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THE ROLE OF SELF-ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF FRESHMAN STUDENTS' WRITING PERFORMANCE AND AWARENESS

THESIS BY

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ÖZET

ÖZ DEĞERLENDİRME UYGULAMALARININ ÜNİVERSİTE 1. SINIF ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN YAZMA PERFORMANSLARI VE FARKINDALIKLARININ GELİŞİMİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ROLÜ

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Bu çalışmada, öz değerlendirme uygulamalarının öğrencilerin İngilizce yazma performanslarının ve farkındalıklarının gelişmesindeki rolü incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın amaçları doğrultusunda nitel bir vaka çalışması yürütülmüştür. Araştırmanın katılımcıları, 22 tane Otomotiv Mühendisliği bölümü 1. sınıf öğrencisidir. Katılımcılar, araştırmacının önceden tasarladığı sekiz ayrı seanstan oluşan yazma derslerine tabi tutulup bu dersler sonunda onlardan kendilerini ve performanslarını çeşitli enstrümanlarla değerlendirmeleri istenmiştir. Veriler, öz değerlendirme kontrol listeleri, öğrenci günlükleri, öğretmen günlükleri ve bir öz değerlendirme anketi aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Çalışmanın sonucunda, öğrencilerin yazma becerisindeki öz değerlendirmelerinin, performanslarının yanı sıra kişilik ve görev farkındalığı yaratma açısından da önemli bir rol oynadığı ortaya konmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öz değerlendirme, farkındalık, öğrenen özerkliği.

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF SELF-ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF FRESHMAN STUDENTS' WRITING PERFORMANCE AND AWARENESS

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In this study, it was aimed to examine the role of self-assessment practices in the improvement of students' English writing skills. A qualitative case study was conducted in line with the objectives of the research. The participants were 22 Automotive Engineering freshman students. Having been subjected to eight different writing sessions which the researcher had designed in advance, the participants were asked to assess themselves and their performance through various instruments at the end of those sessions. Data for this study was collected through self-assessment checklists, student journals, teacher journal and a self-assessment questionnaire. As a conclusion of the study, it was asserted that students' self-assessment in their own writing skill played an important role in creating personality and task awareness as well as in their performances in the writing skill.

Keywords: Self-assessment, language awareness, learner autonomy.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A*f*L   : Assessment *for* Learning

A*o*L   : Assessment *of* Learning

SA   : Self-Assessment

N   : Number

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose and significance of the study, and operational definitions.

1.2. Background of the Study

The last few decades have witnessed a great deal of radical changes in the context of education that have been still characterized as overwhelming in terms of adaptation for some conventional education settings. Upon the emergence of Constructivist curriculums where the 'learner autonomy' or 'formative feedback' terms were first pronounced, learning and teaching have gained a novel dimension. At the outset, these changes had the quality to break the routine by taking risks and going beyond the limits and ultimately to keep pace with the globalized world since "constructivism emphasizes learning and not teaching, encourages learner autonomy and personal involvement in learning" (Wang, 2011, p. 274). Such an utterance was totally opposite to what was accustomed to. Therefore, this new era in education can be considered as a milestone in terms of bringing fresh air into classrooms, changing adopted roles, and aiming to try the untried. In other words, from methodologies to classroom practices, all the dynamics of teaching-learning process have been influenced by these innovations. The fact that assessment process has also got its share was a natural outcome. Since the learning has been acknowledged as a never-ending cycle, the need for ongoing assessment has become an indispensable prerequisite for the curriculums in educational institutions accordingly. Indeed, in line with the attempts in the subsequent years, it is now a widely-recognized conception that assessment and learning are the rings of a chain.

They are so interdependent and interrelated that the whole system may break down in the absence of either. Assessment not only follows but also leads learning, or vice versa. Based on this assumption, Greenstein (2010) points out that "when you use assessment consistently throughout instruction, it will help you move students from basic knowledge to deeper understanding and from knowledge and understanding to the higher cognitive levels of synthesis, analysis, and application" (p. 36). Thus, there has been an inclination to synchronize learning and assessment in order for them to boost each other. In short, learning without ongoing assessment is solely a short-term endeavor.

When diving deeper into the term and taking it into account individually, the definition of assessment depends upon which circumstances and how it will be applied. It may be a measurement scale showing a specific performance whereas it is nowadays more preferable if it reveals the improvement process throughout the course of study. These two assessment notions are terminologically called as summative and formative respectively. Brown (2004) thoroughly explains the former type of assessment as aiming "to measure, or summarize, what a student has grasped, and typically occurs at the end of the course or unit of instruction" and the latter as "evaluating students in the process of 'forming' their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them to continue that growth process" (p. 6). It is an undeniable fact that the current era and rising trends in education favor the latter form.

On the other hand, assessment which had been exposed to polarized discussions with testing for years has now faced with the problem of its most appropriate type in order to be able to draw a parallelism with learning for long-term purposes. Even though assessment has a more positive connotation compared with testing in the new pedagogical domain, debates over assessment have moved into the direction of whether it should be summative or formative, or both. Moreover, current discussions tend to focus on various applications of

formative assessment to be conducted within classrooms. Among these applications, the idea of student involvement to the assessment process is highly salient. This notion embodies quite a lot of implications in that "students decide whether the learning is worth the effort required to attain it. Students decide whether they believe they are capable of reaching the learning targets" (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis & Chappuis, 2004, p. 17). Unlike the conventional mentality, involving students in each step of the process, namely from learning to assessment, has become a concept of high priority. Although these processes used to be attributed to the teacher's task, it has come to be realized that they make sense with learners' participation as Wang (2011) highlights "even with the best teachers and methods, students are the only ones who can actually do the learning" (p. 273). In this respect, self-assessment that is the requirement of the formative assessment process has been one of the highly appreciated issues due to its nature of bringing authenticity into the classroom assessment and of providing feedback parallel with the latest reforms in education. Self-assessment puts the emphasis on the learner himself and his reflections into the process by serving for the purposes of Constructivist approach on a larger scale. In accordance with this view, Wang (2011) draws the framework of this concept as follows:

> Learning processes are individual, based on the learner's pre-knowledge and can only be monitored by the learner himself. In classroom terms this means that each learner will encounter the foreign language and the material through which he is expected to learn the language in an individual way, which varies from one learner to the other. That is why the focus has to be on the individual learner and on his needs in the learning process. (p. 275)

However, this does not necessarily mean that self-assessment has superseded with teacher assessment. It would be a fallacy to disregard the fact that "combining self-assessment

with teacher assessment means that the latter can become more effective" (Harris, 1997, p. 17).

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Writing skill, considered as the ultimate destination to reach in terms of proficiency in language acquisition, needs more up-to-date practices in today's classrooms. Conventional writing exercises within the classes might be making slight contributions to the learners' improvement; however, they fail to promote life-long learning as most of them are product-based. Besides, the feeling of assessed by a superior power restricts their production. Rather than stereotyped roles they take on, students need to be as much involved as they can in order to be competent in this skill. Due to the reforms in education aiming to raise their awareness, learners can go through a more conscious process via self-assessment which Brown (2004) labels under title of alternatives in assessment. It is obvious that the practices of self-assessment and reflection upon one's own work described as "two key skills for the student to learn in order to become an effective life-long learner" (Sullivan & Lindgren, 2002, p. 266) are likely to alter the aged atmosphere of the writing classes.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The overall objective of this study is to make the students to internalize the process of learning and assessment as "it is very difficult for students to achieve a learning goal unless they understand that goal and can assess what they need to do to reach it. So self-assessment is essential to learning" (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, and William, 2003, p. 49). From a deeper perspective, this study aims:

- to show the effects of self-assessment method in the writing skill on students,

- to understand whether self-assessment will make any contributions to the writing process,

- to get an insight about whether self-assessment of writing has any place in students' understanding of foreign language learning process,

- to get students' reflections about the writing process to shed light on further improvements,

- to create awareness towards the writing skill through self-assessment,

- and ultimately to make students more independent and autonomous learners.

1.5. Significance of the Study

Available studies in the literature fail to set a good example for the application of self-assessment practices. Moreover, "current assessment practices in higher education did not equip students well for a lifetime of learning and the assessment challenges they would face in the future" (Boud & Falchikov, 2006, p. 400). Thus, the lack of earlier inspiring application models and the assessment for prospective purposes has borne a necessity for a further analysis. Therefore, the researcher aims to obtain sound data about the effectiveness of an alternative assessment method on the improvement of her students' writing skill. Out of all the contemporary applications, self-assessment has been considered as the most appropriate in order to serve for the above-mentioned purposes. Upon the foreseeable benefits of self-assessment, Birjandi and Tamjid (2010) also state that:

> In order to compensate for the limitations of teacher-assessment, alternative assessment including self-assessment has been the focus of attention. In this modern view towards assessment, learners are trained to assess their own learning progress, and can identify their own strengths and weaknesses. (p. 211)

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This study also has a secondary mission as a fresh impetus to the overall teaching-learning environment since "used with skill, assessment can motivate the unmotivated, restore the desire to learn, and encourage students to keep learning, and it can actually create-not simply measure-increased achievement" (Stiggins et al., 2004, p. 3).

The current study aims to answer following research questions:

1. What is the role of self-assessment in students' perceived writing performance?

2. What is the role of self-assessment in terms of

   a. personality awareness?

   b. task awareness?

1.6. Operational Definitions

Throughout the study, there are six major frequently-used terms that require further clarification in order to avoid the likelihood of misconceptions. These terms are briefly explained below:

Assessment: The process of "the use of data from informal observations, student products, formal and systematic tests, and other measurements and evaluations that are typically used in educational settings" (Shermis & Di Vesta, 2011, pp. 2-3).

Alternative assessment: "Procedures and techniques which can be used within the context of instruction and can be easily incorporated into the daily activities of the school or classroom" (Hamayan, 1995, p. 213).

Formative assessment: "Any task or activity which creates feedback (or feed forward) for students about their learning" (Irons, 2008, p. 7).

Self-assessment: "A process of formative assessment during which students reflect on the quality of their work, judge the degree to which it explicitly stated goals or criteria, and revise accordingly" (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009, p. 13).

Language Awareness: "knowledge about language and languages as an important element in the education" (Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 2010, pp. 314-315).

*Personality Awareness: "*Personal identity, realistic self-esteem, self-direction, and socially responsible autonomy" (Kohonen, 2000, p. 14).

*Task Awareness: "*Understanding language as a linguistic system and learning the necessary communicative skills; meta-knowledge of language at the various levels of linguistic description" (Kohonen, 2000, p. 14).

Learner Autonomy: Students' being "involved in making decision about their own learning" (Balçıkanlı, 2010, p. 91).

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This study aims to explore the role of self-assessment (SA) practices in the improvement of learners' writing skills. In line with the stated purpose, this chapter presents a blend of wide variety of studies conducted in the field of language assessment. The first part of the chapter clarifies the theoretical notions underpinning SA by unfolding the differences of terms existing in language assessment jargon. The second part draws the framework of SA by touching upon various dimensions of the concept such as its benefits, drawbacks, concerns, and implementation challenges. The third part is dedicated to learner autonomy under which psychological considerations of SA practices are also discussed.

2.2. Theoretical Background of Self-Assessment

Despite the abundance of the available studies which provide a basis for SA in the literature, this chapter has the purpose of accumulating those whose common points will serve for the relevant objectives of this study. Thus, this chapter has been systematically categorized to show the relevance of each issue with the notion of SA.

2.2.1. Alternative Assessment

"Alternatives to standardized assessment have been referred to in the literature in many ways: 'alternative assessment,' informal assessment,' 'authentic assessment,' 'performance assessment,' 'descriptive assessment,' and 'direct assessment'" (Hamayan, 1995, p. 213). Although the existence of varied names in the literature seems to be confusing, most of them actually share similar characteristics in nature. For example, authentic

assessment is a form of assessment procedures where "the multiple forms of assessment that reflect student learning, achievement, motivation, and attitudes on instructionally-relevant classroom activities" (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996, p. 4) distinguish. "Authentic types of assessment may be perceived as realistic and relevant to the student's needs and interests if these assessments are meaningful, challenging, performance-driven, and if they integrate rather than fragment knowledge for students" (Butler & McMunn, 2006, p. 6). "Examples of authentic assessment include performance assessment, portfolios, and student self-assessment" (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996, p. 4). In addition to these, Brown (2004) introduces another term to the literature with a slight modification, alternatives in assessment, referring to contemporary applications to be conducted within the process. However it is named, what is certain in the attempts of coining new terms into the assessment jargon is that traditional assessment practices run short for the intended purposes. Ariafar and Fatemipour (2013) determine the lack of traditional assessment as follows:

> The traditional assessment methods are very limited in providing opportunities for learners to reflect on their learning and to monitor their own progress critically. With the lack of chance for learners to self-reflect and without learners' awareness of their abilities, weaknesses, strengths, and the progress they have made, it would not be easy for them to learn efficiently and it may hinder the development of the desired skills and capabilities. (p. 7)

Table 1 displays a clear summary of traditional assessment in comparison to alternative assessment practice. The analysis of the table proves why any alternatives to assessment were needed. Considering the qualities of alternative assessment, the modifications and regulations in the assessment system are likely to serve for long-term

purposes. In addition, these alternatives ensure the learner autonomy which was neglected in the former practices.

Table 1. Traditional and Alternative Assessment *(Brown, 2004, p. 13)*

Traditional Assessment	Alternative Assessment
One-shot, standardized exams	Continuous, long-term assessments
Timed, multiple-choice format	Untimed, free-response format
Decontextualized test items	Contextualized communicative tasks
Scores suffice for feedback	Individualized feedback and washback
Norm-referenced scores	Criterion-referenced scores
Focus on the "right" answer	Open-ended, creative answers
Summative	Formative
Oriented to product	Oriented to process
Non-interactive performance	Interactive performance
Fosters extrinsic motivation	Fosters intrinsic motivation

On the other hand, Boud and Falchikov (2006) also harshly criticize the traditional assessment which is being deprived of student involvement by stating it tends to "undermine students' capacity to judge their own work" (p. 403). Likewise, a great number of recent studies in the literature are mostly in favor of valuing students' reflections to reinforce their learning rather than excluding them in the course of assessment. All in all, "self-assessment is one form of alternative assessment which seeks to make the assessment process more student-centered so as to better support and maximize the learning taking place" (Weisi & Karimi, 2013, p. 732).

2.2.2. Classroom Assessment

Classroom assessment includes a formative cycle which puts the students' involvement at the center (see Fig. 1). "The main difference between classroom assessment and large-scale educational assessment is the context of the classroom. The learners are there as learners, and the teacher is there to engage with the learners in the learning process (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007, p. 24). Judging by Figure 1, classroom assessment calls for students in every phase of the process, namely from setting goals to the assessment depending on the fact that "assessment influences student perceptions of the curriculum and the ways in which they may engage in processes to foster lifelong learning skills" (Boud & Falchikov, 2006, p. 405).

Instructional plans and modifications are carried out.

Learning targets are clarified.

Student Involvement

Inferences, analysis of data, and interpretation are made.

Evidence is gathered in a variety of ways.
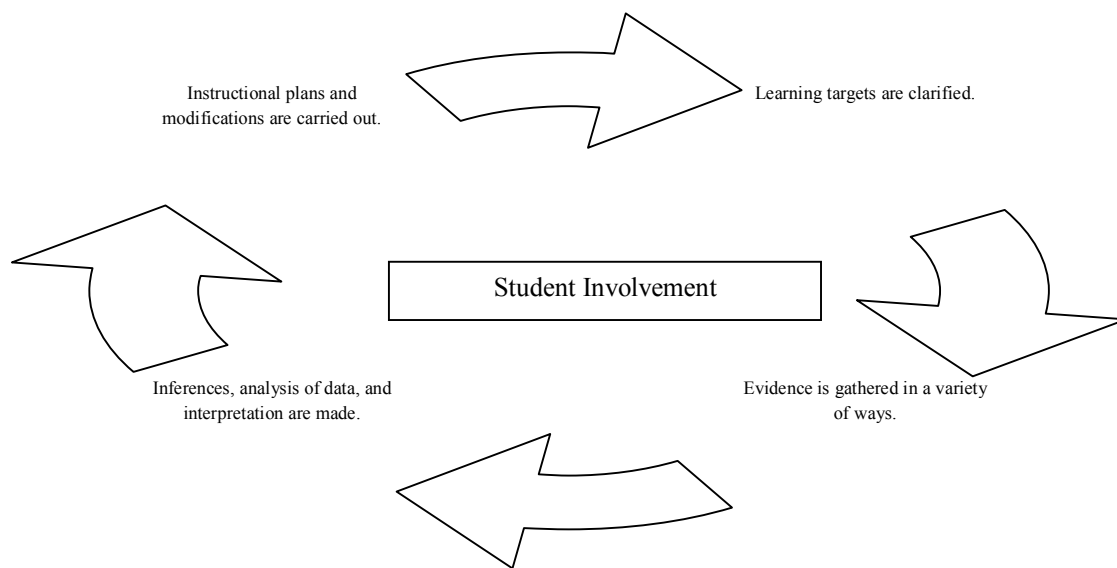
Figure 1. Classroom Assessment Cycle *(Butler & McMunn, 2006, p. xxxii)*

What is meant by the context in classroom assessment is not only students' direct involvement but also their interaction with the stakeholders which may be defined, in this sense, as their teachers, peers, curriculum or whoever is involved in the process. In accordance with this view, Fulcher and Davidson (2007) state that "how well they are progressing can be assessed only in relation to their involvement with the context and the

others with whom they interact in the process of learning. The context is part of the construct" (p. 25).

2.2.3. Assessment *of* Learning vs. Assessment *for* Learning

In its broadest interpretation, assessment is "about gathering evidence about where learners are, and providing feedback which helps them move on" (Stobart, 2008, p. 145). Cizek (1997) conceptualizes the same notion as "a planned process designed to accomplish a specific educational purpose" (p. 10). In addition, Lambert and Lines (2000) list the facts that assessment is based on as follows: "(1) assessment is a fact of life for teachers, part of what teachers do; (2) it is an organic part of teaching and learning; and (3) using assessment evidence is part of the planning process" (p. 2). Yet, such expressions demand more clarification since they are too superficial to determine the objectives of learning and to be able to schedule all the assessment dynamics accordingly. Therefore, in time, this lack has borne a necessity to narrow it down in order to best fit the intended purposes. While the assessment *of* learning (A*o*L) has been continuing its existence, a novel term of assessment *for* learning (A*f*L), firstly coined by Black and William in the mid-1990s, has started to be uttered by many scholars, administrators, and teachers in recent years. A*f*L with Black et al.'s (2003) brief and concise definition can be described as "any assessment for which the first priority is to serve the purpose of promoting students' learning" (p. 2). The innovations in the assessment system have commonly stressed the changing role of the learner; however, it does not necessarily mean that a learner himself is more important than learning. In contrast, as Stobart (2008) suggests, A*f*L serves for "the learning process, rather than learners' abilities and dispositions" (p. 145). Black et al. (2003) later enhance the same definition towards teachers' perspective as "usually informal, embedded in all aspects of teaching and learning,

and conducted by different teachers as part of their own diverse and individual teaching styles" (p. 2).

Apart from teacher and learner perspectives, there are some other researchers dealing with the issue from the perspective of teaching-learning process. For example, Butler and McMunn (2006) claim that "A*f*L requires that assessment occur regularly and that the information gained is used to mold teaching and learning" (p. xxv). Stobart (2008), similarly, shares the same opinion with them by expressing that A*f*L "is a conscious attempt to make assessment a productive part of the learning process. It does this by making the classroom assessment an essential part of effective teaching and learning" (p. 9). Attributing equal attention to the stated key points, it can be deduced that "a key goal of A*f*L is to progress to a classroom culture in which learners are increasingly able to judge the quality of their own and others' work and to understand what is involved in their effective learning" (Stobart, 2008, p. 149).

Figure 2 shows how A*f*L procedure works and how each component is interrelated with the others. It is also very clear to understand the regulations and interpretations teachers or students are supposed to make within the process from this diagram. It is a constructive cycle which lets the stakeholders of the process go back and repair their weaknesses and which gives the opportunity to take immediate actions.
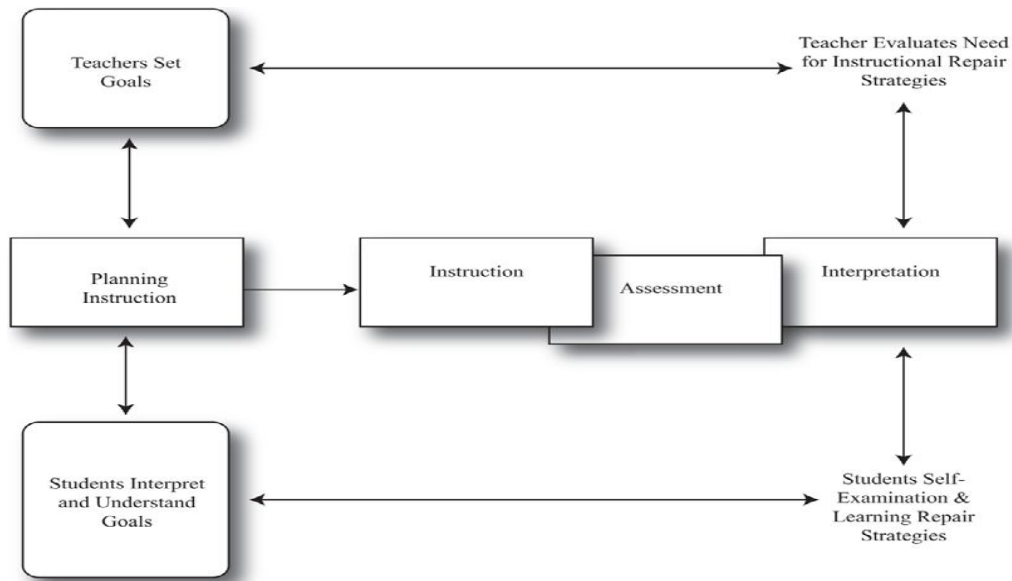
Figure 2. Assessment for learning: basic components, processes, and interactions.
(Shermis & Di Vesta, 2011, p. 84)

By comparison, the reason why A*o*L referring to the summative purposes of assessment has been overshadowed by A*f*L is that the latter "is differentiated from assessment *of* learning, which simply provides a means of rating students, or comparing them one to another. Assessment *of* learning, unlike A*f*L, does not focus on feedback for improvement" (Butler & McMunn, 2006, p. xxv). A*f*L; however, is a different concept that refers to formative assessment whose potential power is defined by Ecclestone (2005) as "to raise standards of attainment, to motivate learners and to make them more autonomous as learners" (p. 3). Lambert and Lines (2000) summarize the formative assessment cycle as follows:

Taking place during the course of study and concerned more with spelling out what has been learned, what is being learned and what the next learning steps may be: mistakes are valued because they can give clues to where there may be learning blocks. (p. 5)

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Formative assessment is a cycle embodying the steps of a continuous process of instruction, evaluation, and feedback as shown in Figure 3. It is "different from summative assessment in what it seeks to achieve. The primary focus of formative assessment (and formative feedback) is to help students understand the level of learning they have achieved and clarify expectations and standards" (Irons, 2008, p. 17).
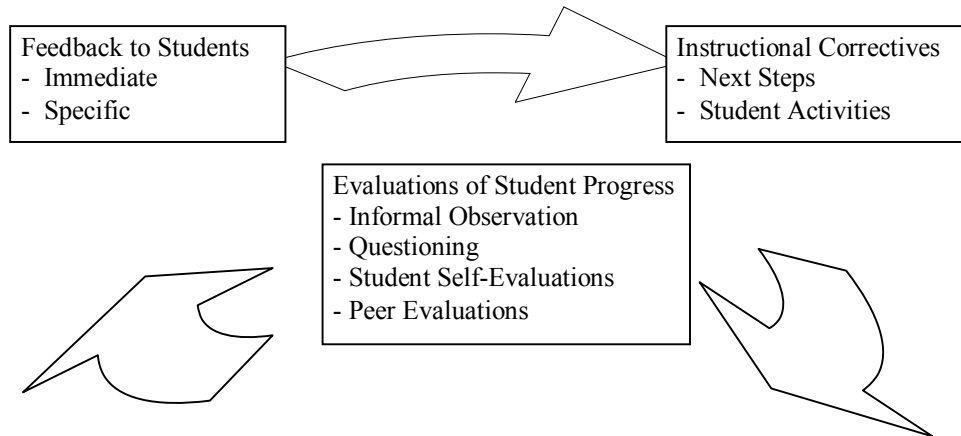
Figure 3. Formative Assessment Cycle *(McMillan, 2007, p. 3)*

In this figure, each item within the cycle proves to create the sustainability of a never-ending process to reach long-term goals. What is striking is the inclusion of innovative practices which confirms Boud and Falchikov (2006) in that "assessment activities should not only address the immediate needs of certification or feedback to students on their current learning, but also contribute in some way to their prospective learning" (p. 400). For this reason, in the formative assessment cycle, "feedback receives considerable attention because in A*f*L it is seen as the key to moving learning forward" (Stobart, 2008, p. 146). The rationale behind the necessity of providing feedback in the process is that "in the classroom learning environment it is feedback to the learner, from any source, that helps him or her to identify what needs to be learnt next to become an independent user of language in a new context" (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007, pp. 28-29).

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For some reasons, innovative practices of the formative assessment cycle are rather rare in the literature although the researchers tend to favor them. This creates a kind of discrepancy between what is adopted in theory and what is actually applied within the language classes. In terms of the choice of the assessment procedure, some researchers suggest that it does not have to be a two-pole discussion-referring to summative and formative types-; that is, the selection of either does not necessarily mean the ignorance of the other. Instead, Lambert and Lines (2000) offer an alternative of the combination of both types of assessment in order for them to yield better results as follows:

> If assessment for learning can be undertaken successfully, then surely we do not need to be worried about the summative tests which assess the product of learning. Pupils who have been taught to be deeper, more confident thinkers, and who have learned more effectively, can surely achieve better test score than otherwise they would have done. (p. 195)

2.3. Self-Assessment in Practice

In line with the endeavor of promoting life-long learning, the phenomenon of learner-centeredness has now come to light in educational contexts. "Modern democratic, collaborative and socioculturally oriented teaching strategies call for active participation by the students themselves in the monitoring and evaluation of their learning" (Oscarson, 2013, p. 2). In the framework of life-long learning, Boud and Falchikov (2006) argue that:

> Preparing students for lifelong learning necessarily involves preparing them for the tasks of making complex judgments about their own work and that of others and for making decisions in the uncertain and unpredictable circumstances in which they will find themselves in the future. (p. 402)

Black et al. (2003) also stress the unique contributions of peer and self-assessment practices to the life-long learning in that "they secure aims that cannot be achieved in any other way" (p. 53). In order to indicate the importance of individuals within the learning process, Boud and Falchikov (2006) further claim that "neither teachers nor a curriculum drive learning after graduation; it is the desires of learners, the initiatives they take and the context in which learning takes place that are powerful influences" (p. 402).

SA whose "definition depends on the purpose" (Saito, 2003, self-assessment section, para. 2) and whose role is described "as a supplementary source of information for the classroom teacher" (Oscarson, 2013, p. 8) is literally a contemporary practice which is regarded as a requisite of constructive curriculum and fashioned by all assessment types of formative purposes. Dlaska and Krekeler (2008) make a brief definition of SA by emphasizing learner-centeredness and its effect on learning in their statements "in language teaching, self-assessment (also termed self-rating, self-evaluation or self-appraisal) is often used to promote student-centered learning, to increase insight into the learning process and to encourage active learning" (p. 507). Considering the dynamics it requires and the cycle it has been through, it would not be wrong to state that SA refers to a multi-dimensional process since "it strengthens the student's own role both in learning activities and in the monitoring of achievement" (Oscarson, 2013, p. 8). Therefore, in order for SA practices to become successful, Dlaska and Krekeler (2008) advocate that "assessments, and most certainly self-assessments, are only useful if they indicate specific weaknesses and give an indication of learning needs" (p. 507). Apart from these pedagogic effects of SA, it holds a great number of cognitive and psychological implications; namely from independent learning to motivation, and from autonomy to awareness. For example, O'Malley and Pierce (1996) point out that "self-assessment promotes direct involvement in learning and the integration of cognitive

abilities with motivation and attitude toward learning" (p. 5). When considering the autonomy SA provides, O'Malley and Pierce (1996) also add that "students make choices, select learning activities and plan how to use their time and resources" (p. 5).

Even though the purpose of SA is context-specific, Andrade and Valtcheva (2009) acknowledge this practice as a tool "to identify areas of strength and weakness in one's work in order to make improvements and promote learning" (p. 12). This judgment is actually what has been commonly agreed upon in the literature. Harris (1997) summarizes the overall purposes as follows:

Self-assessment can help learners to locate their own strengths and weaknesses and then get them think about what they need to do, in order to get better marks. By encouraging such individual reflection, self-assessment can begin to make students see their learning in personal terms. (p. 13)

According to Oscarson (2013), however, "it should be viewed, rather, as a complement to other forms of assessment and, moreover, as much a part of the process of *learning* as a mechanism for assessment" (p. 4). Out of the targeted purposes, 'providing feedback' of SA is highly remarkable. Gardner (2000) handles with the self-monitoring aspect in that "it provides the learner with immediate feedback to determine language proficiency and to reflect on learning strategies" (p. 49). In this sense, the contribution of feedback into the autonomy of the learners which is the ultimate goal of constructivist approaches is best summarized by Shermis and Di Vesta (2011) "given appropriate feedback on different aspects of learning (such as thinking processes, conceptualizations learned, and interactions with others), students can learn to take responsibility for their own learning" (p. 101).

Apart from its purposes, there are a number of parties to be involved throughout SA process although the name implies as if SA were one-agent task to accomplish. The literature allocates a substantially large place to the role of the teacher in SA process. No matter how independent the learners may seem, in fact, "students often need support in understanding the importance of self-assessment, in becoming independent evaluators of their own progress, and in setting goals for future learning" (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996, p. 38). In accordance with this view, Stiggins and Chappius (2006) further add that:

Students and their teachers become partners in the classroom assessment process, relying on student involved assessment, record keeping, and communication to help students understand what success looks like, see where they are now, and learn to close the gap between the two. (p. 11)

With a cautious approach intending not to exclude teachers from SA process and implying the co-working of teacher and students, Ariafar and Fatemipour (2013) suggest that "if learners can do the self-assessment accurately enough, not only they don't have to depend completely on the teachers opinions, but also, they can make teachers aware of their individual needs" (p. 7). However, Gardner (2000) presents a different opinion towards what is commonly believed in the understanding of SA in that "self-assessment may be constructed by anyone, including, but not necessarily, the learner" (p. 50).

It is also noteworthy to touch upon the importance of getting students ready for the SA practices so as to make their reflections more meaningful. In line with this view, Irons (2008) notifies that "developing skills in self-assessment will help students in their reflective practice and their self-development but will also help them understand their assessment and feedback from other sources" (p. 79). While expecting the students to exhibit their reflections, "apprising students of the performance standards and criteria to which they will be held accountable helps students focus on precisely what it is that their work must show" (O'Malley

& Pierce, 1996, p. 38) will surely make contributions to the smooth flow of this process. Thus, in order to ensure the successful implementation of SA, Brown (2004) suggests the following guidelines: "(1) tell students the purpose of the assessment, (2) define the task(s) clearly, (3) encourage impartial evaluation of performance or ability, (4) ensure beneficial washback through follow-up tasks" (p. 276). Figure 4 also outlines the SA process with its general terms. This cycle needs to be maintained throughout the process. In the negligence of any of the steps, the effects of SA may not be attained or it may result in failure.

preparation → implementation → follow-up & evaluation → replication

Figure 4. Main stages in carrying out and evaluating a self-assessment study *(adapted from Falchikov, 2003, p. 104)*

Only after SA is implemented successfully does it offer numerous advantages "related both to the affective implication of students in introspecting about their learning processes and to students' participation in class management" (Azorin, 1991, p. 91). Upon the possible advantages of SA, Birjandi and Tamjid (2010) put different elements together as follows:

The techniques of self-assessment and evaluation play important part in evaluating the effectiveness of individual learning, enhancing their motivation, and training learners for life-long learning. Learners need to assess their progress and accomplishments in order to plan their future learning. It seems that self-assessment can not only raise the students' self-awareness about their meta-cognitive conditions, but also can promote their motivation. (p. 216)

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In an educational context, SA might be a reason for preference due to improvements of the fields from meta-cognitive skills such as high order thinking skills to affective considerations such as motivation. Regarding the pedagogic and affective considerations SA will reinforce, Brown (2004) also expresses that:

Considerably more time and higher institutional budgets are required to administer and score assessments that presuppose more subjective evaluation, more interaction in the process of offering feedback. The payoff for the latter, however, comes with more useful feedback to students, the potential for intrinsic motivation, and ultimately a more complete description of a student's ability. (p. 14)

As well as the abovementioned advantages, Weisi and Karimi (2013) put the emphasis on the issue of practicality since "self-assessment can save the teacher correction time and support students in dealing with often very individual weaknesses" (p. 731).

It is inevitable that SA will provide each stakeholder of this process with benefits. Figure 5 exhibits the shares that every party owns. It is highly crucial to see that teachers and institutions are presented a number of benefits either in a way of assisting students or providing them with formative feedback; however, more importantly, it is of high importance to realize that it is the learner who gets more benefits than other stakeholders.

Figure 5. The benefits of self-assessment *(Gardner, 2000, p. 51)*

In summary, with regard to students, "the effect can be both short-term, as when self-assessment influences student performance on a particular assignment, as well as long-term, as students become more self-regulated in their learning" (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009, p. 17). If the positive impacts it will create on other parties as well as those on students' are taken into consideration, SA is likely to deserve more implementation areas within the curriculum.

2.3.1. Self-Assessment of Writing Skill

Writing is a complex skill demanding a systematic order of many other elements such as genre (academic, business, personal writing), type (informative, persuasive, narrative and etc.), style (guided, controlled or free) and so forth. For this reason, out of all the skills to be acquired in foreign language learning, it is the writing which is the indicator of reaching the proficiency in that target language. In today's classrooms, however, it is a skill whose power is undermined. A majority of teachers, curriculum designers and even course books still tend to prefer not to include writing tasks and activities for fear of the workload it will cause. Indeed, it requires an organization of preparation, planning, instruction, and assessment procedures. However, it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that "writing to learn is a powerful tool for students. It helps them clarify their thinking and their understanding" (Fischer & Frey, 2007, p. 58). Thus, writing gives valuable cues to the teachers in the assessment process. "The ongoing assessment of student writing enables review of student growth over time and a determination of the success of instructional approaches" (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996, p. 136). In addition, "analyzing student writing is a great way for teachers to determine what their students know" (Fischer & Frey, 2007, p. 57). By the help of students' reflections through writing, teachers can get the opportunity to plan the next steps accordingly. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) also acknowledge writing assessment as a tool for determining "if changes in instruction are required to meet student needs" (p. 136).

On the other hand, reinforcing writing skill with SA practices yields quite successful results in terms of prospective learning targets since "self-assessment encourages students to think about their purpose in writing and to reflect on what and how much they are learning" as well as "the type of reflection needed to gain increased control as a writer" (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996, p. 150). In order for SA of writing skill to become effective, Harris (1997) points out that "it is essential to establish clear criteria for students to use when they assess their own performance" (p. 16).

2.3.2. Concerns about Self-assessment

"Because self-assessment is performed through complex cognitive processes which are affected by many uncontrollable factors, there still remains much disagreement in the discussion regarding the effective use of self-assessment" (Saito, 2003, conclusion section, para. 1). Having examined the studies covering SA practices in the literature, the most common items that are seen as a pitfall in the assessment process are listed here:

a. Subjectivity: It is "a primary obstacle to overcome. Students may be either too harsh on themselves or too self-flattering, or they may not have the necessary tools to make an accurate assessment" (Brown, 2004, p. 270). Blue (1994) shares the same opinion stating that "it is widely recognized that learners may find it difficult to be objective about their own language level, or that they may not have the necessary expertise and experience to make judgments of this sort" (p. 3). Irons (2008) also mentions the similar difficulties that the students experience in providing feedback. Subjectivity is actually the natural outcome of SA as the process itself depends on the individuals and their reflections. For the solution of this problem, Saito (2003) offers that "because the students' self-ratings are greatly affected by subjective errors, the results must be interpreted with caution when used for the purpose of placement, certification, diagnosis, and admission" (para. 5). Owing to a special training and

expertise, this may be decreased to some extent but admittedly, it is unlikely to eliminate such an issue.

b. <u>Unreliability</u>: SA studies in the literature mostly encounter with the doubt of reliability which Gardner (2000) describes as discouraging for teachers and learners. Most of the studies base their reliability judgments on the assumption that students "don't have the pedagogic abilities to be constructive and supportive in providing feedback" (Irons, 2008, p. 80) nor do they grasp the criteria for assessment. However, Black (2001) argues that:

> The main problem that those developing self-assessment encounter is not the problem of reliability and trustworthiness: it is that pupils can only assess themselves when they have a sufficiently clear picture of the targets that their learning is meant to attain. (p. 18)

Oscarson (2013), on the other hand, strongly disagrees with those criticizing SA for being an unreliable tool in assessment and acknowledging SA process as delivering all the assessment procedure to the learners in that:

> While it is true that a person's estimate of his/her own ability is inherently subjective, that does not necessarily mean that it is unreliable, or that it is unimportant or without value. Both theoretical work and practical advances indicate that subjectively grounded assessment can yield reasonably dependable results, as well as have other positive effects. (p. 1)

To sum up, it would be rather misleading only to consider the possible difficulties regardless of the benefits of SA. "Undoubtedly, reliability is an issue that needs to be kept in mind but it is not one which should prevent self-assessment from being tried" (Gardner, 2000, p. 53).

c. <u>Inferiority of teachers</u>: There is also a considerable amount of research questioning the role of teachers in the SA process. Moreover, some studies include the students' perceptions of the role of their teachers. What is salient in those studies is that students "worry that they are doing the teacher's job for them" (Irons, 2008, p. 80) and even some are doubtful about the subject knowledge of their teachers. In this sense, Azorin (1991) also states that:

> The chance to give their opinions about the way a course can be improved could generate some expectations in the students which may not be fulfilled, thus creating a feeling of disappointment. Some students, particularly in those contexts characterized by a teacher-centered situation, may feel uneasy about <criticizing> the teacher, whereas in other contexts the reverse case, that is, irresponsible criticism out of all proportion, is also possible. (p. 94)

To remedy these problems, the literature attributes the main responsibility to the teacher. Drawing the attention to teachers' roles, it is commonly recognized that "peer and self-assessment will only thrive if teachers help their students, particularly low-attainers, to develop the skill" (Black et al., 2003, p. 52). Gardner (2000) also concludes that "the potential pitfalls …can be neutralized by teachers who have skills and experience that exceed those of students" (p. 55).

2.3.3. Pitfalls in the Implementation of Self-Assessment

New and radical applications in the education system take some time to be welcomed. The literature proves that SA is one of those implementations which may be found rather confusing and challenging both for teachers and students. From the students' perspective, "when innovations in learning practices, including formative assessment, are introduced, many pupils will resist attempts to change accustomed routines, for any such change is

threatening, and emphasis on the challenge to think for yourself (and not just work harder) can be disturbing to many" (Black, 2001, p. 19).

The common opinion about SA practices in the relevant studies is the necessity of careful design and implementation. Those studies call for being systematic in order to get benefit from the practices on behalf of formative assessment. Brown (2004), for example, points out that "self- and peer-assessment are among the best possible formative types of assessment and possibly the most rewarding, but they must be carefully designed and administered for them to reach their potential" (p. 276). Harris (1997) approves the need for being systematic regarding the fact that "if self-assessment has been systematic, learners should be able to look back and assess their own progress" (p. 18). Gardner (1999) shares more or less the same opinion as his counterparts stating that "there are great benefits to be derived from self-assessment but it is a technique that needs to be introduced carefully and accompanied by considerable awareness raising and support" (p. 49). Harris (1997) also adds the following statements about the challenge of self-assessment:

It is a practical tool, if implemented systematically and integrated into everyday classroom activities. Self-assessment can not only make students more active, it can assist them with the daunting task of learning how to communicate in another language. Above all, they can be helped to perceive their own progress and encouraged to see the value of what they are learning. (p. 19)

Because of the demanding feature of SA and all these hardships in putting it into practice there may have been abstention towards SA applications, which leads the literature to be lack of sound data on this issue. Yet, Saito (2003) argues the contributions of SA practices as follows:

Despite a number of difficulties in appropriately implementing self-assessment, the ways in which we resolve these issues will certainly provide valuable insights into the nature of language teaching, learning, and assessment. When these challenges are met, it is hoped that language institutions and classroom teachers will consider the potential of self-assessment as both a valid and reliable supplement to traditional assessment. (conclusion section, para.1)

2.4. The Ultimate Destination: Learner Autonomy

The literature has a great amount of studies stressing the psychological considerations of SA. Judging by the order of importance in them, two major distinguishing notions; that is, motivation and awareness, are here worth-mentioning since most of the studies and research targeting SA practices give a wide coverage on them. To give a few examples, Dlaska and Krekeler (2008) stress the place of both by pointing out that "self-assessment procedures can enhance the awareness of one's performance, they can increase learner motivation, and shift the decision making process in the direction of the learner" (p. 515). Gardner (2000), on the other hand, notes that "self-assessment does not always demonstrate success but where it does, even on a small scale, learners' motivation will be enhanced" (p. 52). Similarly, according to Birjandi and Tamjid (2010) "self-assessment can not only raise the students' self-awareness about their meta-cognitive conditions, but also can promote their motivation" (p. 216). Related to the desired impact of self-assessment on the attitudes of learners, it is stated that "all the goals, efforts, achievements, self-judgments, and self-reactions combine and affect self-confidence of the learner in a positive way" (Ariafar & Fatemipour, 2013, p. 7). On the other hand, in the subtexts of these two notions, it is not surprising to come up with diverse messages. For example, in a language learning context, "some learners seem to be very critical towards their own performances; others appear confident that their linguistic

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performance is invariably of an excellent standard" (Dlaska & Krekeler, 2008, p. 514). What is more, it is ordinary to observe some students behaving timidly and evaluating their performances neither insufficient nor superior. However, adopting a moderating role as well as the power of their formative feedback to these students' overrated or underestimated performances, teachers can overcome possible psychological problems as well.

In order to motivate learners the literature also offers a number of factors: "(1) involving students in their own assessment, (2) matching assessment strategies to student learning, and (3) considering thinking styles and using assessments to adjust classroom environment" (Butler &McMunn, 2006, p. 159). The effect of these factors on motivation is undeniably great and powerful, which is likely to result in an increase in the awareness level of students. Upon the necessity of creating awareness throughout the process, Rinkevičienė and Zydantė (2002) suggest that "raising students' awareness of the learning processes should become an integral part of the general language curriculum, thus increasing their ability to review their own progress, accomplishments and future learning directions" (p. 99).

Unlike the traditional role of the students in the assessment process, assigning the responsibility of the learning to students not only improves their thinking skills but it also makes them aware of their performances and themselves. In line with this view, Kostopolou (2010) contends that:

Through the process of self-assessment, which requires critical reflection and introspection, learners develop critical-analytical skills and a better self-awareness. Furthermore, by being treated as equal partners in the learning and assessment processes, their self-esteem and self-respect are enhanced and they develop a positive self-concept since their opinions are valued. (p. 295)

A deeper look into the term of awareness in the process of SA brings in a new understanding into the knowledge of the concept. However, the breadth of the term is liable to create confusion. In this sense, the literature clarifies it making the distinction of the types of awareness by the help of Kohonen (2000) as follows:

In terms of the conception of man, the student is seen as a self-directed, intentional person who can be guided to develop his or her competences in three inter-related areas of knowledge, skills and awareness: (a) personal awareness and self-direction, (b) awareness of learning processes, and (c) awareness of the language and communication. (p. 90)

All the psychological implications of SA gather around an ultimate point, which is the main concern of contemporary approaches aiming to locate the student at the center of his own learning and assessment. "The major assumption underlying the learner-centered philosophy is that it is impossible to teach learners everything they need to know and learning does not stop outside the classroom" (Bullock, 2011, p. 114). Learning has been now regarded as matter of individual endeavor. Based on such a theory, in the last few decades, educational reforms introduced a brand-new term: *learner autonomy*, which is defined by *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* as follows:

In language teaching, the principle that learners should be encouraged to assume a maximum amount of responsibility for what they learn and how they learn it. This will be reflected in approaches to needs analysis, content selection, and choice of teaching materials and learning methods. (p. 326)

In terms of the scope of autonomy, the emphasis implying the students' involvement in every phase of the curriculum is fairly remarkable. Such an emphasis confirms the fact that autonomy "derives from tacit and overt metacognitive planning and from monitoring and

renewing one's learning" (Ecclestone, 2005, p. 34). As for the question of 'why autonomy?', Ushioda (2011) has the opinion that "classroom practices that promote autonomy encourage students to develop and express their own personal and valued identities through the language they are learning" (p. 228).

Perhaps, the literature incorporates too few studies where the terms of SA and autonomy are not pronounced in the same sentence. The studies associated with the concept of autonomy mostly gather around SA applications by emphasizing that "to learn, students must be active participants rather than passive receivers of teacher-disseminated information. They must become self-assessors rather than relying on the teacher as the sole judge of the quality of their work" (Butler & Mc Munn, 2006, p. 151). Thus, SA is acknowledged as "not only a means to an end (autonomous life-long learning), but an end itself (a crucial component of autonomy)" (Javaherbakhsh, 2010, p. 213). Upon the relationship between autonomy and SA, Gardner (2000) puts his opinions forth as follows:

> Autonomous learning is about individualization of learning and self-assessment helps learners monitor their individualized progress. An important aspect of the monitoring process for learners is simply knowing how they are doing in their learning. They want to know if they are becoming more proficient users of the target language. (p. 51)

Indeed, SA, "one of the pillars of learner autonomy" (Javaherbakhsh, 2010, p. 214), may be considered as one of the most appropriate practices in order to supply a convenient atmosphere for students to monitor their learning. In accordance with this view, Gardner (2000) contends that:

> Autonomous learners decide what to learn, when to learn, and how to learn. Self-assessors decide what to assess, when to assess and how to assess it. Autonomous

learners take the responsibility for their learning and this includes taking responsibility

for monitoring their progress. (p. 51)

To sum up, Brown (2004) draws the conclusion that "the ability to set one's own goals

both within and beyond the structure of a classroom curriculum, to pursue them without the

presence of an external prod, and to independently monitor that pursuit are all key to success"

(p. 270).

CHAPTER 3

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the administered methodology in order to reveal the role of the self-assessment practices on the students' writing skills. First of all, the subjects of this study and the setting where the study was carried out were explained. After that, the research design of the current study with its rationale was clarified. Next, data collection tools in accordance with the nature of this study were listed. Then, the pilot study was explained before the actual process was discussed. Finally, the main study was presented session by session in detail.

3.2. Participants

The participants of this study were a class of 22 freshman students starting to study in the Department of Automotive Engineering at Mersin University in 2013-2014 Academic Year. Eighteen of the participants were male and the rest four were female. Their ages ranged from 18-21. They were all native speakers of Turkish. In terms of their English learning background, Table 2 shows the distribution of the students according to years.

Table 2. Number of students according to their English learning background

Years of experience	Number of students
0-5 years	1
6-10 years	17
11-15 years	4

Considering the results from the Exemption Test applied at the very beginning of the term, the level of the students was identified as Elementary even though the majority of them took at least six years of English course. Out of those who voluntarily took the test, none was able to pass. The main reason for selecting this group of students as the subjects was the suitability and manageability of the population for the scope of the intended study.

Throughout the application stages of this research, the students were encouraged to attend all the sessions since the process demanded continuity and it would affect the results. Figure 6 shows the outline of the sessions together with the density of the population attended each session.
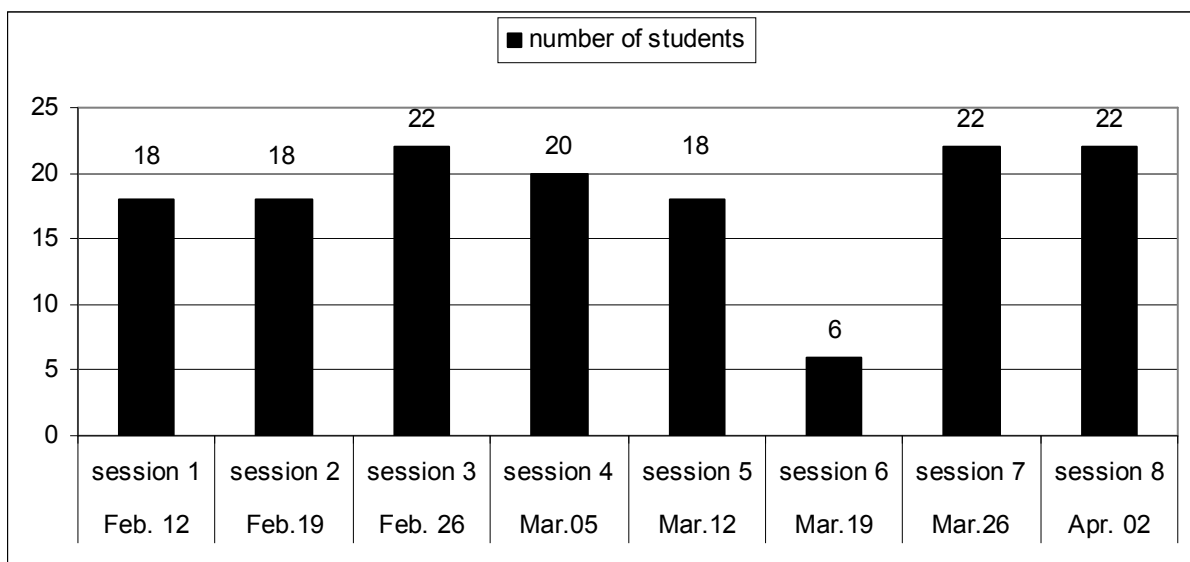
Figure 6. Number of Students Attended the Sessions/ per week

3.3. Context of the Study

The Department of Automotive Engineering is located in Tarsus Technology Faculty of Mersin University. Instead of compulsory preparatory class for a year, students had four hours of English in the curriculum each week. The Higher School of Foreign Languages in Mersin University set a syllabus for faculty students and parallel to that syllabus it was agreed

upon to cover a course book called *English for Life / Elementary* by Tom Hutchinson. In the preliminary study of the current research, the researcher planned to divide these four hours into two as Main Course which was their requirement to pass the class and two as writing sessions which were systematically integrated into the curriculum so as to fill the gaps of the course book. Throughout the study, the researcher stayed loyal to this schedule in order not to fall behind in either application.

3.4. Research Design

The objectives of this study and the setting which the researcher was in required the adoption of a qualitative case study. One of the main differences between the qualitative and quantitative studies is that "quantitative researchers work in artificial settings such as laboratories or construct artificial situations to examine human behavior; qualitative researchers work in real-life settings" (Scott & Usher, 2011, p. 97). In addition, qualitative studies give the opportunity to "analyse the various factors which motivate people to behave in a particular manner or which make people like or dislike a particular thing" (Kothari, 2004, p. 3). In terms of the design, the main reason for administering a case study was that the researcher intended to observe the effects of self-assessment on a single group of students. Thus, when compared with other studies, "they are arguably most appropriate for teacher-generated research" (McDonough & McDonough, 1997, p. 203). Kothari (2004) also defines a case study as follows:

> Case study method is a form of qualitative analysis where in careful and complete observation of an individual or a situation or an institution is done; efforts are made to study each and every aspect of the concerning unit in minute details and then from case data generalisations and inferences are drawn. (p. 113)

Instead of spreading the study over a larger scale, this case study method gave the researcher the opportunity for intensive analysis in her own setting by providing feedback about her own teaching and feed forward for prospective objectives of the course. In this sense, "it is a method of study in depth rather than breadth" (Kothari, 2004, p. 113).

The ultimate purpose of conducting a case study for this research was to enquire the practical side of the self-assessment and to get an insight of the potential place of this application in the language learning environment.

3.5. Instruments

Self-assessment practices call for specific instruments to collect data. "A number of channels can be used to aid students in their self-assessment including journals, checklists, rubrics, questionnaires, interviews and student-teacher conferences" (Price, Pierson & Light, 2011, p. 6). Among these tools, the current study benefited from self-reflection checklists, student journals, teacher journals and an open-ended questionnaire. Each tool making contributions to the data collection process was briefly explained one by one.

3.5.1. Self-Reflection Checklists

Based on the assumption that "with self-assessment of productive skills, it is essential to establish clear criteria for students to use when they assess their own performance" (Harris, 1997, p. 1), the researcher determined the behavioral objectives to be gained in the schedule (see Appendix 1). In line with these objectives, the researcher devised self-assessment checklists (Appendix 2) to give the students at the end of each writing session. The checklists consisted of items, up to eight, aiming to reveal their performance, motivation and awareness. Throughout the process, the participants were supposed to fill them by marking the appropriate column for themselves. They were asked to assess themselves as *successful, partly successful* and *unsuccessful* in the assigned tasks. Regarding the competence level of

the students in the target language, the researcher intentionally prepared the checklists in the students' native language; however, English translations of each item were provided in the subsequent lines.

The purpose for collecting data through checklists was to supply the researcher with quick and immediate feedback about the students' understanding. In addition, "using self-assessment checklists also give the teacher complete information about the students' progress and their failure in the process of learning" (Javaherbakhsh, 2010, p. 217).

When the whole process was scheduled at first, the researcher had made a draft of all eight checklists in advance including items compatible with the objectives of each session. However, it then turned out to be better to adapt them before the sessions since each session was interrelated with the previous and the subsequent ones.

3.5.2. Student Journals

The second tool of data collection process was student journals, also termed in the literature as learner diaries acknowledged as a "useful instrument for helping students to focus on their own performance" (Harris, 1997, p. 17). Considering the assertion that "an ideal genre for self-assessment is through journals, where students engage in more open-ended assessment and/or make their own further comments on the results of completed checklists" (Brown, 2004, p. 272), the researcher provided the checklists to be pursued by student journals every other week. In order to avoid any trouble, the researcher herself prepared a journal file assigned for each student's name. The file consisted of four separate journal sheets (Appendix 3) with questions to be answered every other session. The students were responsible for submitting these files to the teacher at the end of the process.

In terms of the structure of the questions, a systematic order was followed. There were maximum four questions in the journals. In the first two journals students were guided with some questions to be able get their reflections better and to inform the students about the expectation of the researcher on the task; however, in the third journal activity, there were three questions and the last one had no questions at all. For the researcher, the rationale behind this strategy was to get as much reflection as she could without sharply structuring their answers. Similar to the checklists, the instructions in the journals were also supplied in both languages, English and Turkish in order to help draw their attention to the target language use as well.

The preference for journal writing during the study resulted from the fact that it is "an effective tool in helping the learners 'think aloud' on paper, and get involved in the process of their own learning" (Birjandi & Tamjid, 2010, p. 216). In accordance with this view, Nazzal (2011) suggests that "this strategy of self-assessment allows students to reflect on their learning and also provides them an ongoing written record of their learning. The journal allows students to organize, formulate, internalize, explain and evaluate concepts and processes" (p. 31).

Indeed, journal writing was highly crucial within this process since it was a kind of private interaction between the students and the teacher. A teacher might obtain invaluable feedback by taking advantage of this implementation. On the other hand, Sadler and Good (2006) reveal another reality as follows:

Responses that are more open-ended call for more time and effort on the teacher's part to read, correct, provide feedback, and grade fairly. For most teachers, increasing the sophistication of their assessment tools burdens them by leaving less time for other activities. (p. 2)

Such a judgment on the issue is not completely wrong and it is also one of the factors which hinders journal writing to be implemented in language classrooms. However, when taking the contributions it would make into account; this tool is well worth the effort to be made.

3.5.3. Teacher Journal

Throughout the implementation stage of this study, the researcher also kept a journal based on her observations and notes during the sessions. These notes mostly included her students' attitudes and reactions to the tasks, their participation, and their contribution to the process. As the number of the students allowed the teacher to be in good touch with her students individually during the sessions, teacher journal provided the researcher with strong and specific feedback in the course of the current research. The researcher preferred to write her reflections in English into the journals.

Thanks to its nature of reflecting the writer's expectations, awareness, and priorities, keeping journals which Birjandi and Tamjid (2010) describe as "a means of introspection" (p. 213) indeed gives invaluable hints about the outcome of research. For this reason, "journals can be regarded as instruments for formative evaluation, in the sense that they inform us about possible problems and appropriate modifications in our teaching process or in the curriculum as a whole" (Azorin, 1991, p. 95).

3.5.4. Self-assessment Questionnaire

As a last tool, the students were asked to evaluate the whole process in the questionnaire form (Appendix 4). The reason why the researcher wanted to use the questionnaire was that "the self-assessment questionnaire encourages students to evaluate their own understanding of the lesson and its concepts" (Nazzal, 2011, p. 32). All of the items

in the questionnaire were devised by the researcher herself. They were designed in a systematic order ranging from general questions to more specific ones. As the population of the participants did not let the researcher make generalization as well as not being suitable for quantitative data, she preferred to devise the questionnaire in an open-ended form. It consisted of 7 questions each of which asked them to evaluate the eight-week process contrary to what was expected them in the checklists and journals. The students were given some time to answer these questions.

3.6. Data Collection Procedure

Having decided on the instruments, the researcher scheduled the process as in Table 3. Every session ended with a checklist and students were asked to write in their journals every other week. Meanwhile, the teacher wrote in her journal after each session. Lastly, the whole process was evaluated through a self-assessment questionnaire by the students.

Table 3. The schedule of data collection process

SESSIONS	DATA COLLECTION TOOLS		
1	Checklist 1		Teacher Journal 1
2	Checklist 2	Student Journal 1	Teacher Journal 2
3	Checklist 3		Teacher Journal 3
4	Checklist 4	Student Journal 2	Teacher Journal 4
5	Checklist 5		Teacher Journal 5
6	Checklist 6	Student Journal 3	Teacher Journal 6
7	Checklist 7		Teacher Journal 7
8	Checklist 8	Student Journal 4	Teacher Journal 8
	Self-Assessment Questionnaire		

On the other hand, after a long analysis of available books on writing skill, the researcher preferred to adapt *Ready to Write 1* for her research process whose syllabus was found the closest to that of course book. Therefore, taking the time-constraint into account, six chapters with their appropriate tasks were adapted for classroom use by omitting some sections. Appendix 1 lists the schedule of writing sessions including behavioral objectives.

3.6.1. Piloting

Because of the lack of similar applications in the history of targeted study field, conducting a pilot study was essential. Thus, the researcher applied a two-week pilot study on the same group of students. It was at the end of the Fall Semester of 2013-2014 Academic Year.

3.6.1.1. Objectives of the Pilot Study

As the current study had multi-dimensions, it was usual to expect some unusual problems to happen. Therefore, by the help of piloting, the researcher aimed to preview the flow of the application process in advance. This would help her take immediate actions in case an unexpected problem occurred. On the other hand, piloting would be informative about the accuracy and efficiency about teacher-made instruments which had been never used before. Furthermore, from the students' side, piloting would be a rehearsal to accustom them to a new application.

3.6.1.2. Instruments of Pilot Study

In order to conduct the pilot study smoothly, the researcher benefited from the same instruments to be used in the actual process. This would be helpful if changes or modifications on the instruments were needed. Therefore, depending on the schedule to be followed, two checklists (Appendix 5) were given to the students at the end of each session.

The first checklist was designed with 9 items in the students' mother tongue and the second one consisted of 11 items. The students were asked to assess themselves as *successful, partly successful* and *unsuccessful* in these checklists.

As a second instrument, a sample of student journals was used (see Appendix 6). The journal included three open-ended questions leading students to think back and write their reflections. They were asked to write into their journals after the second session.

The last instrument was the teacher journal where she reflected her observation. The researcher kept these journals just after the sessions.

3.6.1.3. Procedures for Data Collection in Piloting

Pilot Session 1: After a short introduction of the course, the students were directed to the Unit 1 which starts with the simple sentence structures in English. The teacher spent a considerable amount of time on the difference between a sentence and a phrase with various examples from the book. Next, the teacher asked the students to produce sentences about themselves. By walking around the classroom, she helped them correct the phrases into sentences. Secondly, the teacher briefly went over the capitalization rules for about 10 minutes. Their knowledge on capital letters was reinforced with some editing activities in the book. Thirdly, having analyzed the rules of forming a paragraph, students were asked to combine their sentences into a paragraph form. The teacher collected their papers and she gave them a checklist in order to assess their performance at the end of the session.

Pilot Session 2: In this session, following the first week, the teacher and the students focused on the paragraph form. The teacher explained how a paragraph should look like through sample paragraphs. In Unit 2, the students were asked to produce sentences about their families. So, they wrote some sentences about one of their family members in the allocated

time. Then, the teacher showed them how to connect similar sentences and how to divide different ideas in a paragraph. They made exercises from their own sentences on the board. It was a whole-class activity and they learnt to use simple connectors like 'and/but' appropriately. In the last section, they covered the rules for giving titles to the written paragraphs. There were some exercises related to the titles in the book. According to the rules, they chose the best title for the given paragraphs. The session ended with the checklist and the teacher asked them to write their reflections in two weeks into their journals.

3.6.1.4. Findings and Implications for the Main Study

A detailed analysis of the pilot study provided the researcher with a few useful suggestions for the main study. First of all, it was found out that allocated time for the sessions was not long enough to meet the objectives of the particular session. During the sessions, the teacher either had to rush or huddle some parts without making sure about her students' understanding. In order to overcome this problem, the researcher decided to decrease the number of objectives by dividing some units into two sessions. Secondly, in terms of checklists, the number of items was too many, which caused distraction in students' concentration. Therefore, the researcher limited the number of items as eight at most in the subsequent checklists. Moreover, the researcher anticipated that it would be a good idea to present the items in the checklists both in native and target languages so that the students could be able to be exposed to latter more.

Data gained throughout the pilot sessions supplied significant implications for the journal application as well. For example, the researcher realized that the questions in the draft journal were too general to obtain sound data concerning the results of the study. Thus, she aimed to address more target-driven questions in the journals of the main study.

3.6.2. Main Study

Having worked through the piloting and considered the limitations, the researcher initiated the main study. The actual application process for the research lasted from 19 February to 6 April covering an eight-week period in the Spring Semester. The summary of each session was briefly presented as follows:

Session 1: The lesson started with the review of Units 1 and 2 in the book which had been covered in the pilot sessions. Among them, paragraph structure, capitalization, and punctuation were emphasized. The teacher tested their understanding through some sample paragraphs by asking whether they had an acceptable paragraph form or not.

The new unit was on writing about their free-time activities. For this task, first of all, the teacher walked around the class and asked their free-time activities. Then, the teacher drew the students' attention to sample paragraphs on free-time activities in the book and they analyzed those paragraphs for a while. For example, they were asked to evaluate those paragraphs in terms of their structure. As they learnt the basic components of a paragraph, the teacher intended to assess whether they got the idea of a sound paragraph form. They looked at the sample paragraphs by showing the components as topic sentence, supporting sentences and concluding sentence. They identified them in the paragraphs. In the last part of the session, the teacher started to teach how a topic sentence should be written after various topic sentence samples were examined. Only when the teacher made sure about their understanding did she ask them to try to write a rough paragraph about their free-time activities. While they were writing, the teacher walked around the room to provide help. They were encouraged to use dictionaries as well. They all got involved in the task and the teacher collected their paragraphs in the end. Lastly, the students were given Checklist 1 and some time to fill in them.

Session 2: The teacher started the session by handing out the paragraphs that they had written previous week with their edited version and suggestions on them. They seemed interested in their mistakes on those papers. After a while, the class moved to the chapter in the book. It was about writing an organized paragraph step by step. For this task, the teacher determined the topic at first; staying healthy. Then, she asked them to brainstorm on the topic and wrote their ideas on the board randomly. In the next step, she asked them to classify these ideas by eliminating some of them. In order to ensure their understanding about writing a paragraph and to make them feel secure, the teacher conducted this task as a whole-class activity and offered to construct a paragraph altogether on the board. They all followed the requirements of writing a paragraph such as writing a topic sentence appropriate for the topic, supporting the topic sentence, and writing a concluding sentence parallel to the topic sentence. After this task, the teacher directed the students to the exercises in the book. These exercises included the review of parts of the paragraph and identifying their places in it. The session ended with students' evaluation of their performances through Checklist 2. Lastly, the teacher reminded them to write in their journals and bring them back for the next session. She explained some points on how to write into the journals and replied a few questions of them for a while.

Session 3: Having collected the journals from the students, the teacher initiated the third session. It was about writing a process paragraph. For this task, the students firstly did some exercises on putting the procedures into the correct order in the book. The teacher, at this point, emphasized the importance of chronological order in this type of paragraphs. In order to improve their understanding, she benefited from the exercises including the diagrams of a process such as cooking a dinner, making a cake, and mending a bike. After these exercises, the teacher taught how to use the signal words indicating a process in a paragraph. It took a while to show them with some sample paragraphs on the board and from the book. In these

exercises, they either underlined the signal words or supplied them into the missing parts. The students seemed to grasp the targeted points so the teacher checked their understanding and performance through Checklist 3. After they had filled in them, the session was over.

<u>Session 4:</u> The teacher came to the class with their journals given feedback on them and she distributed to the owners. Then, she intentionally gave them some time to look at their journals and read what was written by the teacher. There were some questions about the journals and she replied them. When they moved to the new session, they were asked to write a process paragraph which they covered the previous week. There were some suggestions about the topics on the book. The teacher asked the students to choose one of them and go step by step from brainstorming to writing the final draft as they learnt in the former sessions. Most of them really managed to follow the steps. Those who had difficulties in organizing their ideas and thoughts asked help from the teacher. During the writing activity, the teacher reminded the important points that they should consider such as chronological order and supplying the signal words. This task lasted for about a session. Having collected their papers, the teacher gave them Checklist 4 to fill in. Lastly, she reminded them to write in their journals 2 and not to forget to bring them back in the next session.

<u>Session 5:</u> The products of the students that they had written the previous session showed that there were some problems related to the process paragraph. Although the teacher was supposed to go on with the new chapter, she preferred to go over the process paragraph one more time with some different tasks than before. First of all, she showed some slides consisting of various process paragraph examples. As a whole class activity, they analyzed the components of those paragraphs by identifying the chronological order, signal words, topic-concluding sentence agreement and supporting sentences one by one in each paragraph. Only when the teacher made sure about their understanding did she give their papers back for self-

check. On a different slide, she reflected the guidelines to follow while writing an organized process paragraph. What she asked her students to do was to check their own paragraphs according to those guidelines and put a tick or cross next to each item. After all, she collected their papers back and gave them Checklist 5 to fill in. The session finished after the journals were handed out to the teacher with the checklists.

Session 6: Unfortunately, the population of the class was very low this week. Yet, it was enough to initiate the new session. One more time the session started with the distribution of their journals with the feedback on them. The teacher waited for a while for the questions and overview of the journals. Next, the new session was initiated with the Chapter 5. It was about writing about a typical day. Firstly, they repeated the frequency adverbs to tell their typical days. They were familiar to them from the Main Course so this activity did not take much time. Secondly, this chapter also emphasized the importance of keeping the chronological order and order of events. In order to make them comprehend these issues, the book presented some examples consisting of independent sentences. The students were shown how to combine these sentences by using before-after so as to provide the correct order of the events. After a few exercises, the teacher asked them to do the rest and also wrote some sentences on the board to reinforce their learning. They analyzed the paragraphs concerning the same points in the book. Next, the book presented another important point while writing a paragraph: Unity. The teacher tried to explain what was meant by unity and how to supply unity in the written works. There were some exercises in the book such as identifying the irrelevant sentences in the paragraphs. The students were asked to do them and they did this task successfully. Before concluding the session, the students were given Checklist 6 and reminded to write in their journals one more time in the light of the feedback they were given.

Session 7: Unlike the last session, all of the students were present in the class this time. Having collected their journals, the teacher decided to go over the points that they covered the previous week because of the low attendance to the last session. She spent a considerable amount of time on order of events, unity, detecting the irrelevant sentences respectively. When she finished teaching the important points and boosting them with some exercises, she asked them to write a paragraph where they would tell their typical days. She reminded them not to ignore the guidelines while building their paragraphs. She gave some time for this task and provided help during the process. At the end of the session, she gave them Checklist 7 where they assessed their performance in the tasks of the current session.

Session 8: The last session of the research process started with a full attendance of the students. As a routine, their journals were handed out to them to see the feedback. Then, the teacher initiated the last session with Chapter 6 where they were going to deal with writing a descriptive paragraph. First of all, they read some examples from the book describing people in detail using examples. In one of the tasks, they matched people's descriptions in terms of their appearances with the photos. Secondly, the teacher asked them to form groups of four for a new task. When they did, she wrote some categories on the board such as hair, height, body, eyes, and age. Then, she wanted each group to find as many words under these categories as they could in five minutes. After they had finished, she wrote their words on the board. As the next step, the teacher asked them to find someone in the class and write a descriptive paragraph about him/her by using details and examples. In addition, the teacher wanted them not to give the name of the person so that the rest of the class could guess him/her. As this task was an individual activity, it took some time to finish. When they completed their paragraphs, the teacher asked them to read aloud. All of the students were

encouraged to read. In the end, the teacher collected their works and gave them Checklist 8 to fill in. Lastly, she reminded them to come to the next class with their journals.

3.7. Data Analysis

In line with the characteristics of a qualitative case study, data obtained through the instruments for the research was examined in detail. Firstly, in order to analyze the data from the checklists for each session, frequency analysis was applied. Next, the qualitative data gathered through the student journals, teacher journal, and the questionnaires was analyzed together. Content analysis technique was applied and the researcher formed a code list for the data. Having coded the data, the researcher determined the labels showing the categorization of the data. In order to remove the unreliability issue, the data was triangulated by the help of a colleague with whom the researcher reached a consensus on the labeling of the categories in the Content Analysis.

CHAPTER 4

4. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

The preceding chapter presents the data analysis results of the instruments used in this research. In line with the objectives of the current study, the researcher used eight Self-Assessment Checklists specific to each session, Student Journals, an open-ended Questionnaire, and a Teacher Journal. Upon the completion of the scheduled 8-week process, all the data was gathered and analyzed separately by the researcher. Findings from the checklists, student journals and the questionnaire boosted with the data obtained from the Teacher Journal were presented in tables and interpreted subsequently.

4.2. Findings from Checklists

In the analysis of 8 checklists for each session, the frequency analysis was applied. The researcher presented the results in tables item by item with their percentages and frequencies so as to simplify the interpretation process. She intended to interpret mainly the highest and lowest scores of the items.

Table 4. Frequency Analysis of Checklist 1

Now…	Successful	Partly successful	Unsuccessful
1. I know how a paragraph should look like.	16 88,8%	2 11,1%	0
2. I can tell my free-time activities in an organized paragraph.	14 77,7%	4 22,2%	0
3. I know the parts of a paragraph.	16 88,8%	2 11,1%	0
4. I can decide whether a paragraph is appropriate in terms of structure.	10 55,5%	8 44,4%	0
5. I can identify the topic sentence, supporting sentences and concluding sentence in a paragraph.	14 77,7%	4 22,2%	0
6. I know how I am supposed to write the topic sentence.	14 77,7%	3 16,6%	1 5,5%

N= 18

According to the first session results (Table 4), students' self-assessment revealed that almost all of the behavioral objectives for this particular session were successfully fulfilled. For example, a high success rate of 88,8% in the items 1 and 3, though it was the first session, was indeed salient. Such a high success can be explained with the effect of pilot studies in which they were introduced with the same subjects in advance. On the other hand, more than half of the students had some problems in deciding about an appropriate paragraph structure, which was shown in rates of item 4 with a percentage of 55.5%.

Table 5. Frequency Analysis of Checklist 2

Now…	Successful	Partly successful	Unsuccessful
1. I can identify an inappropriate paragraph.	11 61,1%	6 33,3%	1 5,5%
2. I can write suitable supporting sentences about the topic.	11 61,1%	6 33,3%	1 5,5%
3. I can provide the parallelism between the topic and concluding sentences.	11 61,1%	7 38,8%	0
4. I can detect the irrelevant sentences in the paragraphs.	9 50%	7 38,8%	2 11,1%
5. I can manage the process of writing up to now.	2 11,1%	15 83,3%	1 5,5%
6. I can realize my weaknesses during the writing process.	13 72,2%	5 27,7%	0

N= 18

During Session 2, the students were introduced with a number of new tasks to accomplish. Judging by the self-assessment results in Table 5, especially in the item 6, it can be inferred that the majority of the students had high task awareness in terms of realizing their weaknesses within this particular session. In addition, what was striking in Checklist 2 was that almost all of the students felt themselves insufficient in managing the process of writing up to that time. Although this low rate of 11,1% was discouraging both for the students and the researcher, it was meaningful in terms of taking immediate action and regulations for the next sessions.

Table 6. Frequency Analysis of Checklist 3

Now…	Successful	Partly successful	Unsuccessful
1. I can organize my paragraphs.	11 50%	11 50%	0
2. I know how to tell a process in a paragraph.	11 50%	11 50%	0
3. I can determine the chronological order in the paragraphs.	17 77,2%	3 13,6%	2 9,09%
4. I can detect the signals showing chronological order in the paragraphs.	15 68,1%	5 22,7%	2 9,09%
5. I can put the stages of a process into the correct order.	14 63,6%	8 36,3%	0
6. I can decide how a good process paragraph should look like.	8 36,3%	12 54,5%	2 9,09%

N= 22

Session 3 where there was a full participation of the students was dedicated to writing a process paragraph. The results in Table 6 revealed that the students found this new process a bit challenging since only 36,3% of the students really understood the structure of a process paragraph as shown in item 6. Although the students were divided into two halves in terms of comprehending the process, they became mostly successful in supplying the chronology in this type of paragraph where 77,2% of them assessed themselves as successful in the item 3.

Even though the results from Checklist 3 seemed sufficient to be able to fulfill the objectives, the researcher was not satisfied enough with the students' production. So she intentionally designed Session 4 as the extension of the previous session since she detected some problems in their performance after reading their assignments telling a process.

Table 7. Frequency Analysis of Checklist 4

Now...	Successful	Partly successful	Unsuccessful
1. I can consider the priority of some sentences than others in a process paragraph.	18 90%	2 10%	0
2. I can understand what a process paragraph means.	15 75%	5 25%	0
3. I can keep the chronological order in my process paragraph.	16 80%	4 20%	0
4. I can provide the basic components of a paragraph structure in my process paragraph, too.	7 35%	13 65%	0
5. I can write an organized process paragraph.	13 65%	6 30%	1 5%
6. I feel that my writing skill is gradually improving.	16 80%	4 20%	0

N= 20

The results in Session 4 (Table 7) showed that students did not have any difficulty at all in putting the stages of a process into the correct order as given in the item 1 with the highest rate of 90%. This high rate proved the importance and necessity of the in-class task conducted together with the teacher where they were asked to schedule a process and go step by step in a paragraph form. However, it was clear from their assessments that they still had organizational problems during the writing process as stated in the item 4 with a success rate of 35%. The researcher recorded this issue in her journal as well:

"...I walked around the room to give immediate feedback but what I felt was that I needed to cover this task once again next week. There were students who really got the idea and did the right thing but the rest of them had some problems in organization."

Teacher Journal 4/ March 13,2014

Another important point drawn from the results was the self-awareness of the students given with the rate of 80% in the item 6. When compared to the low rate of 11,1% in the item

5 of Checklist 2 where they felt they couldn't manage the writing process, the rise in the awareness rate was highly promising.

Table 8. Frequency Analysis of Checklist 5

Now...	Successful	Partly successful	Unsuccessful
1. I can tell a process with stages in an organized paragraph.	9 50%	9 50%	0
2. I can understand what a process paragraph means.	13 72,2%	4 22,2%	1 5,5%
3. I can make the difference this type of paragraph from the previous ones.	9 50%	9 50%	0
4. I can realize the parts I have difficulty in.	8 44,4%	5 27,7%	5 27,7%

N= 18

The results obtained from Session 5 (Table 8) revealed that the students got the theory of process paragraph writing shown with the rate of 72,2% in the item 2; however, in the implementation process of this task they needed more exercises. In addition to their performance, very few of them had task awareness in this session as shown in the item 4 with the rate of 44,4%. With the help of the self-check activity, the researcher aimed to show the individual students their own weaknesses. It can be inferred from the results that process writing task was very new to them and it needed some more time to make them reach the desirable level. The researcher shared the same opinion with her students as she wrote the following statements in her journal:

> *"...Parallel to my concerns about last session, I became sure that there were some problems in the understanding of the process paragraph. I also got this idea from their writing assignments..."*

> *Teacher Journal 5/March 19, 2014*

Table 9. Frequency Analysis of Checklist 6

Now...	Successful	Partly successful	Unsuccessful
1. I can put the scrambled paragraph into correct order by following the chronology.	6 100%	0	0
2. I can provide the correct timing in this type of paragraph.	5 83,3%	1 16,6%	0
3. I can make the difference this type of paragraph from the previous ones.	4 66,6%	2 33,3%	0
4. I can use frequency adverbs correctly while telling my typical day.	5 83,3%	1 16,6%	0
5. I can build up combined sentences with "before-after" to give the time order of the events.	4 66,6%	2 33,3%	0
6. I can understand what paragraph unity means.	5 83,3%	1 16,6%	0

N= 6

Because of the low participation to Session 6, the results obtained (see Table 9) may not give reliable implications about the overall objectives. Yet, judging by the session on its own merit, it can be said that available students had high task awareness and they were really good at supplying the chronology as given in the item 1 with a full rate. However, the rate of 66,6% in the item 5 revealed that in terms of the producing combined sentences, they needed more exercises.

Table 10. Frequency Analysis of Checklist 7

Now...	Successful	Partly successful	Unsuccessful
1. I can use combined sentences (when, before, after) in my paragraph.	12 54,5%	10 45,4%	0
2. I can understand what paragraph unity means.	17 77,2%	5 22,7%	0
3. I can identify the irrelevant sentences in paragraphs.	16 72,7%	6 27,2%	0
4. I can manage the paragraph writing activity in this unit.	13 59%	8 36,3%	1 4,5%
5. I can use the words and expressions given in the book in my own paragraph.	12 54,5%	9 40,9%	1 4,5%
6. I know the difference of the paragraph type in this unit from the previous ones.	17 77,2%	5 22,7%	0

N= 22

Taking the low attendance into consideration in the last session, the researcher planned to revise the same chapter in Session 7 since the related part covered the essentials of a paragraph such as detecting irrelevant sentences and providing the unity. The results (see Table 10) showed that the students fulfilled the objectives successfully in the stated points; however, the rate of using combined sentences, 54,5%, was lower than the other items one more time. This proved that they needed more practice specific to the issues they were unfamiliar with.

Table 11. Frequency Analysis of Checklist 8

Now...	Successful	Partly successful	Unsuccessful
1. I can use appropriate vocabulary to describe physical appearance.	16 72,7%	6 27,2%	0
2. I can use appropriate vocabulary to describe a person's character.	16 72,7%	6 27,2%	0
3. I can give examples in a descriptive paragraph.	11 50%	10 45,4%	1 4,5%
4. I can write a detailed descriptive paragraph.	2 9%	19 86,3%	1 4,5%
5. I can keep the unity in my descriptive paragraph too.	11 50%	9 40,9%	2 9%
6. I can write this paragraph type successfully.	6 27,2%	16 72,7%	0

N= 22

Checklist 8 presented interesting results (Table 11) in terms of the objectives of the session. For instance, the direct effect of vocabulary task conducted upon the students' requests in the journals was very clear from the items in 1 and 2 with a high rate of 72,7%. On the other hand, only 9% of them stated that they were able to write a detailed descriptive paragraph in the item 4. The majority of the students rated their production performance as *partly successful* which implied more practice and tasks related to the descriptive paragraphs.

4.3. Findings from Student Journals

Within the application period of the study, the students were responsible for writing their reflections into their journals in every other week. Upon the completion of the process, journals were thoroughly analyzed as well as the checklists; however, this time the researcher applied Content Analysis method to the journals. Content analysis is "just what its name implies: the analysis of the usually, but not necessarily, written contents of a communication" (Fraenkel, Warren & Hyun, 2012, p. 478). In the light of the analysis, data from these journals was categorized and subcategorized. The findings were presented in the table with their ratings:

Table 12. Findings from Student Journals

Categories	Subcategories	N
Achievement	- writing	19
	- language	15
Attitude	- towards tasks	22
	- towards English	7
Challenges		19
Awareness	- personality	18
	- task	19
Student-stated Suggestions		18

Achievement: The researcher defined the achievement as what the students gained within the process. By the help of the guided questions in the first two weeks, the students were encouraged to write their achievements into their journals. Although the researcher expected them to reflect their writing achievements, the results were not limited to the writing skill. Therefore, the researcher subcategorized the main category under the titles of writing and language. In terms of writing skill, one student reflected his achievements as follows:

ST21: "... One of my biggest achievements was that we studied the paragraph structure and we wrote meaningful paragraphs."

Another student shared her writing achievements in detail as in the following excerpt:

ST18: "I achieved the skill of paragraph writing. I learnt the key points of writing a good paragraph. For example, in order to write a good paragraph it is required to give a title relevant to the subject, to start with a topic sentence, to end the paragraph with a concluding sentence, and to avoid repetition."

The second subcategory was their language achievement. In their journals, 15 students stated the contributions of these sessions into their language skills as well. The common point in those statements was that the tasks also helped them obtain new achievements and improve their skills apart from writing. Among the stated achievements, they mostly mentioned the vocabulary and grammar knowledge, reading, speaking, grammar as well as their skills of expressing themselves in English. To illustrate, one student uttered this statement:

ST 4: "Due to the different writing tasks in each session, my vocabulary knowledge has improved..."

In terms of expressing himself, another student summarized his achievement as follows:

ST 11: "During these sessions I learnt to build up sentences by expressing myself more comfortably."

Attitude: Throughout the journaling activity, the students exhibited their feelings, opinions, or thoughts both about the writing tasks and the language directly or indirectly. Thus, they were assembled under the title of 'attitude'. In order to exemplify the attitude towards the tasks, some students showed similar attitudes using positive keywords such as necessary, good, useful, and so forth:

ST 17: "In spite of finding them very hard at the very beginning, I think the tasks are very good for our improvement."

ST 7: "These writing tasks assigned are very beneficial for me. I am fulfilling them with love and approval…"

However, the attitudes towards the tasks were not always positive as in the following excerpts:

ST 9: "In my opinion, the assigned tasks were not very good because I think I do not have enough vocabulary knowledge to be able to write in English. I felt like taking a sentence from somewhere and putting it into another place while doing them."

Likewise, the researcher mentioned the negative attitude towards tasks in the Teacher Journal as well:

"…During the task, I saw some students who were really interested in it but there were still some others who totally ignored and stated that the tasks were useless…"

Teacher Journal 7 / April 2, 2014

In addition to the messages about the writing tasks, there were a great number of utterances showing their attitudes towards English in their journals as follows:

ST 15: "…The sessions are fun. I like English."

As an example of the students' positive attitudes towards English, the researcher recorded another anecdote into her journal as in the following excerpt:

"…Today my students seemed very enthusiastic to learn. One of them, student 2, said 'Teacher, this is the only lesson which can wake me up in the morning' I became very happy…"

Teacher Journal 8/ April 9, 2014

Though they were not many in number, there was a negative attitude towards the language itself as follows:

ST 18: "To be honest, I get bored and I don't like it since we have been covering the same things over the years."

Challenges: In this context, challenge can be defined as the difficulties they encountered or weaknesses they felt which interrupted students' improvement in writing. Throughout the journaling activity, 19 students identified various challenges in their productions and recorded them with their reasons as in the following excerpts:

ST 21: "That I don't know the meanings of much of the vocabulary we used in reading and writing was the most important challenge for me. It results from, as I always stated, the fact that I haven't studied English for a very long time."

ST 6: "...I have difficulty in writing the topic sentence and supplying the rest of the paragraph. Moreover, I have difficulty in translating the sentences into English because my vocabulary isn't very good."

ST 1: "As I have studied German for four years, I can confuse the grammar of both languages and the meanings of some words in writing paragraphs. This can be a big trouble for me."

As it is obviously seen in the excerpts, the students attributed their weaknesses to some reasons such as lack of vocabulary, insufficient English background, language transfer, and so on. However, the results mostly intensified on the issues concerning vocabulary.

Awareness: The journaling implementation was quite important to reveal the students' awareness which was the originating point of the current research. Since obtained data was prone to misinterpretation because of the breadth of the term, the researcher benefited from Kohonen's (2000) classification of awareness in the literature by choosing only personality and task awareness of them. Student journals provided the researcher substantially rich data in either subcategory. What was meant by personality awareness in this study was the realization

of the students about themselves in the sense of self. The following statements set examples for this category:

ST 12: "I can't reflect my imagination as much as I want. I am sure about my ability of fiction and I can reflect it verbally in Turkish; however, I can't put it into words. Even if I can, it takes too much time. I am going to be better later on but I am bad right now, I admit this."

ST 14: "To tell the truth, I think I am trying hard although I am uninterested in English…"

In the analysis process, the researcher defined task awareness as the realization of the students on the assigned tasks. As the following students reported:

ST 16: "…I had difficulty in paragraph unity because I lack in enough background in English…"

ST 6: "I can't write appropriate sentences. I need to pay more attention to my writings…"

In order to exemplify the awareness level, the teacher wrote an anecdote in her journal upon a dialogue with Student 20 during the session:

"…After collecting their journals, I asked their opinions about this application verbally. Student 20 replied in a clear manner: 'Teacher, you want us to improve and I really like to express myself in this way…'"

Teacher Journal 6/ March 26, 2014

<u>Student-stated Suggestions:</u> By the help of gaining awareness and identifying the challenges, the students made various suggestions in their journals for the sake of improving their writing skill throughout 8 sessions. For instance, the students expressed that:

ST 20: "Doing abundant paragraph writing tasks will not only increase our writing skill but also decrease our mistakes. Owing to this, we can build up more appropriate sentences in a shorter time..."

ST 4: "...Maybe if we write on up-to-date topics or on the ones appealing to our interests, I believe that we will be more successful."

ST 19: "We should write more...

4.4. Findings from the Questionnaire

The 8-week period was completed with a questionnaire where the students were asked to answer 7 open-ended questions concerning the whole process. Data obtained through this instrument was thoroughly examined according to the Content Analysis. However, the researcher deliberately excluded the questions numbered 5 and 6 for a special analysis. The rest of the questions were coded and the researcher determined the categories which were presented in Table 13 with their ratings:

Table 13. Findings from the Questionnaire

Categories	N
Continuity	18
Contributions	16
Positive	13
Progress	13
Task achievement	12
Indicator of weakness, strength, level	6

Continuity: The most rated category was the continuity where the students expressed their positive feedbacks to the implementation of self-assessment practices. Almost all of them stated that these practices should be conducted perpetually. In addition to this view, there were some others who suggested certain conditions for the successful implementation of the process as follows:

> ST 22: "Continuing these practices will be very useful if you decrease the number of them…"

> ST 13: "Of course, these practices should go on. However, it should be continued based on our suggestions…"

> ST 9: "Self-assessment practices can be used but they should be conducted under the control of the teacher."

Contributions: As well as the development of writing skill, the questionnaire revealed quite a lot of contributions of the process namely from general language knowledge and improvement in other skills such as grammar, speaking and vocabulary to the improvement in thinking skills. For example, one student reported the following statement:

> ST 4: "It had good effects. For example, I can use the expressions that I learnt from the writing sessions. I can build up better sentences and organize the texts better than before."

Positive: This category points to the judgments of the students towards the entire process. In the analysis, the researcher obtained highly positive feedback from the students. Majority of the students expressed this situation with the words such as good, beneficial, and useful as in the following examples:

> ST 8: "I think the writing sessions were efficient."

> ST 12: "Writing sessions were very positive from my perspective…"

Progress: The researcher coded the concept of progress as any positive change or improvement the students perceived related to their learning process. In this sense, 13 of the students mentioned their progress making a comparison with their former learning experiences. They uttered sentences similar to the followings:

ST 22: "I think I am gradually improving compared to previous years…"

ST 1: "…Now I think that my English is more successful."

Task achievement: According to the researcher's description, it is the students' perceptions about their success in the specific task. 12 of the students thought that they fulfilled the tasks successfully. So they reflected their thoughts as follows:

ST 9: "I didn't use to construct a paragraph before. Now I can manage to do this using topic, supporting and concluding sentences."

ST 13: "…In addition to learning new vocabulary, I learnt how to write an organized paragraph."

Indicator of weakness, strength, level: The last category in the overall analysis of the questionnaire was the role of the sessions in showing the students their strengths, weaknesses and their levels. 6 students reported similar statements as in the following excerpts:

ST 5: "I saw my weaknesses and I decided to make a study plan. I remembered the things I learnt before."

ST 3: "…We can see our level and where we are."

4.4.1. Findings from the Questionnaire Item 5

The rationale behind excluding two questionnaire items from the overall analysis was that the researcher aimed to get the students' opinions about the role of self-assessment instruments they used in this process separately. The results are given in tables respectively:

Question 5: What do you think about the self-assessment checklists given after each session? How do they affect your writing skill?

Table 14. Students' Opinions of Checklists

Categories	N
Showing strengths & weaknesses	16
Positive	12
Teacher adjustment	4
Improving writing skill	4
Goal setting	2

<u>Showing strengths and weaknesses:</u> A great majority of students directly stated that checklists helped them reveal their strengths and weaknesses. For example, three students expressed similarly as follows:

ST1: "Thanks to those assessments, I weighed how successful I was. I thought that I needed to improve myself more by realizing my weaknesses."

ST 20: "We can realize the weaknesses that we couldn't so far thanks to the questions in these assessments."

ST 4: "While answering the questions in this application, I can see whether I succeed or not better. Thanks to this, I can go back and study the subjects I am not good at."

<u>Positive:</u> In their assessment, the students mostly had a positive attitude towards checklist application. Their choice of words such as good, useful, logical reinforced this attitude. As the following students stated:

ST 21: "I think that this application is useful for us."

ST 7: "I see this activity as beneficial."

ST 13: "I find it quite logical."

Teacher Adjustment: The researcher defines this category as the regulations and arrangements of the teacher for the next sessions upon the feedback from the students' checklists. Although the number of the students whose opinions were in this way was limited, the researcher found this category remarkable as the students' opinions showed a correspondence with those of hers. To give a few examples, the students stated:

ST 10: "It is good for you to see our weaknesses."

ST 22: "...And its effect on the writing skill was that it enabled you to focus on those particular parts as we stated what we comprehended or did not comprehend in the journals..."

ST 9: "...Our teacher knows what we can or cannot do and she does exercises accordingly..."

Indeed, the researcher mentioned about this issue in her journal with the following statement:

"...I love getting my students feedback and arranging my next session accordingly."

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Goal setting: In spite of expressed by very few students directly, this aspect of checklists is worth mentioning. The existence of such a perception proves to be the formative cycle of self-assessment since the students have some prospective objectives in terms of their improvement. Aforesaid students stated their opinions as follows:

ST 14: "If we want to improve ourselves, which most of us do, this makes us think what we are going to do after each writing session. I think this is the most important step of us in improving ourselves."

ST 13: "...Filling in that particular assessment objectively and reading it afterwards guide us in the next application."

4.4.2. Findings from the Questionnaire Item 6

Likewise, the data from the item 6 was analyzed and the results were categorized according to Content Analysis.

Question 6: What are your opinions of student journals that we applied every other week? How do they affect your writing skill?

Table 15. Students' Opinions about Journals

Categories	N
Positive	12
Self-reflection	9
Interactivity	5
Feedback to the teacher	4
Repetition	3

Positive: 12 students stated their positive attitude towards journal application with various words such as successful, essential, good, logical, enjoyable, useful and so on. There were quite a lot of statements similar to the followings:

ST 2: "...I think it was very successful..."

ST 20: "...My opinion towards this activity is also positive..."

<u>Self-reflection:</u> What is meant by this category is that students can make objective judgments about their own capabilities in the journals. Indeed, the results from the questionnaire showed that 9 of the students saw the journals as a means to an end as stated in the following excerpts:

ST 16: "...It was an application where I wrote my own mistakes, my own weaknesses and my own thoughts..."

ST 2: "...It helped me see my mistakes and weaknesses better..."

<u>Interactivity:</u> This notion refers to the communication between the teacher and her students by using journals as a tool. Some of the students stressed this feature of journal writing through these statements:

ST 19: "These journals are like a communication network between the teacher and us. We told our requests, weaknesses, and success in the journals by talking with the teacher. I wrote my weakness and you wrote how to remove it, for example..."

ST 21: "... In addition, we can also tell our suggestions through this application."

ST 9: "This is the shortest way of communication between our teacher and us, I think..."

Following excerpt from the Teacher Journal shows the situation from the teacher's perspective:

"...I reminded them to bring back their journals for the next session. I really like the way they state about themselves in the journals. It's a private communication between us and they can write their opinions, thoughts, and feelings easily..."

Teacher Journal 4 / March 13, 2014

<u>Feedback to the Teacher:</u> Journal writing has an importance in providing the teacher with feedback about students and the process. 4 of the students expressed similar opinions about this point in the questionnaire. As stated by the following students:

ST 15: "...The teacher obtained the feedback of the lessons thanks to journals..."

ST 8: "Thanks to this application, you must have got some feedback about me. In line with the feedback, I think you have made the lessons more efficient..."

<u>Repetition:</u> Three students in the questionnaire touched upon the effect of journal writing on repeating and keeping fresh what they have learnt. In spite of its low rating, the researcher found it noteworthy to mention about this aspect of journal writing. Two of them expressed their opinions as follows:

ST 17: "Journals' being applied in every other week helps us keep the subjects of the last two weeks fresh. I mean, we review the last two weeks while writing in our journals instead of putting them away."

ST22: "We used to keep our knowledge that we learnt in the writing sessions fresh by conveying them into our journals."

CHAPTER 5

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a brief summary of the conducted study based on the research questions and findings from the data which will be followed by the conclusion and discussion about the whole study. Next, the implications and suggestions for the further research will be provided. Finally, it will be concluded with the limitations of the study.

5.2. Summary of the Study

The overall objective of this case study was to investigate the role of SA practices in students' writing skill. It also embodied a number of sub-goals such as indicating its place in foreign language learning, presenting prospective purposes, creating awareness, and promoting learner autonomy. The researcher designed a process in her own setting so as to serve the intended purposes of the study and collect data to answer the research questions. According to the objectives to be accomplished and the schedule, writing sessions were arranged. Throughout the sessions, the participants were asked to share their reflections by the help of researcher-made instruments at regular intervals. For example, they were given checklists at the end of each session and they were directed to write in their journals every other week. A teacher journal also accompanied this reflection stage. The process was finalized with a self-assessment questionnaire for the students' overall evaluation of the process. Having completed the application, data was thoroughly analyzed and each tool was separately examined in detail. Frequency Analysis method was applied to the checklists for each session whereas journals and the questionnaire were applied Content Analysis technique as they were composed of open-ended items. In the analysis of those items, the researcher

coded the data and determined the categories. In order to decrease the likelihood of unreliability and to supply triangulation, the researcher asked help from a colleague in the labeling of the categories. The findings were presented in tables in order to simplify the interpretation. The research was concluded on the basis of the interpretation of two research questions, its implications, suggestions, and limitations.

5.3. Conclusion

In every phase of the study, the researcher tried to find an answer to the following research questions by the help of the data collection tools:

Research Question 1: What is the role of self-assessment in students' perceived writing performance?

Data obtained throughout the process provided the researcher with fruitful results. Firstly, in terms of the role of SA in students' writing performance, it can be inferred from the success frequencies of production-based items in the checklists that almost all of the objectives have been successfully fulfilled with respect to the number of participants attended that particular session. More than half of the students in each session assessed their writing performance on the assigned task as successful. The last session may be regarded as an exception for this situation; however, even in this session there was only one student evaluating their performances as unsuccessful. On the other hand, journals which "provide evidence about the fact that an assessing technique does not necessarily have to be only an evaluation tool, but can also- and should actually always be- perceived by students as a learning tool" (Azorin, 1991, p. 100) equipped the researcher with a considerable amount of implications about their writing performances. According to the results, students mentioned the role of self-assessment practices in writing performance as a tool for showing their strengths and weaknesses, for

setting goals and providing feedback to the teacher. Most of the population focused on the importance of its role as an indicator of strengths, weaknesses, and level by exhibiting a positive attitude towards self-assessment practices. At this point, the findings about the students' writing performance show parallelism with the possible effects of SA in the writing process suggested in the Literature Review of the current study. Among them, the role of ongoing assessment in the growth of students' writing skill as well as informing the teacher about the students' capabilities are consistent with the results of this study. Indeed, making the assessment procedure regular and an indispensable part of the instruction offered an opportunity for students to go one step forward by letting them set goals for their next performances. The results were also quite meaningful in terms of giving the teacher a chance for regulating her instruction by taking students reflections into consideration, which was also discussed in the earlier chapter. All in all, findings from the analysis showed that students' self-assessment had an important role in the improvement of their writing skill.

Research Question 2: What is the role of self-assessment in students' awareness in terms of

    a. personality awareness?

    b. task awareness?

Because of the breadth of the term, the researcher needed to classify the results with the assistance of the literature. She benefited from Kohonen's (2000) classification of awareness in language learning. However, she intentionally excluded the third aspect of it, which is the awareness of the learning process, for the sake of a strong classification of the data. Therefore, the notion of awareness was examined in terms of two aspects: personality and task awareness.

The distinction of personality awareness from task awareness was essential for this study judging by the messages retrieved from students' reflections. The former included the implication of the realization of the sense of self whereas the latter highlighted their realization in the given task. There were related items and questions in the data collection tools aiming to reveal their awareness level. Since the journals were based on open-ended questions, they presented a more elaborate view towards the issue. The results showed that students had high personality awareness since they knew their boundaries, capabilities, and abilities. Furthermore, SA practices helped them make suggestions to go beyond their limits as well.

Judging by the framework of task awareness, the researcher came up with similar results with a high frequency of success in the instruments. At this point, checklists supplied enormously strong evidence to the process due to their nature of being compact, easy-to-fill in, task-specific, and time-saving. Although they might be exposed to the questioning of reliability, they served for the purpose of the research. For example, the students reflections through those checklists reshaped the flow of the process and helped the researcher re-designed the next steps accordingly. Moreover, they expressed their success and failure in a specific task in their journals as well. When combining all of these data together with Teacher Journal, the researcher obtained highly important feedback for the teaching-learning process. In short, the roles of SA in task awareness can be summarized as informing the teacher about the task achievement, regulating the next sessions accordingly, and supplying the teacher with feedback about the overall teaching-learning process.

5.4. Discussion

As stated in the Literature Review, there is scarcity of available studies on innovative practices such as SA even though it has been acknowledged as an ideal strategy in theory.

Parallel to the modern views on language teaching and learning, it is expected to be one of the mostly credited applications; however, the difficulties in preparation, planning, implementation, and evaluation discourage teachers, researchers, and educators.

Throughout the study, the researcher experienced similar concerns as stated in the Literature Review. The subjectivity, the natural consequence of SA procedure, was observed in the current research as well. Some students were never satisfied with their performances because of the lack of self-confidence whereas there were also some tending to inflate his or her success. The second concern was towards the reliability issue. As the research was based on a case and limited to the researcher's own setting as well as the existence of open-ended questions instead of one single right answer in data collection tools, there was a high probability of facing with this concern.

The role of SA which is defined as one form of alternative assessment methods has been negotiated in the context of developing students' writing skill in this study. Compared to the features of alternative assessment given in Table 1 in Literature Review, it would not be inaccurate to acclaim that the conducted study had several characteristics in common. To give a few examples, this study was similarly based on free-responses as well as creative and open-ended answers of the students rather than one single right answer. Next, there was a formative cycle which was reinforced with the interactive performances. Last but not least, feedback was individualized; that is, they were student-specific which confirmed the strong relationship between feedback and motivation. In other words, as well as its constructive role in the improvement of the writing skill, psychological implications of SA became highly salient through this application. Positive attitudes of students and the teacher boosted the contribution of SA into motivation. To sum up, the study was rich in psychological considerations, too. If

the subtexts of students' reflections in SA were to analyze meticulously, it would definitely lead to the discussion on several other issues.

In terms of awareness, either task or personality, the results obtained from the overall study proved that the application fulfilled the pre-determined objectives successfully. In this success, the role of instruments was crucial. The combination of the reflective role of journals with the informative role of checklists in showing the students' strengths and weaknesses doubled the students' awareness level. For this reason, the concept of awareness was the most effective issue in terms of its success in fulfillment.

The notion of learner autonomy constituted the final destination of this study. In line with its description made in earlier chapters, mentioned concepts in theory such as responsibility and reflection have settled into their places in this application. Indeed, the role of SA in giving the students the responsibility of their learning, in locating the students and their needs into the core of the process, and in encouraging student involvement might be considered as milestones of this study.

In conclusion, this study presented a section of SA practices which could be extended and deepened according to other particular curriculum. It was highly important for the researcher's own environment so that it could show the consequences of such an application in order to adapt her current practices into new and modern trends.

Considering all the aspects, the study has helped to improve students' writing skills considerably, to create awareness both on tasks and personalities and to shed light on further improvements to promote learner autonomy. Despite its demanding feature both from the students and the teacher, it has brought a totally new perception to the language learning

setting which was accustomed to traditional practices. Thus, it can be asserted that it was a challenging but an efficient study.

5.5. Implications and Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the findings from this study, a number of implications and suggestions can be touched upon. First of all, this study was conducted with Automotive Engineering students of Mersin University who take four hours of English a week. When applied in an intensive-English program in longer hours, these practices will surely yield totally different results in terms of constructing a stronger formative cycle. Secondly, the outcomes of the research may differ when conducted with students in higher levels of English. Finally, in terms of language skills, the researcher selected the writing for improvement which was neglected in her own setting. A similar study may be implemented to reveal the improvement of other skills such as listening or speaking as well as sub-skills such as pronunciation or intonation.

5.6. Limitations of the Study

This study has certain limitations because of some factors. First of all, the need for ongoing assessment demanded full participation of the students to each of the sessions; however, the attendance was low to some of the classes which hindered the progress of the process. Therefore, the results may have been affected by this limitation. Secondly, this study was restricted to the researcher's own setting in Automotive Engineering Department of Mersin University and this may not allow for the generalization of the results to other contexts. Lastly, the instruments used in this study were all designed by the researcher taking her own application setting into account. Implementing those instruments on different research setting might not produce similar results.

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7. APPENDICES

7.1 APPENDIX 1   THE SCHEDULE OF WRITING SESSIONS

	Activity	Objectives *By the end of each session, students will be able to…*
Chapter 1	Writing a paragraph about yourself	- produce simple sentences about themselves. - differentiate a sentence from a phrase. - use capital letters correctly. - combine sentences into a paragraph form. - identify the steps in the writing process. - describe them in a paragraph.
Chapter 2	Writing a paragraph about your family, a relative or a friend.	- write simple sentences about their family and friends. - combine the sentences with the proper conjunction; and / but. - write titles.
Chapter 3	Writing a paragraph about free-time activities	- produce sentences about their free-time activities. - recognize the parts of a paragraph. - write a paragraph about their free-time activities according to the paragraph structure (with topic, supporting and concluding sentences).
Chapter 4	Writing a paragraph about how to make or do something	- give instructions in English. - write about a process. - use time/order signal words (first, second,…) appropriately.
Chapter 5	Writing a paragraph about your/someone else's typical day	- write sentences by using frequency adverbs properly. - combine the sentences with before/after to show time order. - detect the irrelevant sentences in paragraph - supply unity in the paragraph - write about their typical day.
Chapter 6	Writing a descriptive paragraph	- describe people. - write about someone by describing him/her with examples. - describe things with details.

Adapted from Ready to Write 1

7.2. APPENDIX 2   SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLISTS OF THE MAIN STUDY

CHECKLIST 1

Artık… *Now…*	Başarılı Successful	Kısmen başarılı Partly successful	Başarısız Unsuccessful
1. Bir paragrafın nasıl görünmesi gerektiğini biliyorum. I know how a paragraph should look like now			
2. Boş zaman aktivitelerimi organize bir paragrafta anlatabiliyorum. I can tell my free-time activities in an organized paragraph.			
3. Bir paragrafın bölümlerini biliyorum, I know the parts of a paragraph.			
4. Bir paragrafı yapısı açısından inceleyip uygun olup olmadığına karar verebiliyorum. I can decide whether a paragraph is appropriate in terms of structure.			
5. Paragrafı oluşturan ana cümle, destekleyici cümleler ve sonuç cümlesini paragrafta belirleyebiliyorum. I can identify the topic sentence, supporting sentences and concluding sentence in a paragraph.			
6. Giriş cümlesini nasıl yazmam gerektiğini biliyorum. I know how I am supposed to write the topic sentence.			

CHECKLIST 2

Artık… *Now…*	Başarılı Successful	Kısmen başarılı Partly successful	Başarısız Unsuccessful
1. Uygun olmayan bir paragrafı belirleyebiliyorum. I can identify an inappropriate paragraph.			
2. Bir konuya uygun destekleyici cümleler yazabiliyorum. I can write suitable supporting sentences about the topic.			
3. Giriş ve sonuç cümleleri arasında paralellik sağlayabiliyorum. I can provide the parallelism between the topic and concluding sentences.			
4. Paragraflarda konu ile ilgisiz destekleyici cümleleri belirleyebiliyorum. I can detect the irrelevant sentences in the paragraphs.			
5. Şu ana kadarki yazma sürecinde başarılı olduğumu düşünüyorum. I can manage the process of writing up to now.			
6. Yazma sürecinde eksiklerimin farkına varabiliyorum. I can realize my weaknesses during the writing process.			

CHECKLIST 3

Artık… *Now…*	Başarılı Successful	Kısmen başarılı Partly successful	Başarısız Unsuccessful
1. Yazdığım paragrafı organize edebiliyorum. I can organize my paragraphs.			
2. Bir sürecin bir paragrafta nasıl anlatılacağını biliyorum. I know how to tell a process in a paragraph.			
3. Paragraftaki kronolojik sırayı belirleyebiliyorum. I can determine the chronological order in the paragraphs.			
4. Kronolojik sırayı gösteren ifadeleri seçebiliyorum. I can detect the signals showing chronological order in the paragraphs.			
5. Bir sürecin aşamalarını sıraya koyabiliyorum. I can put the stages of a process into the correct order.			
6. İyi bir süreç paragrafının nasıl olması gerektiğine karar verebiliyorum. I can decide how a good process paragraph should look like.			

CHECKLIST 4

Artık… *Now…*	Başarılı Successful	Kısmen başarılı Partly successful	Başarısız Unsuccessful
1. Süreç paragrafında olayların öncelik sonralığını göz önünde bulundurabiliyorum. I can consider the priority of some sentences than others in a process paragraph.			
2. "Süreç paragrafı" ile ne kastedildiğini anlayabiliyorum. I can understand what a process paragraph means.			
3. Süreç paragrafımı yazarken kronolojik sırayı sağlayabiliyorum. I can keep the chronological order in my process paragraph.			
4. Süreç paragrafımda da paragrafın temel yapısını sağlayabiliyorum. I can provide the basic components of a paragraph structure in my process paragraph,too.			
5. Organize bir süreç paragrafı yazabiliyorum. I can write an organized process paragraph.			
6. Yazma becerimin giderek geliştiğini hissediyorum. I feel that my writing skill is gradually improving.			

CHECKLIST 5

Artık… *Now…*	Başarılı Successful	Kısmen başarılı Partly successful	Başarısız Unsuccessful
1. Aşamaları olan bir süreci organize bir paragrafta anlatabiliyorum. I can tell a process with stages in an organized paragraph.			
2. "Süreç paragrafı"nın ne demek olduğunu anlayabiliyorum. I can understand what a process paragraph means.			
3. Bu paragraf türünün bir öncekilerden farkını anlayabiliyorum. I can make the difference this type of paragraph from the previous ones.			
4. Yazarken zorlandığım bölümleri kendi kendime fark edebiliyorum. I can realize the parts I have difficulty in.			

CHECKLIST 6

Artık… *Now…*	Başarılı Successful	Kısmen başarılı Partly successful	Başarısız Unsuccessful
1. Tipik bir günün anlatıldığı paragrafı kronolojik sırayı takip ederek doğru sıraya koyabiliyorum. I can put the scrambled paragraph into correct order by following the chronology.			
2. Bu paragraf türünde zamanlamayı sağlayabiliyorum. I can provide the correct timing in this type of paragraph.			
3. Bu paragraf türünün bir öncekilerden farkını anlayabiliyorum. I can make the difference this type of paragraph from the previous ones.			
4. Sıklık zarflarını tipik bir günümü anlatırken cümlelerimde doğru bir biçimde kullanabiliyorum. I can use frequency adverbs correctly while telling my typical day.			
5. Olayların öncelik-sonralığını anlatmak için kullanılan bağlaçlarla bağlı cümleler kurabiliyorum. I can build up combined sentences with "before-after" to give the time order of the events.			
6. Paragraf bütünlüğü ile ne denilmek istediğini anlayabiliyorum. I can understand what paragraph unity means.			
7. Paragraf bütünlüğünü bozan cümleleri ayırt edebiliyorum. I can identify the irrelevant sentences in paragraphs.			
8. Başından sonuna kadar bir günümü bir paragrafta anlatabiliyorum. I can tell my typical day from the beginning to the end in an organized paragraph.			

CHECKLIST 7

Artık… *Now…*	Başarılı Successful	Kısmen başarılı Partly successful	Başarısız Unsuccessful
1. Paragrafımda bağlı cümleler kullanabiliyorum. I can use combined sentences (when, before, after) in my paragraph.			
2. Paragraf bütünlüğü ile ne denilmek istediğini anlayabiliyorum. I can understand what paragraph unity means.			
3. Paragraf bütünlüğünü bozan cümleleri ayırt edebiliyorum. I can identify the irrelevant sentences in paragraphs.			
4. Başından sonuna kadar bir günümü bir paragrafta anlatabiliyorum. I can tell my typical day from the beginning to the end in an organized paragraph.			
5. Kitapta geçen kelime ve ifadeleri kendi paragrafımda kullanabiliyorum. I can use the words and expressions given in the book in my own paragraph.			
6. Tipk bir günün anlatıldığı bu paragraf türünün süreç paragrafından farkını biliyorum. I know the difference between how to tell a typical day and a process paragraph.			

CHECKLIST 8

Artık… *Now…*	Başarılı Successful	Kısmen başarılı Partly successful	Başarısız Unsuccessful
1. Fiziksel görünüşü tarif etmek için uygun kelimeler kullanabiliyorum. I can use appropriate vocabulary to describe physical appearance.			
2. Bir kişinin karakterini tarif etmek için uygun kelimeleri kullanabiliyorum. I can use appropriate vocabulary to describe a person's character.			
3. Bir kişinin karakterini tarif ederken örneklendirebiliyorum. I can give examples in a descriptive paragraph.			
4. Detaylı bir tanımlayıcı paragraf yazabiliyorum. I can write a detailed descriptive paragraph.			
5. Tanımlayıcı paragrafımda da bütünlüğü sağlayabiliyorum. I can keep the unity in my descriptive paragraph too.			
6. Bu paragraf türünü başarılı bir şekilde yazabiliyorum. I can write this paragraph type successfully.			

7.3. APPENDIX 3   JOURNALS OF THE MAIN STUDY

JOURNAL 1

Yazma becerisi derslerindeki son 2 haftanızı gözden geçirin.
Think back your last two weeks in the writing session.

1. Bu derslerde neler yaptınız? Kazanımlarınız neler oldu?
   What have you done in these lessons? What did you get from them?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. Dersler sırasında verilen alıştırma/ödevlerle ilgili düşünce ve hisleriniz nelerdir? Sevdiniz mi/sevmediniz mi? Neden?
   What are your opinions and feelings about the task? Did you like them or not? Why?

_____
_____
_____
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_____

3. Bu dersler sırasında ne gibi zorluklar yaşadınız? Sizce sebepleri neler olabilir? Bu zorlukları aşmak için neler yapılabilir?
   Did you have any difficulties during the lessons? What are those? What can be the reason(s) for this difficulty? What can be done to overcome these difficulties?

_____
_____
_____
_____
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4. Diğer yorumlarınız:
   Your other comments:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

JOURNAL 2
Yazma becerisi derslerindeki son 2 haftanızı gözden geçirin.
Think back your last two weeks in the writing session.

1. Bu derslerde neler öğrendiniz? Kısaca özetleyin.
    What have you learnt during these sessions? Summarize briefly.

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

2. Bu derslerdeki performansınızı nasıl buldunuz? Sizce yazma becerisinde ne kadar iyisiniz? Özellikle hangi bölümlerde kendinizi güçlü ya da zayıf olarak değerlendiriyorsunuz?
    How did you find your own performance? Do you think you are good at writing? In which parts specifically do you think you are strong/weak?

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3. Sizce güçlü olduğunuz yönler nasıl kuvvetlendirilebilir ve zayıf yönleriniz nasıl iyileştirilebilir?
    How can your strengths be reinforced and your weaknesses be improved?

    _____
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4. Your other comments/suggestions:
    Diğer yorumlarınız/önerileriniz:

    _____
    _____
    _____

JOURNAL 3

Yazma becerisi derslerindeki son 2 haftanızı gözden geçirin.
Think back your last two weeks in the writing session.

1. Yazma derslerindeki performansınızda nasıl bir değişme-gelişme gözlemliyorsunuz?
   What kind of change/improvement do you observe in your own performance in the writing sessions?

   _____
   _____
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   _____

2. Şimdiye kadarki deneyimlerinizde en zorlayıcı olan hangisiydi? Sizce neden "zorlayıcıydı"?
   What was the most challenging experience in these sessions up to now? Why do you think it was "challenging"?

   _____
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   _____

3. Diğer yorumlarınız / önerileriniz:
   Your other comments/ suggestions:

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JOURNAL 4

Yazma becerisi derslerindeki son 2 haftanızı gözden geçirin. Gözlemlerinizi, düşüncelerinizi, duygularınızı ve önerilerinizi yazın.
Think back your last two weeks in the writing session. Write your observation, opinions, feelings and suggestions.

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7.4. APPENDIX 4   ÖZ DEĞERLENDİRME ANKETİ

Sevgili Katılımcı,

Bu anket, öğrencilerin öz değerlendirme uygulamalarının İngilizce yazma becerileri üzerindeki etkilerini ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Elde edilecek veriler yalnızca bilimsel araştırma amacıyla kullanılacaktır. Katılımınız için teşekkür ederim.

Ad Soyad: Yaş :

Cinsiyet :   Erkek ☐   Kadın ☐

1. İngilizce seviyenizi genel olarak değerlendiriniz.

Zayıf ☐   Orta ☐   İleri seviye ☐

2. Kaç yıldır İngilizce dersi alıyorsunuz? İngilizce geçmişinizden (okul, kurs, iş, yurtdışı vb.)kısaca bahsediniz.

_____
_____
_____
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_____

3. Bu yıl aldığınız İngilizce yazma derslerinin genel bir değerlendirmesini yapınız. Ne gibi beceriler kazandınız? Önceki yıllara oranla değişiklikler var mıydı?

_____
_____
_____
_____
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_____

4. Yazma derslerinizdeki performansınızın genel olarak İngilizce öğreniminize ne gibi etkileri oldu? Bu derslerden sonra önceki yıllara oranla kendinizde ne gibi ilerlemeler gözlemliyorsunuz?

_____
_____
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_____
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_____

5. Her <u>yazma dersi</u> sonunda uygulanan kendinizi değerlendirme (self-assessment checklists) uygulaması hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz? Bu uygulamanın yazma becerisine etkisi neydi?

_____
_____
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6. İki haftada bir uyguladığımız öğrenci günlüğü (journal) uygulaması hakkındaki düşünceleriniz nelerdir? Bu uygulamanın yazma becerisine etkisi neydi?

_____
_____
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7. Sizce ilerideki süreçlerde de öğretmen değerlendirmelerinin yanı sıra kendinizi değerlendirme uygulamaları kullanılabilir mi? Kendinizi değerlendirme uygulamaları devam etmeli mi?

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(English Translation of the Self-Assessment Questionnaire)

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire aims to reveal the effects of self-assessment practices of students on their writing skill in English. Data to be obtained will only be used for scientific purposes. Thank you for your participation.

Name: Age :

Gender :   Male ☐   Female ☐

1. Evaluate your English level in general.

Beginner ☐   Intermediate ☐   Advanced ☐

2. How long have you been taking English courses? Briefly summarize your English learning background (school, private course, job, abroad etc.).

_____
_____
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3. Make an overall evaluation of the writing sessions you took this year. What kind of skills have you gained? Are there any changes compared to the previous years?

_____
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4. What effects did your performance in the writing sessions make on your general English learning process? What kind of improvements did you observe in yourselves compared to the previous years after these sessions?

_____
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5. What do you think about self-assessment checklists applied at the end of each writing session? What effect did they make on your writing skill?

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6. What are your opinions about journal practices applied every other week? What effect did they make on your writing skill?

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7. Do you think that self-assessment practices can be applied as well as teacher assessment in the future? Should self-assessment practices be continued?

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7.5. APPENDIX 5   SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLISTS FOR <u>PILOTING</u>

SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLISTS WEEK 1	Başarılı	Kısmen başarılı	Başarısız
1. Kendi hayatımla ilgili cümleler yazabiliyorum.	☐	☐	☐
2. Bir cümle ile öbeğin yapısı arasındaki farkı ayırt edebiliyorum.	☐	☐	☐
3. Öznesi ve yüklemi olan kurallı cümleler yazabiliyorum.	☐	☐	☐
4. Büyük harfleri doğru bir şekilde kullanabiliyorum.	☐	☐	☐
5. Büyük harf ve küçük harflerin kullanımını ayırt edebiliyorum.	☐	☐	☐
6. Cümlelerimi bir paragrafta birleştirebiliyorum.	☐	☐	☐
7. Paragrafın yapısını biliyorum.	☐	☐	☐
8. Kendi hayatımla ilgili bir paragraf yazabiliyorum.	☐	☐	☐
9.Fikirlerimi bir paragraf formunda birleştirebiliyorum.	☐	☐	☐

WEEK 2	Başarılı Successful	Kısmen başarılı Partly successful	Başarısız Unsuccessful
1. Aile üyelerim ile ilgili cümleler kurabiliyorum. I can produce sentences about my family members.	☐	☐	☐
2. Kurduğum cümleleri bir paragraf formuna dönüştürebiliyorum. I can write my sentences in the paragraph form.	☐	☐	☐
3. Nasıl başlık atılacağını biliyorum. I know how to give a title.	☐	☐	☐
4. Özne ve nesne zamirleri arasındaki uyumu biliyorum. I know the subject-object agreement.	☐	☐	☐
5. Öznesi ve nesnesi birbirine uyumlu cümleler yazabiliyorum. I can produce sentences with subject-object agreement.	☐	☐	☐
6. Paragraflardaki bağlaçları belirleyebiliyorum. I can identify the conjunctions in a paragraph.	☐	☐	☐
7. Benzer ifadeleri ve cümleleri bağlayabiliyorum. I can combine similar statements and sentences.	☐	☐	☐
8. Zıt ifadeleri ve cümleleri birleştirebiliyorum. I can combine opposite statements and sentences.	☐	☐	☐
9. Cümlelerimi "ve" ya da "fakat" bağlaçlarını kullanarak	☐	☐	☐

bağlayabiliyorum.
I can combine my sentences by using the conjunctions
"and" or "but".

10. Aile üyelerimden biri ya da bir arkadaşım ile ilgili "ve" ve
"fakat" bağlaçlarını kullanarak bir paragraf yazabiliyorum.
I can write a paragraph about one of my family members
or friends by using the conjunctions "and" or "but".

11. Yazdığım paragrafa başlık atabiliyorum.
I can give a title to my paragraph.

7.6. APPENDIX 6   A SAMPLE OF STUDENT JOURNALS FOR <u>PILOTING</u>

STUDENT JOURNAL

1. Son iki haftadaki yazma derslerinizi gözden geçirin ve bu derslerde aklınızda en fazla ne kaldığını yazın. Bu derslerde neler hissettiniz? Bu dersleri sevdiniz/sevmediniz mi? Neden?

    Think back over the week and the week before in your writing sessions and write down what you most strongly remember doing in these sessions. How did this make you feel? Did you like it or not? Why?

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
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    _____
    _____

2. Bu son iki yazma dersinden neler öğrendiniz ve sınıf içinde öğrendiklerinizi yaşamınızın diğer alanlarına-okulda ya da evde- nasıl uygulayabilirsiniz?

    What did you learn this week and how can you apply what you learned in class to other areas of your life, either in school or at home?

    _____
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    _____

3. Yazma derslerinizdeki performansınızı nasıl buldunuz? Sizce bu derslerdeki güçlü ya da zayıf yönleriniz nelerdir? Eğer varsa, zayıf olduğunuz yönleriniz için neler yapılabilir?
    How did you find your performance in the writing sessions? What do you think about your strengths and weaknesses? What are they? If any, what can be done for your weaknesses?

    _____
    _____
    _____
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8. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name **:** Seda BANLI   **Place of Birth:** Adana, TURKEY

Date of Birth : 03.06.1983

CONTACT INFORMATION

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EDUCATION

2012-2014 M.A. at Çağ University, The Institue of Social Sciences, English Language Teaching Department, Yenice, Mersin.

2000-2005 B.A. at Mersin University, Faculty of Education, English Language Teaching Department, Mersin.

1996-1999 Anafartalar High School, Adana

WORK EXPERIENCE

2013- English Language Instructor at Tarsus Technology Faculty at Mersin University, Mersin

2009- 2013 English Language Instructor at Tarsus Technical Education Faculty at Mersin University, Mersin

2006-2009 English Language Instructor at Higher School of Foreign Languages at Gaziantep University, Gaziantep

2005-2006 English Language Teacher at Direkli Hacı Ahmet Irmak Secondary School, Derik, Mardin.

ATTENDED SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

- EALTA *Assessment for Academic Purposes SIG Conference* Çağ University, Mersin, Turkey, March 1, 2014.
- 4th International ELT Student Conference Çukurova University, Adana, Turkey, May 9, 2013.
- 6th International ELT Conference on "The Use of Technology in Student Centered Learning". Beykent University, İstanbul, Turkey, March 31, 2012
- NLP, Groupwork, Body-language and Motivation Seminar by Rheiland Privatschule M.V.L.V. Coaching Academy, Tarsus Technical Education Faculty, Mersin, Turkey, April 27, 2011.
- 2nd International ELT Conference entitled "Golden Implementations to Enable Students' Productive Skills to Flourish". Atılım University, Ankara, Turkey. April 19, 2008.
- 2nd GKV ELT Conference "Adding Variety to ELT" Gaziantep College Foundation Private Schools, Gaziantep, Turkey, April 7, 2007.