any alteration in their attitudes regarding practicing writing and using peer-feedback. The questionnaires contained close-ended questions and consisted of two parts in order to substantiate the research questions. Specifically, the items aimed at examining any possible change in students’ writing habits and attitudes to writing as well as attitudes towards peer feedback and project work.

At the same time, the effectiveness of using process writing and peer feedback on students’ attitudes and engagement in the lesson was explored using observation sheets which were completed and kept by the teacher.

3.4. Description of the teaching procedure and the teaching objectives

As mentioned earlier, the specific study relates to the creation of project-based lessons implementing process writing and peer feedback. Specifically, two projects were designed by the teacher who determined the inquiry questions, procedures, sources and end products after considering students’ lack of experience with EFL projects. Furthermore, due to the students’ unfamiliarity with the practice of peer feedback, as well as their young age, two training sessions were organized in order to eliminate the learners’ anxiety and provide them with some experience. In-class training using a peer review guide seemed imperative, as various authors (Anastasiadou, 2011; Hansen and Liu; 2005, Min; 2006, Rahimi, 2013)consider it a form of scaffolding for the learners.

As soon as students became accustomed to providing feedback, the projects were launched. The main aim of the PBL projects was to have learners explore websites in order to create travel guides in the first project and reports on environmental issues in the second with the intention of improving their writing skills. The topics chosen, namely travelling and environment were related to the syllabus and ranked first in the students’ preferences as the needs analysis questionnaire revealed. Special care was taken to create a real-world scenario in both projects as Blank and Harwell (1997) propose.

The projects involved the planning stage, the implementation stage and finally presentation and evaluation. During these stages, students became familiar with the topics and their background knowledge was triggered through speaking tasks, videos and short texts. Furthermore, they were divided into groups of mixed-ability so that the more competent students could provide support to the weaker ones. An important aspect of the projects was that the presentation involved the use of a Power-point. It has been reported that through presentation, the project gets real-world credibility and the whole experience becomes more rewarding for the students. What is more, a number of pedagogical tasks were employed throughout the projects. The use of a Prezi presentation enabled students to learn core vocabulary. Brainstorming was used to activate students’ schemata while the macro-skills of skimming, scanning and note-taking were practiced when students browsed online texts to gather information. One of the most important tasks was peer feedback which took place after the completion of the first writing draft. Students received the teacher’s guidance but gradually they became more independent. The second writing drafts were based on their peers’ comments while in order to write the third and final draft, students received teacher feedback only. Finally, the presentation of the first project to the rest of the students involved a challenge, namely a competition between the two travel agencies for the most popular destination, something which added interest and excitement in the classroom.

4. Presentation of the findings

This section presents and analyses the findings of the collected data in an attempt to examine whether the research questions were validated and search for plausible explanations.

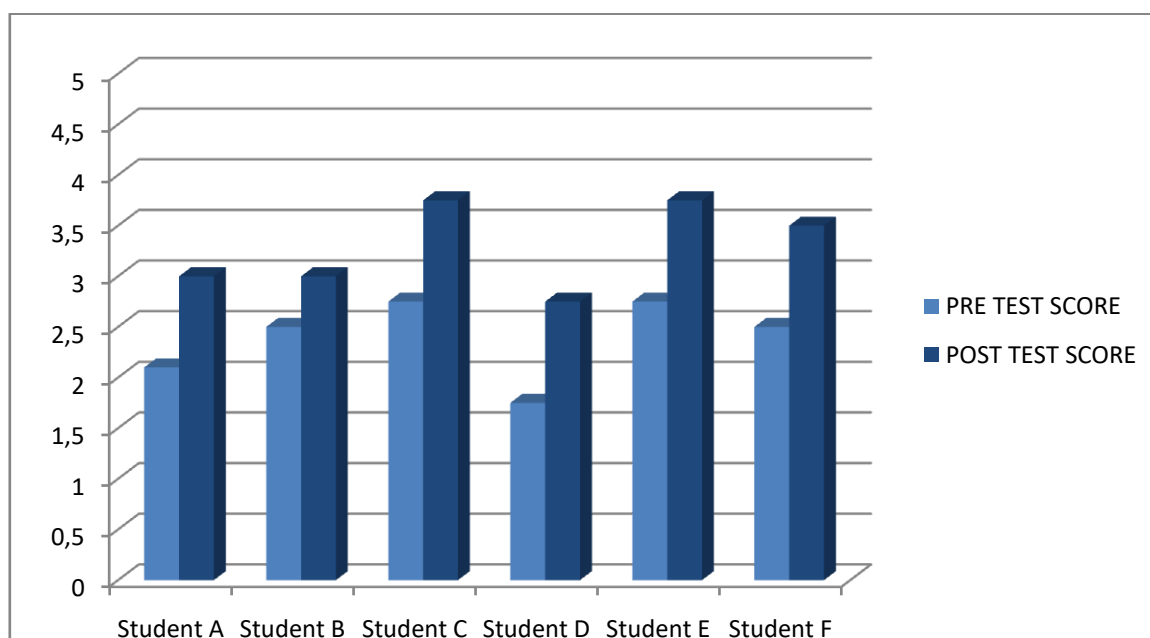
4.1. Needs analysis questionnaire

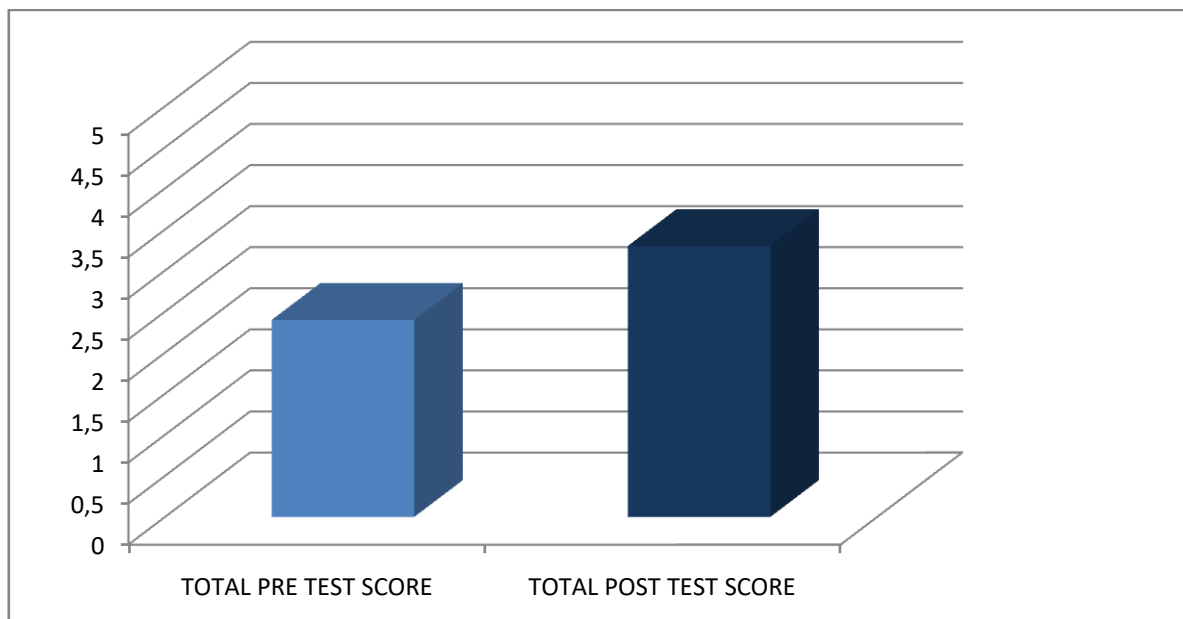
According to the findings, the students’ most preferred EFL topics were *travelling* and the *environment*, which actually determined the topics of the two projects. Moreover, most of the students, either always or sometimes, said that they find difficulty in writing while they feel more comfortable with speaking and listening. As it had been anticipated five out of six students would like to improve their writing performance. Another important finding, taken

into account in the preparation of the projects was that *watching videos* and *reading texts* highly appealed to them.

4.2. Students’ writing performance

Regarding the 1st research question, the hypothesis that process writing facilitated through PBL can have a positive effect on students’ writing performance was verified. The first graph below shows individual students’ pre and post test scores revealing a considerable improvement. As it was revealed, students’ pre-writing test scores ranged from 1,75 to 2,75 while post-writing test scores ranged from 2,5 to 3,75. The second figure shows the pre- and post-test scores of the class in total. Thus, these findings comply with the initial hypothesis that process writing facilitated through PBL can enhance students’ writing performance.





4.3. Findings based on the pre- and post- questionnaires

The analysis of the pre and post-questionnaire shed light on students' attitudes towards the practice of writing, peer and teacher feedback as well as on their attitudes towards projects, collaboration, the use of educational technology and perceptions regarding the improvement of their writing skills.

The pre-questionnaire revealed that most of the students (66,7%) prefer to get feedback from their teacher in their written texts, while only one stated his/her preference for peer feedback. This finding agrees with other studies (Anastasiadou, 2015; Meletiadou, 2012; Katsogianni, 2014) which revealed that students were quite hesitant to take part in peer assessment before becoming familiar with the procedure. Interestingly, half of the students replied that they would feel nervous if their classmates corrected their mistakes while the rest do not know how they would feel. Remarkably, 66,7% of the students appeared quite positive towards giving feedback to help their classmates improve their texts. This could be attributed to the fact that, although, they are negative to criticism, they are willing to offer constructive feedback to their fellow students. Finally, the majority of students (83,3%) felt that their writing performance could improve by means of a project.

After the intervention, 88,3% of the students replied that practicing writing in the classroom is more helpful than practicing it at home. As a result, the process approach implemented in the study along with the guidelines given by the teacher in the classroom had a positive effect on them. In addition, five out of six students (83,3%) expressed their preference for teacher feedback, revealing that students think highly of teacher-correction and regard it as valid and effective. Surprisingly, only two students agreed that they liked receiving feedback from their peers while four out of six replied that they liked giving feedback to their classmate's

text. Also, 66,6% of the students felt stressed when their classmates corrected their paper. Thus, it can be concluded that students still did not welcome peer feedback even after the intervention, considering it a stressful activity. However, four out of six students seemed to recognize the usefulness and appreciate the value of peer feedback a finding which is in line with previous studies (Anastasiadou, 2015; Chronis, 2013; Giannakopoulou 2003; Meletiadou, 2012). Another important finding was that only two students seemed to like peer more than teacher feedback verifying once more their reluctance towards this practice. In addition, collaboration during the projects appealed to most students who enjoyed group work and felt more confident, a finding which is in line with other studies (Al-Rawahi & Al; Mekhlafi, 2015; Astawa et al.; Praba, 2018). Finally, the use of educational technology contributed to the development of students’ writing skills and created an engaging learning environment.

4.4. Findings based on the observation

Classroom observation was also conducted by the teacher in order to explore students’ involvement and attitudes towards peer feedback and process writing. The students were observed by the teacher who completed a structured observation schedule that was direct and non-threatening.

Although students appeared interested in and very willing to engage in the tasks from the very beginning, most of them were quite reluctant to provide their peers with comments concerning their written texts. During the first project in particular, only two students seemed eager to make corrections to their peers’ drafts. The situation somewhat improved in the second project where most of the students appeared quite comfortable with providing feedback. It was also observed that most students did actually correct their texts based on their peers’ feedback, while some of them seemed suspicious towards the accuracy of the corrections. When teacher feedback took place, most students felt relieved and reassured a fact which verified their preference for it. Moreover, students engaged in process writing and seemed to enjoy producing multiple drafts to improve their texts by means of the projects. Finally, students’ satisfaction at the end of the project-based lessons pinpointed that they would definitely take part in similar projects again and that they felt more confident in writing texts in English.

5. Discussion

In an effort to draw some conclusions as to the effectiveness of peer feedback and process writing implemented through PBL, further discussion of the findings will follow in relation to the research questions.

As far as the first research question is concerned, it was revealed that the process approach to writing, where equal emphasis is given on both the process and the product, aided students' writing performance. Priority was given to the discovery of meaning rather than accuracy and form and at the same time the recycling that took place throughout the multiple drafts also reinforced students' writing skills enabling them to acquire appropriate language and develop their writing competence. PBL also assisted the process-based instruction as students expanded their EFL vocabulary through inquiry-based reading and learnt to gather and organize information, plan and write their drafts in order to produce a coherent end-product. Provision of adequate input along with the use of technology was another decisive factor that contributed to improved writing skills. Students were provided with online resources containing sufficient relevant materials such as texts and videos concerning the topics of the projects. What is more, they were encouraged to visit and explore various websites, watch videos and read texts, gather information and as a group decide what was useful for their writing task. Finally, the element of authenticity found in many aspects of the projects played a key role in enhancing students' writing performance. The writing tasks were embedded in a real world scenario an approach which according to Bell (2010) is child-directed and can lead students to gain valuable skills through sustaining their motivation. Students were exposed to authentic reading material and videos on the Internet a fact which according to Oliver (2000) can facilitate constructivist learning. The use of a Power Point and the fact that the students' end products were published on the school Facebook page also added to the students' motivation. The findings of the study are in line with previous research (Abbasian et al., 2017; Astawa et al., 2017; Diaz-Ramirez, 2014; Foulger & Jimenez-Silva, 2007; Plexida, 2013; Praba et al., 2018; Sadeghi et al., 2016) in that it proved that students' writing skills can develop when assisted by project based learning and the process writing approach.

Regarding the second research question, it became apparent that most students exhibited reluctance towards peer feedback, questioning the validity of the technique, and feeling incapable of implementing it successfully. However, they acknowledged its usefulness while stating preference for teacher-feedback. These findings are consistent with the findings of other empirical studies (Katsogianni, 2014; Li, 2006; Paulus, 1999; Yang, Badger & Zhu; 2006; Zhang, 1995). One explanation of their reluctance could be attributed to the students' unfamiliarity with the particular technique as well as the fact that it is a time-consuming and cognitively demanding task. What is more, peer assessment is a relatively new concept for both teachers and students in Greek contexts (Meletiadou, 2012) with the teacher being the

dominant figure and the one in charge of assessing students’ writing performance. Another psychological factor that contributed to students’ hesitation could be the feelings of anxiety some might have experienced due to the difference between their proficiency level. Particularly, during peer feedback some students admitted that they felt doubtful towards the accuracy of their peers’ comments while some weak students felt unable to provide their peer with constructive feedback. It was proved that some comments were superficial and careless, a problem encountered in Min’s (2003) study as well, indicating the need for more intensive training sessions that would raise students’ awareness of what good and poor writing performance is and what suggestions to make.

All in all, students’ attitude towards peer feedback could be described as neutral since on the one hand they did not appear emotionally ready to accept the technique but on the other hand they recognized its usefulness indicating that peer comments can be conducive to their revising and improving the texts.

6. Limitations of the study

One limitation of the study was its sample, as only 6 students took part in this small-scale research. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized and representative of all EFL groups. The results could have been more reliable if other classes had been researched as well or if the teacher had implemented a longer-term teaching intervention, something which was prevented by time constraints and pressure to cover the syllabus.

7. Suggestions for further research

In light of the above limitations and findings of the study, a longer research involving a bigger sample of students would lead to a clearer picture and more valid results regarding the effect of process writing and peer feedback implemented through the PBL framework on students’ performance and attitudes. Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate the difference in writing performance and attitudes between an experimental group that would be involved in the intervention and a control group that would receive traditional writing instruction and feedback. Finally, to delve deeper into process writing implemented through PBL, one could explore the writing strategies used by the students via the think-aloud method, a research method which involves having students orally describe their thoughts while completing a task (Charters, 2003).

Conclusion

The present study revealed that the writing anxiety that many Greek learners exhibit in the EFL classroom (Gkonou, 2011), feeling under pressure to perform well and succeed in the exams can be reversed with the use of process writing and peer feedback within the context of Project Based Learning. In this way, Students find a real purpose in writing tasks and perform better when they practice writing through projects. PBL can give them the opportunity to enjoy collaboration, creativity and autonomy in a non-threatening environment while choosing to integrate ICT skills in projects can make the lesson ever more fascinating.

In addition, process writing instruction can yield fruitful results as students engage in writing in a normal pace and are able to realize the complex features of writing as well as the importance of revising a text. Thus, a positive attitude is encouraged and students’ writing competence is enhanced. Finally, special emphasis should be placed on peer feedback, a technique which has the potential to render learners autonomous and establish a learner-centered environment in the EFL classroom in order to maximize learning opportunities and give our students the chance to become independent learners.

References

- Abbasian, G-R., Ebrahimi, Y. & Bazaee, P. (2017). 'The effect of project-based learning on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' paragraph writing skills.' *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 4/6: 254-271. Retrieved February 2018, from <http://www.jallr.com/index.php/JALLR/article/view/700>
- Alan, B. & Stoller, F. L. (2005). 'Maximizing the benefits of Project work in foreign language classrooms.' *English Teaching Forum*, 43/4: 10-21. Retrieved January 2018, from https://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/05-43-4-c.pdf
- Al-Jamal, D. (2009). 'The impact of peer response in enhancing ninth grader's writing skill.' *Umm Al-Qura University Journal of Educational & Psychologic Sciences*, 1/1: 11-40.
- Al-Rawahi, L.S. & Al-Mekhlafi, A.M. (2015). 'The effect of online collaborative project-based learning on English as a Foreign Language learners' language performance and attitudes.' *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives*, 12/2: 1-18.
- Alnasser, S. M. & Alyousef, H. S. (2015). 'Improving the effectiveness of peer feedback technique: the impact of focusing EFL student-writers on macro-level features.' *International Journal of English Language Education*, 3/1: 92-112. Retrieved January 2018, from http://fac.ksu.edu.sa/sites/default/files/alnasser_and_alyousef_2015.pdf
- Anastasiadou, A. (2010). *Implementing the process writing approach in the English language classroom: an innovation for the development of young learners' writing skills in the Greek state primary school*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki: Thessaloniki.
- Anastasiadou, A. (2015). 'Feedback revisited: The impact of peer commentary on students' attitudes and writing performance in the EFL classroom.' *An - Najah Univ. J. Res. (Humanities)*, 29/2: 369-402.
- Astawa, N., Artini, L. P. & Nitiasih, P. K. (2017). 'Project-based learning activities and EFL students' productive skills in English.' *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 8/6: 1147-1155. Retrieved March 2018, from <http://www.academypublication.com/ojs/index.php/jltr/article/viewFile/jltr080611471155/1282>
- Bell, S. (2010). 'Project-Based Learning for the 21st Century: Skills for the Future.' *The Clearing House*, 83/2: 39-43.
- Berg, E. C. (1999). 'The effects of trained peer response on ESL students' revision types and writing quality.' *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8/3: 215-241.

- Bijami, M., Kashef, S. H., Nejad, M. S. (2013). ‘Peer feedback in learning English writing: advantages and disadvantages.’ *Journal of studies in Education*, 3/4: 91-97. Retrieved December 2017, from <http://www.macrothink.org/journal/index.php/jse/article/viewFile/4314/3623>
- Blank, W. E. & Harwell, S. H. (Eds) (1997). *Promising practices for connecting high school to the real world*. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida.
- Brodhal, C., Hadjerrouit, S. & Hansen, N. K. (2011). ‘Collaborative writing with Web 2.0 technologies: education students’ perceptions.’ *Journal of Information Technology Education: Innovations in Practice*, 10: 73-103. Retrieved March 2018, from <http://www.jite.org/documents/Vol10/JITEv10IIPp073-103Brodahl948.pdf>
- Butler, S. (1981). “The bridge to real writing: Teaching editing skills” *paper presented at the University of British Columbia*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED228639).
- Byrne, D. (1988). *Teaching Writing Skills*. London: Longman
- Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chang, C. Y. (2015). ‘Teacher modeling on EFL reviewers’ audience-aware feedback and affectivity in L2 peer review.’ *ELSEVIER*, 2-25. Retrieved December 2017, from <http://daneshyari.com/article/preview/344206.pdf>
- ChanLin, Lih-Juan. (2008). ‘Technology integration applied to project-based learning in science.’ *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 45: 55-65.
- Charters, E. (2003). ‘The use of think-aloud methods in qualitative research an introduction to think-aloud methods.’ *Brock Education*, 12/2: 68-82.
- Chong, I. (2016). ‘How students’ ability levels influence the relevance and accuracy of their feedback to peers: A case study.’ *ELSEVIER*, 13-23.
- Chronis, L. (2013). ‘Improving writing with the help of peer feedback in a senior state high school teaching context’. Διπλωματική εργασία. Πάτρα: Ελληνικό Ανοικτό Πανεπιστήμιο.
- Colosi, L. (2006). ‘Designing an effective questionnaire.’ *Ithaca, NY: Cornell University*, 1-6.
- Díaz Ramírez, M. I. (2014). ‘Developing learner autonomy through project work in an ESP class.’ *HOW*, 21/2: 54-73. Retrieved March 2018, from <http://dx.doi.org/10.19183/how.21.2.4>.
- Farrah, M. (2012). ‘The impact of peer feedback on improving the writing skills among

Hebron university students.’ *An-Najah Univ. J. Res. (Humanities)*, 26/1: 179-200.

Foulger, T. S. & Jimenez-Silva, M. (2007). ‘Enhancing the writing development of English language learners: teacher perceptions of common technology in project-based learning.’ *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 22/2: 109-124.

Fried-Booth, D. L. (2002). *Project work*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gebhardt, R. (1980). ‘Teamwork and feedback: Broadening the base of collaborative writing.’ *College English*, 42: 69–74.

Giannakopoulou, A. (2002). ‘Children’s writing in the early primary years: a process-based approach to teaching L2 writing’. Διπλωματική εργασία. Πάτρα: Ελληνικό Ανοικτό Πανεπιστήμιο.

Giannakopoulou, G. (2003). ‘Exploring the relationship between peer feedback and revisions in young EFL learners’ writing’. Διπλωματική εργασία. Πάτρα: Ελληνικό Ανοικτό Πανεπιστήμιο.

Gielen, S., Tops, L., Dochy, F., Onghena, P., & Smeets, S. (2010). ‘A comparative study of peer and teacher feedback and of various peer feedback forms in a secondary school writing curriculum.’ *British Educational Research Journal*, 36/1: 143–162.

Gkonou, C. (2011). ‘Anxiety over EFL speaking and writing: a view from language classrooms.’ *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 1/2: 267-281. Retrieved may 2018, from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1136465.pdf>

Hadaway, N., Vardell, S., & Young, T. (2002). *Literature-based instruction with English language learners, K-12*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Hansen, J. G., & Liu, J. (2005). ‘Guiding principles for effective peer response.’ *ELT Journal*, 59/1: 31-38. Retrieved November 2017, from <http://teachingcomp.pbworks.com/f/Hansen%20and%20Liu.pdf>

Hanson, W. E., Clark, V. L. P., Petska, K. S., Crewswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. (2005). ‘Mixed methods research designs in counseling psychology.’ *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52/2: 224-235. Retrieved February 2018, from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1372&context=psychfacpub>

Hedge, T. (1994). *Writing, resource books for teachers*. Alan Maley (Ed) Oxford: Oxford University Press

Helle, L., Tynjala, P. and Olkinuora, E. (2006). ‘Project-based learning in post secondary education – theory, practice and rubber sling shots.’ *Higher Education*, 51: 287-314.

- Hu, G. (2005). ‘Using peer review with Chinese ESL student writers.’ *Language Teaching Research*, 9/3: 321-342.
- Hyland, K. (2009). *Teaching and researching writing* (2nd ed.). London: Pearson.
- Jacobs, G. (1987). ‘First experiences with peer feedback on compositions: Student and teacher reaction.’ *System*, 15/3: 325–333.
- Kachru, B.B. (1985). Standards, codifications, and sociolinguistic realism: the English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk & H. Widdowson (Eds), *English in the world: teaching and learning the language and literatures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Katsogianni, T. L. (2014). ‘A case study on promoting peer assessment in a Greek state school through the use of WebQuests and a wiki platform’. Διπλωματική εργασία. Πάτρα: Ελληνικό Ανοικτό Πανεπιστήμιο.
- Keh, C. L. (1990). ‘Feedback in the writing process: a model and methods for implementation.’ *ELT Journal*, 44: 294-304. Retrieved December 2018, from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.453.2387&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Kolade, T. (2012). ‘The influence of process approach on English as Second Language students’ performances in essay writing.’ *The CCSENET Journal*, 5/3: 16-29.
- Krashen, D (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Press. Retrieved March 2018, from http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/books/principles_and_practice.pdf
- Legutke, M. & Thomas, H. (1991). *Process and experience in the language classroom*. London: Longman.
- Li, Y. (2006). ‘Alternative to forms of response for teachers’ feedback on Chinese EFL students’ writing in college level.’ *US-China Foreign Language*, 4: 72-77.
- Li, L., Liu, X. & Zhou, Y. (2012). ‘Give and take: a re-analysis of assessor and assessee’s roles in technology-facilitated peer assessment.’ *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 43/3: 376–384.
- Lin, G. H. C. & Chien, P. S. C. (2009). ‘An investigation into effectiveness of peer feedback.’ *Journal of Applied Foreign Languages Fortune Institute of Technology*, 3: 79-87.
- Liu, N. F. & Carless, D. (2006). ‘Peer feedback: the learning element of peer assessment.’ *Teaching in Higher Education*, 11/3: 279-290. Retrieved November 2017, from http://davidcarless.edu.hku.hk/wp-content/uploads/2006_Peer-feedback-The-

learning-element-of-peer-assessment.pdf

- Maarof, N., Yamat, H., & Lili, K. (2011). ‘Role of teacher, peer and teacher-peer feedback in enhancing ESL students' writing.’ *World Applied Science Journal 15, (Innovation and Pedagogy for Life Long Learning)*, 29-35. Retrieved December 2017, from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.390.1221&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- MacDonald, R. & Savin-Baden, M. (2004). ‘A briefing on assessment in problem-based learning.’ *ITSN Generic Centre Assessment Series*, 13: 1-21.
- McQuitty, V. (2014). ‘Process-oriented writing instruction in elementary classrooms.’ *Writing and Pedagogy*, 6/3: 467-495.
- Meletiadou, E. (2012). ‘The impact of training adolescent EFL learners on their perceptions of peer assessment of writing.’ *RPLTL*, 3/1: 240-251. Retrieved December 2017, from <http://rpltl.eap.gr/images/2012/03-01-240-Meletiadou.pdf>
- Mergendoller, J. R. & Thomas, J. W. (2000). “Managing project-based learning: Principles from the field” *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.*
- Min, H. T. (2003). ‘Why peer comments fail.’ *English Teaching & Learning*, 27: 85-103.
- Min, H. T. (2006). ‘The effects of trained peer review on EFL students’ revision types and writing quality.’ *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 15/2: 118-141.
- Myers, J. (1991). ‘Cooperative learning in heterogeneous classes.’ *Cooperative learning*, 11/4.
- O’Donnell, C. (1980). “Peer editing: A way to improve writing” *Paper presented at the meeting of the combined annual meeting of the Secondary School English Conference and the Conference on English Education, Omaha, NE.*
- Oliver, K. (2000). ‘Methods for developing constructivist learning on the Web.’ *Educational Technology*, 40/6: 5-16.
- Paulus, T. M. (1999). ‘The effect of peer and teacher feedback on student writing.’ *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8/3: 265-289.
- Plexida, A. (2013). ‘The use of project in improving writing skills in a young learners’ classroom’. Διπλωματική εργασία. Πάτρα: Ελληνικό Ανοικτό Πανεπιστήμιο.
- Plutsky, S., & Wilson, B. A. (2004). ‘Comparison of the three methods for teaching and evaluating writing: A quasi-experimental study.’ *The Delta Pi Epsilon Journal*, 46/1: 50–61.

- Praba, L. T., Artini, L. P. & Ramendra, D. P. (2018). ‘Project-based learning and writing skill in EFL: are they related?’ *SHS Web of Conferences*, 42:1-6. Retrieved April 2018, from https://www.shs-conferences.org/articles/shsconf/pdf/2018/03/shsconf_gctale2018_00059.pdf
- Rahimi, M. (2013). ‘Is training students reviewers worth its while? A study of how training influences the quality of students' feedback and writing.’ *Language Teaching Research*, 17: 67-89.
- Raimes, A. (1993). ‘Out of the woods. Emerging traditions in the teaching of writing.’ *TESOL Quarterly*, 25/3:407-430.
- Rollinson, P. (2005). ‘Using peer feedback in the ESL writing class.’ *ELT Journal*, 59/1: 23–30.
- Ruegg, R. (2015). ‘The relative effects of peer and teacher feedback on improvement in EFL students' writing ability.’ *ELSEVIER*, 29: 73-82.
- Sadeghi, H., Biniiaz, M. & Soleimani, H. (2016). ‘The impact of project-based language learning on Iranian EFL learners' comparison/contrast paragraph writing skills.’ *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 6/9: 510-524. Retrieved April 2018, from [http://www.aessweb.com/pdf-files/IJASS-2016-6\(9\)-510-524.pdf](http://www.aessweb.com/pdf-files/IJASS-2016-6(9)-510-524.pdf)
- Shafaei, A., Poorverdi, M. & Parvizi, B. (2007). Use of project-based learning in increasing students' vocabulary knowledge & communicative ability. In: The Second Biennial International Conference on Teaching and Learning of English in Asia: Exploring New Frontiers (TELiA2), 14-16 June 2007, Holiday Villa Beach & Spa Resort, Langkawi. Faculty of Communication and Modern Languages, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok. pp: 1-11.
- Silva, T (1990). ‘Second language composition instruction: developments, issues, and directions in ESL’. In B. Kroll (Ed) *Second language writing research: Research insights for the classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 11-23.
- Stoller, F. L. (1997). ‘Project work: A means to promote language content.’ *English Teaching Forum*, 35/4.
- Strijbos, J.W., Narciss, S. & Dünnebier, K. (2010). ‘Peer feedback content and sender's competence level in academic writing revision tasks: Are they critical for feedback perceptions and efficiency?’ *Learning and Instruction*, 20/4: 291-303.
- Thitivesa, D. (2014). ‘The academic achievement of writing via project-based learning.’ *International Scholarly and Scientific Research & Innovation*, 8/9: 2994-2996. Retrieved May April, 2018, from <https://waset.org/publications/9999384/the-academic-achievement-of-writing-via-project-based-learning>

- Thomas, J. W. (2000). *A review of project-based learning*. San Rafael, CA: Autodesk Foundation.
- Topping, K. J., Smith, E. F., Swanson, I. & A. Elliot. (2000). ‘Formative peer assessment of academic writing between postgraduate students.’ *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 25/2: 149–169.
- Tsui, A. B. M., & Ng, M. (2000). ‘Do secondary L2 writers benefit from peer comments?’ *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 9/2: 147–170.
- Van Steendam, E., Rijlaarsdam, G., Van den Bergh, H., & Sercu, L. (2014). ‘The mediating effect of instruction on pair composition in L2 revision and writing.’ *Instructional Science*, 42/3: 1-23.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- White, L., & Arndt, V. (1991). *Process Writing*. Harlow, Essex: Longman.
- Widodo, H. P. (2013). ‘Implementing collaborative process based writing in the EFL college classroom.’ *RPLTL*, 4/1: 198-206. Retrieved December 2017, from <http://rppltl.eap.gr/images/2013/04-01-198-widodo.pdf>
- Wong, R. M. F., & Hew, K. F. (2010). ‘The Impact of blogging and scaffolding on primary school pupils’ narrative writing: A case study.’ *International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies*, 5/2: 1-17.
- Yang, M., Badger, R., & Yu, Z. (2006). ‘A comparative study of peer and teacher feedback in a Chinese EFL writing class.’ *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 15/3: 179-200.
- Yastibas, G. C. & Yastibas, A. E. (2015). ‘The effect of peer feedback on writing anxiety in Turkish EFL (English as a foreign language) students.’ *ELSEVIER*, 199: 530-538.
- Yu, F., & Wu, C. (2013). ‘Predictive effects of online peer feedback types on performance quality.’ *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 16/1: 332–341. Retrieved November 2017, from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a088/7908b9f2532bf27915004e2f0a74cba28095.pdf>
- Zhang, S. (1995). ‘Re-examining the affective advantages of peer feedback in the ESL writing Class.’ *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 4/3: 209-222.
- Zheng, C. (2012). ‘Understanding the learning process of peer feedback activity: An ethnographic study of exploratory practice.’ *Language Teaching Research*, 16/1:109-126.
- Zouganeli, K. (2004). ‘Literacy in the Young Learners’ Classroom’. In J. Andrews, P.

Bouniol & K. Zouganeli (Eds), *Teaching English to Young Learners*. Patras: HOU, 13-166.