

EFFECTS OF COLLABORATIVE WRITING ON ATTITUDES OF LEARNERS  
TOWARDS WRITING AT ANADOLU UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY  
SCHOOL

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## ABSTRACT

Title: Effects of Collaborative Writing on Attitudes of Learners  
Towards Writing at Anadolu University Preparatory  
School

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The participants were 61 upper-intermediate and advanced level students at AUPS whose ages were from 17 to 21. Participants were male and female. Two questionnaires were used in the study. Each questionnaire was given twice. The first

questionnaire, which included question items about general attitudes towards writing was given before the first collaborative writing workshop as the pre-treatment questionnaire. The second, which had question items about attitudes towards collaborative writing was administered after the first collaborative writing workshop. The second questionnaire was given once more after the fourth collaborative writing workshop and the first questionnaire was administered as post-treatment at the end of the study. The whole data collection procedure lasted one month.

Data were analyzed by t-test and correlation. T-test was used to see the significance of difference between the first and the fourth questionnaires; and also between the second and the third questionnaires. Correlation was used within the first and the fourth questionnaires to see the relationship between the attitudes towards writing in general and towards collaborative writing according to the responses to the question items about both types available in those two questionnaires. The results showed that before treatment the students at AUPS had negative attitudes towards writing and that they had not tried collaborative writing before. The results also indicated that negative attitudes towards writing turned into positive ones after the collaborative writing workshops. In addition the study results indicated that the positive change in attitudes is related to the collaborative writing. Another result of this study is that there is no significant difference between the two proficiency levels; upper-intermediate and advanced.

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INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
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The examining committee appointed by the Institute of Economics and Social  
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The committee has decided that the thesis of the student is satisfactory.

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We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Masters of Arts.

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for his never ending love, support  
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## Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Language is like a tree having several branches, which are so called language skills, interrelated to each other. Yet, the productive skills, writing and speaking are always the most difficult ones for second language learners. Despite its difficulty speaking can be made at least enjoyable with interesting activities. But, for the learners, writing is a boring and complicated skill since good writing requires good organization, creativity, imagination and good language knowledge. Ghani (1986, p.36) argues that “writing compositions, for example, in a foreign language, can become a boring task that they do because they have to and not because they feel that it is a process that should not only improve their language but also stimulate thinking and thus develop their cognitive abilities”. It is hard to put the ideas on a piece of paper in a systematic, effective and interesting design. Even though one has valuable ideas to write and she can design in her mind what to write in a very good and impressive way, she finds it very difficult to commit the thoughts to the paper in a sensible and meaningful way particularly in a foreign language. Owing to the fact that learners often find those items too complex to deal with, their attitudes towards writing are not positive in general.

There may be different ways to change those attitudes. Ghani suggests using “various teaching techniques, which provide and foster creativity” (1986, p.36). One of the ways is scattering collaborative writing among non-collaborative ones to add a different color to writing courses, to give learners chances to share their ideas with their peers, to have them discuss and find more interesting and creative ways to write and so forth. So the purpose of my research was to find out the attitudes of learners at prep school in Anadolu University towards collaborative writing which might be a new way

for them to implement in writing courses and to see whether there are any change in their attitudes after trial of group work.

For my study, collaborative writing is defined as more than one person working together in a group to write a single document through sharing their opinions (see Boughey, 1997; Hirvela, 1999; Houseman, 2000; Kolin, 1994). Another term I often use in my study is non-collaborative writing. Boughey defines this term as “a lonely process requiring writers to explore, oppose and make connections between propositions for themselves, a process which is conducive to learning” (1997, p. 127). So non-collaborative writing refers to “writing individually” without sharing ideas with peers.

Boughey (1997) and Sharples (1993) claim that writing is complex. Writing requires “writers to explore, oppose and make connections” (Boughey, 1997, p. 127) between ideas. They also should be organized and ordered “which means that the writer has to examine and manipulate his thoughts thoroughly” (Boughey, 1997, p. 127). Sharples (1993) states that “writing is part fascination and part frustration” (p. xi) He asserts that “writing never came easily and I still wrestle with words as if they were opponents that must be strangled into submission” (p. xi). These realities about writing cause learners to have negative attitudes towards writing.

However, studies done by Bassett et al (1999), Boughey (1997), and Hirvela (1999) show that collaboration can have positive effects on interaction, motivation, communication and attitudes of learners towards writing. Wilhelm (1999), says that cooperative work “helps students build fluency, confidence and motivation while engaging them in functional practice and extracurricular use of English” (p. 14). So



there might be a relationship between collaborative writing and attitudes changing positively.

By taking into consideration the sources that discuss collaborative writing, it can be inferred that there are visible or invisible factors, which produce negative attitudes in writing. These factors might be eliminated through implementing collaborative writing as a supportive activity in writing courses. If learners do writing in groups their performance might be much higher and the quality of their writing might be much better and they may feel more self-confident, encouraged and relaxed in collaboration. Sharing judgments, compensating for the shortcomings of other members of the group and even negotiating conflicts might make learners feel that they can do very good writing without being frustrated. Trying to overcome the complex and frustrating sides of writing through collaboration may reduce the negative feelings and attitudes of learners towards this skill. Briefly, collaborative writing can make learners gain positive attitudes towards writing.

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study is that students' generally negative attitudes towards writing. Learning must be done in a surrounding which can make learners actively take part and produce. It is the teacher's duty to provide an environment full of rich activities and materials. Of all skills mostly writing requires such surroundings to lead the learners to be creative. Especially, as Edward (2000) argues, writing in a foreign language makes learners confront more problems than writing in native language and even than learning other skills of language. For various reasons, which will be discussed in Chapter 2, success or lack of success in writing

affects the attitudes of learners. It is a very human thing to gain negative attitudes towards the subjects at which we are bad and good attitudes towards the ones at which we are good. Failure to write well set the ground of desperateness of both learners and the teachers because demotivated learners get very low grades in writing tests and the students' failure affects the instructors negatively as well. This problem can arise from their lack of knowledge and inadequacy of practice in writing or because of their lack of self-confidence in this productive and indeed difficult skill.

Main problems learners face with in writing will be discussed now. What is done at Anadolu University in writing courses is giving learners a topic expecting them to produce something interesting and well-organized in terms of its content, grammatical quality and overall quality. Sometimes the topics may not be interesting for learners. Some of them may not be very good at using grammatical structures in writing accurately. Some of them may have good ideas and experiences about the topic but may be unable to commit them to the paper appropriately. Some of them may not be very sure about the design and order of writing. Some of them may be very good at grammar usage but may not be very successful at appropriate vocabulary usage. It is not incredible that each individual has strengths and weaknesses in his personality and abilities. Even though a learner has attractive thoughts on a topic given and she does not have any negative attitudes towards writing, she may have difficulties in forming good sentences. While writing one may not be aware of her mistakes but after an enthusiastic writing one may get a very low grade which is one of the most seen cases at Anadolu University. While proctoring the first writing exams, what we experience is that some learners write in a very willing mood and get out of the class smiling and

saying that it was the best exam they have had so far. Yet, after the results are explained some of those students come to talk and complain about their bad grades, which they had never expected after the exam. I generally go to the writing teachers of those students to learn what is wrong. And I see that they have problems either in grammar or in vocabulary usage or in the organization of the paragraphs. This makes learners lose their positive attitudes towards writing. The others, who already do not feel so positively in writing, may and do become unsuccessful in tests as well. Grades are the best motivators for learners. Even if teachers try to motivate them in other ways, students cannot give up thinking about getting a good grade. I think using collaborative writing sometimes in writing courses may get learners to overcome the problems they face while writing in class and also in exams. Since the results and claims of researches or the other sources are on the side of positive effects of collaborative writing and the results of my study showed that the negative attitudes of learners towards writing might turn to be positive through collaborative writing, this research is definitely very important because it will make changes in writing syllabus of Anadolu University by adding collaborative writing sessions to the individual ones. It is important for the learners too since they will feel better and more confident and be more successful in writing. If learners are encouraged to write collaboratively, then their attitudes may change.

#### Significance of the Study

I will discuss the significance of this study in two parts: 1) if my research study results show that learners have negative attitudes towards writing and if the results also display a change in attitudes of learners at Anadolu University Preparatory School

(AUPS), 2) if this study extends, and supports the previous studies in terms of effects of collaborative writing.

The studies I discussed generally agree with the idea that learners have negative attitudes towards writing because of several reasons (see Edward, 2000; Henschen and Sidlow, 1990; Sharples, 1993). As I mentioned in “Statement of the Problem”, the methods used in writing at AUPS are traditional. So, since my study showed that learners mostly have negative attitudes towards writing, we, as instructors, will have to think about this once more. In addition, because my study indicated that collaborative writing has positive effects on attitudes of learners towards writing, it can be added to the curriculum. Not only collaborative writing but some other new methods can be added to the curriculum. So, this study is significant for writing courses to be more effective and to change the negative attitudes of learners into positive.

This study is also important to support the previous studies. In previous studies, it is mostly seen that learners have negative attitudes towards writing, they are not too successful in writing, and they are not motivated enough in writing courses (see Chapter 2). It is also discussed in Chapter 2 that writing is generally done as a passive activity. These all influence the attitudes of learners negatively. Studies show that collaborative writing has positive effects on motivation, interaction, success, and attitudes of learners. So, my study results support these positive effects. It is significant for this reason too.

## Research Questions

This study will be based on the following question:

\_\_\_ What are the effects of collaborative writing on students' attitudes towards writing at Anadolu University Preparatory School (AUPS)?

\_\_\_ Does "level" have a significant role on change of learners' attitudes?

I put forwards null hypotheses to find the answers to the research questions. The first null hypothesis includes that collaboration in writing will not have positive effects on attitudes of learners towards writing and will not change negative attitudes towards writing into positive. The other null hypothesis is that there will not be any difference between proficiency levels in terms of attitudes towards writing.

Review of the Literature, Methodology, Data Analysis, and Conclusion chapters will follow this chapter. In Chapter 2, I will look at the studies about writing, collaboration, and collaborative writing in detail. In Chapter 3, I will deal with the participants, instruments, procedure, and data analysis. In Chapter 4, I will mention how I analyzed the data and I will also look at and explain the tables in detail. Conclusions, interpretations, limitations, further studies, and implications will be mentioned in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Introduction

My main purpose in conducting this study was to determine if it was possible to change the negative attitudes of students towards writing in English, if there are any, to positive. Writing is a complex and tough job and these characteristics intensify when the subject is writing in a foreign language. The goals of this study were to make writing more enjoyable, to have students share the load on their shoulders, and to get them to overcome the deficiencies in their writing through the help of their peers. Collaborative writing is a treatment which may increase the positive attitudes of learners towards writing. For this study collaborative writing is defined as one document produced by a group. In order to provide appropriate background, in this chapter I will first discuss research dealing with the attitudes of learners towards writing in general. Then, I will discuss collaborative learning and deal with some definitions and implementations of it. Next, I will focus on definitions of collaborative writing. Afterwards, I will move onto the effects of two collaborative writing types, peer review and single document production in a group. These two types are the most common ones, and the second one is focus of this study. Then, I will deal with collaborative writing effects on attitudes by touching on achievement, interaction, and motivation. Then, I will briefly mention the negative sides of collaborative writing.

### Writing

Writing is often thought to be one of the most difficult skills to be taught and to be learnt. Writing is burdensome because it is hard to write well, and it requires

learners to focus on writing in detail to be better writers. This complexity of writing increases anxiety in writing courses, anxiety results in demotivation or discouragement, and thus learners gain negative attitudes towards writing (Gere, 1987, Henschen & Sidlow 1990, and Sharples 1993). The traditional, isolated approach to writing increases its burden. Henschen & Sidlow (1990) note that writing is a passive activity because the grades are the primary source of motivation. Furthermore, writing is done in the traditional way: learners write on a topic, hand in their papers to the teacher and get feedback or more usually just a grade. Studies by Catanach et al (1997), Clawson (1993), Connery et al (1996), Dale (1994), Edward (2000), Henschen & Sidlow (1990), Hirvela (1999), Lou & Abrami (2000), Peyton et al (1994), Powell (1984), and Wilhelm (1999) have been done to find a way to make writing more interactive, enjoyable and interesting. In order to overcome these limitations, I will focus on two of those studies. Peyton et al (1994) and Powell (1984) note that learners generally do not like writing either in first or foreign language because this difficult skill is done mostly in only one way, which is traditional essay writing. Powell (1984) adds that the writing courses are also done in a rigid way. The approaches of teachers towards teaching writing are generally rigidly structured, and they generally tend not to change their approaches. For instance, if they have predetermined a type of writing like choosing a topic and making learners write on it in different styles such as comparison, argumentative, narrative and so forth, they go on teaching in the same ways without trying to change their style. Powell mentions a study done by Adams (1984) comparing the attitudes of learners towards writing in a highly structured method and a flexible one in which the teacher tries various methods in writing. The results show that the

class having flexible methods in writing developed more positive attitudes towards writing. Powell claims that there is a direct relationship between the methods used in writing courses, such as rigid instruction, and attitudes towards writing. Because the attitudes of learners are negative, their competency level and self-esteem will decrease. Negative attitudes can be changed to positive if teachers can create natural, interesting, enjoyable, and different environments for students to write in (Peyton et al, 1994).

Powell (1984) studied the relationship between the attitudes of learners towards writing and their success in composition. For him, instruction, strictness and environment were also affecting variables on students' success. His instruments were questionnaires about attitudes and the grades of learners. Grades do not reflect just the results of a test but reflect what students did during a semester and average of all grades they got. So, all the variables mentioned before had effects on the grades. The results show that the teachers themselves, instructions, flexibility, and the creativity of the environment had roles on success of students and there is a direct relationship between success and attitudes. In addition to this, Powell found that "confidence is at its highest when success is achieved" (1984, p. 122).

Although nearly the same results were found as in Powell's study, Peyton et al (1994) did a more specific data collection, through a workshop method. A workshop is defined in the article as a writing process "beginning with a mini lesson, followed by periods of drafting, conferencing and sharing, revising, redrafting, editing, publishing and celebrating" (Peyton et al, 1994, p. 472). The workshops were audio and videotaped and the teachers were interviewed. In addition, teachers kept personal



journals, observed each other's classes and shared their ideas. Results show that nearly all of the students had positive attitudes towards such an implementation.

Actually, these two different studies share nearly the same results. Both display that if students are interested in the topic and the process; if they are able to try different methods in writing; if teachers behave flexibly; then, learners are more motivated, they produce more creative and successful writings, they feel more confident in writing, they feel more satisfied with their product and they learn how to interact with their peers and teacher. All of these positive changes are explained as changes in "attitudes" in both of the studies.

Edward (2000) and Scott & Rodgers (1993) pinpoint another dimension of writing and effects of it on attitudes of learners. They note that it is very important to make learners conscious about the writing process which includes developing ideas logically, writing grammatically correct sentences, focusing on the content and meaning (Edward, 2000; Scott & Rodgers, 1993). Rodgers & Scott add that "the production of text involves a complex process that occurs in a recursive rather than a linear manner" (1993, p. 234). They state that learners have negative attitudes towards writing because they are not aware of the processes of writing and because they do writing in a linear way. One of the ways to make learners gain cognition and awareness of writing processes is collaboration in writing which is seen as a facilitator of the cognitive connections between previous knowledge, personal experiences and new information (Edward, 2000; Scott & Rodgers, 1993).

To summarize, in studies and articles of Edward (2000), Gere (1987), Henschen & Sidlow (1990), Powell (1984), Peyton et al (1994), Scott & Rodgers (1993),

Sharples (1993), it is claimed that students generally have negative attitudes towards writing because of different reasons. So, some techniques are suggested in these studies for changing attitudes. The most commonly suggested ways are the ones which let learners become involved in the learning process and in which they can interact with each other and with their teacher. A common instructional technique in these studies is “collaboration” in teaching and learning. So, in the coming section I will deal with collaborative learning.

### Collaborative learning

In order to understand the characteristics of collaborative learning and the effects of it on language learning, it is necessary to clarify what collaborative learning means. The terms collaborative and cooperative learning are sometimes used interchangeably. Although both terms include the concepts of group work, interaction, increased motivation, more developed interpersonal skills and autonomous learners, there are some points separating them from each other (Dörnyei, 1997 and Horwitz et al, 1997). Both in cooperative and collaborative learning, it is emphasized that learners learn better in community and in group, so learning must be done in society instead of in isolation (DeCiccio, 1988; Dewey as cited in Oxford, 1997; Palmer as cited in Wilhelm,1997). Relationship between the learner and the society must go on actively during the learning process (DeCiccio, 1988; Dewey as cited in Oxford, 1997). Another point cooperative and collaborative learning share is that the teacher is only the guide and the facilitator in the teaching and learning processes (Oxford, 1997).

In some points cooperative and collaborative learning are different from each other. In cooperative learning particular classroom techniques are emphasized to

improve the skills of learners. Collaborative learning includes those particular classroom techniques to develop the interpersonal and learning skills of learners too, but collaborative learning refers to social relationships of learners in a community as well. In cooperative learning, the structure of the classroom and specific aims have the prior importance because the cooperation in this view is specific to the classroom. Yet, what collaborative learning refers to is broader than what cooperative learning includes. In collaborative learning, in addition to interaction in groups in the classroom, learners must have relationships with the community because “learning occurs while people participate in the socio-cultural activities of the learning community” (Oxford, 1997, p. 448). Since collaborative learning is based on social constructivist theory, the interaction cannot be restricted to classroom; interaction must be between the learner, the surrounding and the world (Vygotsky as cited in Oxford, 1997). In cooperative learning, what is emphasized is the organization of the classroom, the teacher, students and the exchange of information between group members (Oxford, 1997); whereas, collaborative learning both emphasizes what cooperative learning focuses on, it includes the culture of the community and “views learning as construction of knowledge within a social context” (Oxford, 1997, p. 443).

In summary, collaborative learning is a broader concept than cooperative one since it includes what cooperative learning emphasizes and includes deeper views as well. I touched these two terms because they are sometimes used interchangeably and my study is related with the common properties of them.

### Roles of teacher and student in collaborative learning

In collaborative learning, the teacher is not the center of the classroom any more. What teachers must do is just to help students become autonomous learners (Horwitz et al, 1997). Learning must be shared between the teacher and the learner or among learners with the guidance of the teacher. In teacher-student collaboration, teachers help learners work in groups effectively and teachers act as a part of each group too. Being a part of each group does not mean that teachers share equal power with group members. They just become a member of the groups as a guide and a facilitator whenever any group needs help. Teachers cannot share equal power in groups in collaborative learning because there are several groups in a classroom and each group might need help. In student-student collaboration, teachers are not participants in the collaborative work. They might only guide and facilitate the work whenever learners need help. The role of learners here is to negotiate with group members and “to help to direct and reflect upon his or her own learning experiences” (Wilhelm, 1997, p. 528). There must be negotiation, interaction, help, and sharing in teacher-student or student-student collaborative work.

In order to create the environment that promotes these factors, and make collaborative work beneficial and effective, several elements are necessary (Wilhelm, 1997). For example, a communicative atmosphere can be created in the classroom; groups can be formed carefully for effective negotiation; the instructions and the feedback can be in an individualized way; students can be involved in grade decision; teacher can function as a good model, facilitator and guide; awareness of both the teacher and students can be provided to learn individually and in a social process;

students can be warned about how to behave in a group as a group member, such as being supportive, listening actively, inviting and allowing criticism and disagreements, avoiding pressure and punishment and not giving easily for criticism (Wilhelm, 1997, p. 528). So, the setting, instructions, tools must be suitable for collaborative work.

Wilhelm notes that if teachers and learners do collaborative learning without applying those rules, the possibility of negative effects might increase, whereas, the positive ones might decrease (1997). That's why, those rules must be born in mind to prevent the negative effects from emerging because of lack of knowledge about that approach.

Awareness of both students and teacher of collaborative learning as a process of individualization and as a social process is also crucial because on the personal level learning requires individual work and as a social process negotiation and interaction helps learning (Wilhelm, 1997). Sakofs et al (cited in Wilhelm, 1997) also states that learning is both personal and social. Learning is a discovery on the personal level and trust, sharing and mutual respect on the social level (Sakofs et al cited in Wilhelm, 1997). Sakofs et al(cited in Wilhelm, 1997) also add that learning as a process of individualization includes imagination, self-discipline and achievement, and as a social process self-discoveries, imagination and achievement are shared with other people to enhance learning.

#### Effects of collaboration on learning

##### Positive effects

Studies that focus on the effects of collaboration on teaching and learning (Bejarano, 1987; DeCiccio, 1988; Dörnyei, 1997; Horwitz et al, 1997; Klein & Schnackenberg, 2000; Lou eat al, 2000; Oxford, 1997; and Wilhelm, 1997). conclude

that collaborative learning is a method which involves learners in the teaching and learning process through giving active roles to learners in groups which leads learners to communicate and interact with each other and with the teacher. The interaction socializes learners in groups and has a crucial role in providing effective class intervention, motivation, building trust and self-esteem, and activating learners' awareness. Learners also improve their interpersonal skills by interacting with each other in groups. They also note that collaborative learning provides more enjoyable teaching and learning which leads to learners' gaining positive attitudes towards learning.

Studies done by Connery et al (1996), Dörnyei (1997), Horwitz et al (1997), Oxford (1997), Wilhelm (1999), show that collaborative learning enables learning to gain self-esteem; to enhance interpersonal skills; to build trust on other people; to become autonomous; to be involved in teaching and learning process; to become motivated; to become creative; to interact; to communicate and to be able to mistakes more easily. All of these effects of collaboration, as Dörnyei (1997) states, help learners gain positive attitudes towards learning. Horwitz et al (1997) supports this by claiming that collaborative learning increases self-confidence and decreases anxiety.

Bejarano (1987) compared small-group and whole-class activities in terms of academic achievement in EFL. Observation and special achievement tests were used as instruments. The study was conducted during 4.5 months and the achievement test was given twice as pre and post-tests. His study results show that the participants taught in collaborative mode were much more successful than the ones who worked in the whole-class method. Observation results display that, in addition to success,

collaborative learning was effective in increasing participation, interaction, motivation and enrichment of linguistic competence. So, in this study, collaboration had positive effects on learning when compared with a whole class method.

Lou and Abrami (2000) focused on comparing group with individual instruction. In Lou & Abrami's study, tests given to participants found that collaborative work was more effective than individual work in learning. Lou and Abrami claim that collaborative learning results in more success on achievement tests because learners are involved in teaching; they participated actively in the activities in their groups, and interacted with group members (2000). Moreover, by grouping the class, teacher can address more diverse groups and so such concepts as multiple intelligence can be incorporated. Lou and Abrami's (2000) study confirmed Bejarano's (1987) finding of the positive effects of collaboration on motivation, interaction, and success of learners in learning. Bassett et al (1999) did their research both on teachers and students. In this study, the purpose was to find to what extent the trained teachers used the strategies of collaborative learning in their classes and what the attitudes of learners were towards this method. So, first, all of the teachers in several schools were trained about using collaborative work in teaching for a year. Then, it was explored how many of those teachers implement what they learned through a year, in their classes. Likert-type questionnaires were given to those teachers to see the effects of training about collaborative teaching on attitudes of teachers and the students. Students did not respond to the questionnaires but there were items exploring the attitudes of students towards collaboration from the teachers' perspective. Questionnaire results displayed that both teachers and learners enjoyed collaboration in teaching. Both

wanted to continue such a method in teaching and learning. This study is related with my study because it tries to find the effects of collaboration on attitudes too and it reveals another dimension of collaborative work which is collaboration in general teaching and attitudes of teachers about this method.

Klein and Schnackenberg's (2000) focused on students and investigated the effects of collaboration on achievement, attitudes and interaction. Results revealed that collaboration motivated learners and encouraged them to learn. They also learned how to interact with each other which helped them share ideas, negotiate and discuss to learn better. So, through better motivation and interaction, they gained positive attitudes towards collaborative learning which. In my study, I expect that learners will write more successfully, learn better by interaction and this will lead to positive attitude gain as in Klein and Schnackenberg's study.

Previous research clearly supports the positive effects of collaboration. However, some research points to certain negative effects as well.

#### Negative effects

It is inevitable that any method will have disadvantages. Although students mostly enjoyed collaboration, there were a few who did not like it and complained about it (Horwitz et al, 1997). They were unwilling to participate in collaborative studies and they wanted to work individually. They were unwilling was because of either not liking to share their ideas with others or not being able to get along with group members. The students who have negative opinions generally say that the grouping must be very careful to prevent negative effects of collaboration. Wilhelm (1997) also gives the opinions of learners did collaborative learning in a study. There



are several students who admit that they were discouraged by this new method which requires negotiation, interaction and communication among group members. Those students explain that they are not used to such interactive methods in teaching so they at first felt discouraged. Some students, did not feel comfortable in negotiating. Some thought that the teacher does not do her job and loads her work on students' shoulders according to Wilhelm's study (1997).

Despite those explanations done by several students in studies of Horwitz et al (1997) and Wilhelm (1997), there are not many studies mentioned about negative effects of collaboration.

As we have seen till now, collaboration has so far been used in teaching and learning processes. This method can be used in every area of teaching as well as in every skill of language teaching. Since my main concern in this study is changing negative attitudes of learners to positive towards writing, I will now move onto collaborative writing which I believe might turn negative attitudes of learners into positive towards writing.

## Collaborative Writing

### Definitions

I will mention two different definitions of collaborative writing which are focused by most researchers. For example, Brumfit (1984) sees group writing as a kind of communicative activity. According to Brumfit (1984), Carson & Nelson (cited in Hirvela, 1999), Catanach et al (1997), Gere (1987), Ike (1989), and Sharples (1993) group work in writing refers to "group revision and improvement of written work" which, they see, an alternative solution to decrease the level of negative attitudes

toward writing. Rivers (1987) on the other hand claims that writing does not have to be done alone or individually. Both the instructor and the students may also participate in the writing process actively. Rivers asserts that group writing can be defined as “students’ work in small groups to produce brief compositions (p. 85). Bosley (cited in Hirvela, 1999), Clawson (1993), Connery et al (1996), Houseman (1999), Sharples (1993), and Storch (2001) give another description which is producing single document in groups. I will focus on these two different types of collaborative writing because they are the most commonly used ones especially in Turkey. These are *peer review in writing* and *producing a single document in a group*.

a) Peer review.

In the peer review process, students write their own papers and fellow students provide feedback on the draft. These papers can be randomly distributed to other students in class and each student gives feedback to the paper they read. This process can also be done in groups or in pairs. Carson and Nelson (cited in Hirvela, 1999) state that the main focus of peer review is “critiquing texts produced by individual students” (p. 9). After the students review the papers of their peers, everyone gets his own paper and revises and rewrites according to the feedback of his peer or peers.

Larson and Maier (2000) focus on modeling in the peer review process and its effects on participant roles. They studied how the “teacher explicitly modeled her own authorship processes and how students took up those processes in their own writing through shifts in participation roles” (p. 468). First, the teacher shows how she co-authors with group members in a peer review writing activity and students learn the process by actively participating. Each step is displayed explicitly and in detail so that

learners can learn this process very well to apply it. Learners can ask questions whenever they feel confused. Then, after this explicit modeling, the teacher expects learners to form groups and do the process she modeled in groups. The students first select a topic and then start to write a story. During writing the story, they can get help from their teacher or peers, but each student writes his paper by himself not in group. Group members become more active when peer review starts. So, in the modeling part, the teacher is the authority, but in group work sessions, students take the authority. The study results show that modeling the peer review process enhances learners' motivation and enables them to interact. Results also indicate that the students are willing to participate in the writing process.

For Gere (1987) collaborative writing that is “conversation within writing groups” (p. 84) is giving feedback to group members. She claims that group writing means peer-response writing, and it is very helpful in learning; lessening anxiety towards writing; increasing motivation and gaining positive attitudes (Gere, 1987).

Motivation and participation are the key concepts mentioned in Ike's (1989) and Larson and Maier's (2000) studies. Henschen & Sidlow (1990) support these conclusions and add some other concepts which are gained through peer review writing. They firstly assert that writing is a boring, frustrating, isolated and complex work, so learners find it difficult to deal with. That's why, giving feedback to the papers will enhance and ease the writing. Henschen & Sidlow (1990) argue that the burdensome and isolation of writing can be decreased by peer review because a great degree of communication, negotiation and interaction is required in this type of writing. In peer review, group members make judgements about the writing of each other in

terms of “what to write about, how to begin, what to say, how to say” (Henschen & Sidlow, 1990, p. 31). Bruffee (cited in Henschen & Sidlow, 1990) states that “students see things in peers, that they would not have seen on their own; they begin to overcome private ways of thinking” (p. 31). One participant in a study says that “my partner gave me some tips on writing papers that I previously did not know” (Henschen & Sidlow, 1990, p. 31). In peer review, students get an immediate feedback from their peers, and they get a chance to question the reasons of the feedback. So, they can more easily improve their writing. Students in that study also agree that getting feedback from their peers teaches them better.

#### b) Producing a single document in a group.

This kind of collaborative writing most commonly and simply is defined as “the activities involved in the production of a document by more than one author” (Spring, 1997, p. 1, see also Houseman, 1999 and Kolin, 1990). Traditional collaboration refers to “two or more writers working on the same text who assume equal responsibility for the text produced; actual involvement in terms of contributions to the finished product may vary or be more equally shared (Parks, 2000, p. 104). Bosley (cited in Hirvela, 1999) defines collaborative writing similarly: “two or more people working together to produce one written document in a situation in which a group takes responsibility for having produced the document ” (p. 9).

Committee collaboration refers to two or more writers, who although working on the same text, do not assume equal responsibility for the text produced; actual involvement in terms of the finished product may vary or be more equally shared” (p. 104). These definitions share the property of working on the same single document

which is same with the collaborative writing of my study. Now, I will deal with how collaborative writing affects the attitudes of learners.

### Collaborative writing and attitudes

The purpose of my study is to determine whether collaborative writing affects attitudes towards writing. However, there are not many studies that focus specifically on attitudes and attitude change. Many researchers, for example, Catanach, 1997; Clawson, 1993; Dale, 1994; Ghani, 1986; and Storch, 2001, have done studies on the effects of collaboration on achievement, motivation, negotiation, interpersonal relationships, participation, and involvement, and those studies take these concepts as directly related to attitudes. As I will explain in the coming sections, they claim that if collaborative writing has effects on those areas, it has effects on attitudes too. I will divide the discussion into the effects of collaborative writing on achievement, motivation and interaction, and attitudes.

#### Effects of collaborative writing on achievement

For my purposes “achievement” means “the improvement in writing quality”. Research studies done by Clawson (1993), Hirvela (1999), Storch (2001) and Dale (1994) reveal that collaborative writing has positive effects on achievement or success in writing.

In Clawson’s (1993) study, achievement was evaluated through a comparison between individual and group work. Students were taught how to do collaborative writing which was producing a single document in a group, and then were given assignments to do in groups. After the assignments were handed in, the teacher compared the results with the previous results from individual writing. The students

were also interviewed about the effects of collaborative work. Clawson states that “the students gained a breadth of perspective that they have not had before, and their writing was really improving by collaborative writing” (p. 55). She also claims that “the collaborative writings were obviously more carefully worded and creatively written” (p. 57). She adds that there was a great improvement in development of ideas, quality of writing, in vocabulary usage, sentence structure and length of papers. In brief, results show that after the collaborative writing periods, improvements in success and achievement in writing were seen. In Hirvela’s study (1999), as in Clawson’s (1993), learners were assigned collaborative writing work for seven weeks and results revealed that the students showed very effective performance at these works. They were more successful at producing better writing in collaborative work. Hirvela states that learning is done best through collaborative work.

Two other researchers Dale (1994) and Storch (2001) evaluated achievement through tape recording, group interaction, observation, and interview. They agree with that learners display better performance in writing tasks and write more successfully. Both Dale and Storch tape-recorded the talks in collaborative works and then transcribed them to discover what factors affected the success of their collaborative writing groups. In addition, Storch (2001) used the researcher’s observation notes and the written texts to learn what groups did during writing and what they produced. Dale (1994) also gave questionnaires and did interviews with groups to take their viewpoints about collaborative writing. Transcriptions in both studies showed how serious the groups worked and how effective their interaction was. Storch’s (2001) observation notes and written texts reinforced the results inferred from the transcriptions. Dale’s

(1994) questionnaire and interview results showed that students had positive reactions to collaborative writing. To summarize, the results of these studies confirmed the results of the studies of Clawson (1993) and Hirvela (1999) by proving that collaborative writing affects achievement positively and it is a very effective way of teaching writing.

#### Effects of collaborative writing on motivation and interaction

The studies of Brumfit (1984), Rivers (1987), DeCiccio (1988), Dale (1994), Clawson (1999), and Storch (2001) consider the effects of collaborative writing on motivation and interaction. They all agree that, since while writing collaboratively students are sharing their ideas, discussing the writing, questioning each other's opinions and sharing responsibility, they feel that the control is in their hands. As with the positive effects of collaborative writing on achievement, the control makes the students feel more confident. Success always makes self-confidence increase. As learners feel self-confident about the quality of their papers in terms of organization and content, they feel motivated. Rivers claims that collaboration in writing makes colorful contributions to the activity by providing interaction and these contributions also result in motivation (1987). In addition, as Storch (2001) asserts "group work will provide learners with more opportunities to use the target language in low anxiety contexts" (p. 20), and since their anxiety will decrease, motivation will increase.

Furthermore, because learners will have to discuss and negotiate during the collaboration process, interaction will inevitably increase. Exchanging ideas also helps interaction (Storch, 2001). Clawson's study (1993) shows that participants accept that they learned different viewpoints while discussing and this increases enjoyment. So,

motivation is result the of such a work. Edward (2000) adds that “learners get opportunity to discuss with peers, brainstorm ideas, question, argue, defend, and explore, it facilitates the cognitive connections between previous knowledge, personal experiences and the information to be learned” (p. 15). So, learners find opportunity to review their own experiences and to share them with their peers. Edward makes a simile that the bits and pieces from each member of the group come together like a jigsaw puzzle. Thus, this is an enjoyable and exciting work for learners. These activities result in improvement in interpersonal skills, increases motivation and teaches interaction (Catanach et al, 1997).

As I had mentioned in section 2 (pp. 12-15) collaboration as seen through social constructivist theory means that teaching and learning are effective if done as a social process instead of in isolation. This leads to multiple voices, interaction and motivation. The studies reviewed in this section show that collaborative writing results in increased achievement and this leads to greater confidence and motivation. Collaboration also activates the interpersonal skills which results in interaction. Thus, there is a relationship among these results, and they are, in turn, related to attitudes. Although the connection is indirect, we can postulate that increase in motivation and achievement lead to more positive attitudes towards writing. In the next section, I will look at studies that deal directly with attitudes.

#### Effects of collaborative writing on attitudes

Catanach et al (1997), Clawson (1993), Edward (2000) and Ghani (1986) are the authors pinpointing the positive effects of collaborative writing on attitudes towards writing. Clawson (1993) asked the same question I pursued: “What happens to student



writing and attitudes towards writing when students participate in collaborative writing activities?” (p. 55). Clawson (1993) and Catanach et al (1997) argue that collaborative writing emphasizes interpersonal skills, motivation and achievement. In addition, it increases awareness of learning to write, provides growth in learning process, enables students to learn critical thinking, helps improvement in writing and so, learners gain positive attitudes towards writing as a result of these. Because of these changes Clawson (1993) believes that collaborative writing is so powerful it can turn negative attitudes into positive ones. She believes that her students “gain a breadth of perspective that they have not had before” and they write much more successful papers that have crucial roles in changing attitudes (1993, p. 55). Clawson proves the positive attitude change by getting the opinions of learners about writing before and after collaborative writing and the responses of learners in her article show that they really changed their negative attitudes to positive towards writing after collaborative writing sessions.

Edward (2000) also claims that the activities students do in collaborative writing process result in positive attitudes. He notes that collaborative writing provides learners “the opportunity to discuss with peers, brainstorm ideas, question, argue, defend, and explore” which “expand their minds to explore their potential in writing” and which is crucial for learners to discover and improve their skills in writing (p. 15). Edward states that all those effects of collaborative writing changes the negative attitudes of learners towards writing into positive. Ghani (1986) supports the statements of Edward and she emphasizes that group work changes negative attitudes “by promoting creativity through discussions and peer learning” (p. 36).

### Negative effects of collaborative writing

Ghani (1986) and Sharples (1993) mention the negative sides of collaborative writing. Both argue that collaborative writing can be time consuming especially the time spent in training students and teachers how to apply collaborative writing properly. Sharples (1993) also claims that it is not easy to organize the setting, conditions and students.

What is suggested by Ghani in these cases is that students and teachers must be trained before applying collaborative works and they must be convinced about the advantages of it. If still there are some students who do not want to participate in collaborative writing, then, they must not be forced to participate.

### Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed some research studies which are related to writing, attitudes towards writing, collaborative learning and collaborative writing. Nearly all of the studies have attempted to find ways to overcome the burden of writing, to make it easier and more enjoyable for learners and to enhance interpersonal skills by stressing communication, negotiation and interaction. Researchers have generally focused on achievement, confidence, motivation, participation, involvement, interaction, communication, improvement in writing, effective performance, and assumed a connection between these and attitudes. However, a few studies discuss attitudes directly, and I have discussed these as well.

## Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

In my research study, my main concern is how doing collaborative writing affects the attitudes of learners towards writing. Since I used two-tailed statistics in my study I used null-hypotheses. The null hypothesis is that collaboration in writing will not have positive effects on attitudes of learners and will not change negative attitudes towards writing into positive ones. The other null hypothesis states that there will not be any difference between proficiency levels in terms of attitudes towards writing. In this chapter, I will deal with how I conducted this study under the subtitles of *participants, instruments, procedure* and *data analysis* in detail.

### Participants

I conducted the study at Anadolu University Preparatory School (AUPS). The participants were the students in two upper-intermediate and one advanced level classes from that university. The program has six levels including *beginner, elementary, lower-intermediate, intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced*. Proficiency levels of the students were determined by a placement test in the beginning of the semester. I used these two levels and three classes because they were accessible for me. I worked with 64 students. 43 of them were upper-intermediate level students and 21 were advanced level ones. In the upper-intermediate levels, there were 28 female and 15 male students; and in the advanced level, there were 15 female and 6 male learners. So, totally, 43 female and 21 male students participated in my study. Their ages vary from 18 to 21. I had to work with a teacher who would help me in conducting my study since the study would last four weeks and it was impossible for me to be at Anadolu University in

Eskişehir every week because of my obligatory courses at Bilkent University. Thus, I asked a few teachers at Anadolu University to help me. The co-coordinator of writing agreed to help me. I did not want to work with more than one teacher because different teachers would introduce additional variables that could affect the results of my study. The instructor I worked with had three classes two are upper-intermediate and one is advanced levels. Given time limitations and not being able to set the similar situations with other teachers, I did not have a control group.

### Instruments

I used two questionnaires in my study. The first questionnaire (see Appendix A) was prepared to measure the general attitudes of learners towards writing. I also wanted to learn whether they had ever tried collaborative writing and if so what they thought about it. The second questionnaire (see Appendix B) contained questions which investigated the attitudes towards collaborative writing after engaging in collaborative writing. I adapted some items in the questionnaires from Dale (1994) and from Cheng et al (1999). All of the Likert-type questions in all questionnaires are in English, but, I translated the open-ended ones from English to Turkish using a back translation method. In order to make sure that the translations were done well, I asked three native speakers of Turkish, who are English teachers, to back translate Turkish items into English. Then, I compared these translations with the original English ones to see if there are any inconsistency or difference. Afterwards I was sure that the translations were well-done.

In the first questionnaire there are 14 Likert scale type items. The second and the fifth items in the first and the fourth questionnaires are taken directly from Cheng et

al (1999). I did not use the study of Cheng et al (1999) in my literature review because their study is not related with mine. But, I noticed two question items which are directly related with my study and the content of my questionnaire, so I borrowed two items from their questionnaire. The other 12 items in these questionnaire were designed for this study.

In the second questionnaire there are 17 Likert scale type and four open-ended question items. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8 are taken directly from Dale (1994). Item 5 and 7 are adapted from Dale (1994). Some language changes were made after the feedback from piloting. I used the study of Dale (1994) in my literature too because her study is about collaborative writing and positive effects of it on learners. Several items in the questionnaire used in her study is directly related with the content of my questionnaire, so I adapted some items from the questionnaire of Dale's (1994) study. I produced the rest of the question items in these questionnaires. I took 4 open-ended questions from Dale (1994) and translated them from English to Turkish because I thought it would be much easier for the students to understand and especially to state what they meant in Turkish in open-ended questions.

I had two main questionnaires and I administered both of them twice. The first questionnaire was given twice as pre- and post treatment of collaborative writing workshops. The second questionnaire was also administered twice after the first and the fourth collaborative writing workshops. "Workshop" in my study is used as a brief explanation about collaborative writing and also the writing activity learners did in groups. Because of time limitation, I did not give a long training to learners about collaborative writing.

I piloted two questionnaires on 18 upper-intermediate students at AUPS, Preparatory School. Since there was only one advanced level class and they were to be the participants in my study, I could not pilot my questionnaires on advanced level students. After piloting, I revised the questionnaires based on the feedback of the pilot students.

### Procedure

I started to collect data on 16<sup>th</sup> of April at AUPS. The procedure of the study included the first questionnaire as the pre-treatment of the collaborative writing workshops which was followed by the first collaborative writing workshop and then by the second questionnaire. Then, the second, third and the fourth collaborative writing workshops were done which were followed by the repetition of the second questionnaire and the post-treatment questionnaire. I, myself, was there to inform the instructor and to deal with possible problems. In that week, the instructor and I gave the first questionnaire to all three classes on Tuesday and Wednesday. On Thursday and Friday, the learners did a writing exercise which was already on their syllabus. I did not want to change the syllabus of the instructor helping me, so we only changed the individual writing mode to the collaborative writing one. The students were supposed to write a story, the beginning part of which was given by us. I briefly informed the learners in each class about the collaborative writing structure I wanted them to apply before starting writing. I also responded to their questions. Since we did not have enough time, I did not give a long workshop training about collaborative writing to the students. Then, the groups are set deliberately, each of which had three or four students. I asked the instructor to set the groups because she knew the students she put the people

who get along well in the same group. We asked each group to have one piece of paper. Next, I wrote the beginning part of the story which would be completed by students collaboratively in their groups. The beginning of the story is as follows:

“Mr. Johnson was trying to relax in his small flat. He had just come back from work and he felt completely tired. He turned on the radio and a loud song of 60s filled the room. Suddenly, .....

Afterwards the students started writing. They were expected to write a complete story approximately 250 words. They were encouraged to use their imagination and creativity. They had nearly 40 minutes to complete their story. When 40 minutes were over, it was the break time. We gave them the second questionnaire right after the break. Thus, the first two questionnaires and the first collaborative writing workshop were over by the end of the first week of my research.

I gave two weeks free from questionnaires to the learners. Yet, the instructor had them do two more collaborative writing workshops to make learners more familiar with collaboration. These were narrative composition exercises. In the second week of May starting on the 7<sup>th</sup>, on Monday and Tuesday, the instructor got learners to do the last collaborative writing which was a story completion like the first one. One sentence was given and the rest was expected to be completed by the groups. The story started as follows: “When I opened the door to the darkened old house, I heard a chilling scream”. The same rules and situations with the first collaborative writing were valid for this workshop too. After the class, the second questionnaire was administered for the second time.

On Thursday and Friday, it was time to administer the first questionnaire for the post-treatment data collection. Therefore, the data collection processes were over at the end of the second week of May.

#### Data analysis

I had three different classes at two different levels in my research study. In order to explore possible difference in attitudes arising from proficiency levels, I looked at the differences between these two levels in terms of attitudes towards writing and in terms of whether they had ever tried collaborative writing. I used descriptive statistics to compare the results of questionnaires of upper-intermediate and advanced levels.

I did not have a control group to learn whether the positive changes of learners towards writing are the effects of collaborative writing or there are other factors, because of time limitations and not being able to set the same situations with the 61 participants. But, I assume that I have clues to say that the attitudes of learners changed because of collaborative writing since those changes will show up in the second and the third questionnaires too, which are about attitudes towards collaborative writing. If the attitudes towards collaborative writing are negative according to results of the first, second and third questionnaires, but a positive change is seen in their attitudes towards writing when looked at the differences between the first and the last questionnaire results, then, it can be said that there are other factors affecting the attitudes of learners positively rather than collaborative writing. And, if their attitudes are already positive towards collaborative writing and the attitudes towards writing in general turns into positive from negative, still other effects might be said to have effects on attitudes. Yet,



if attitudes of learners both towards writing in general and collaborative writing are negative and turn into positive through the process including four questionnaires and four collaborative writing workshops, then, I assume that the positive attitudes towards writing can be the results of collaborative writing only. So, in order to prove my hypothesis, results of four questionnaires were important since the second one gave me the clues about the effect of collaborative writing on attitudes of learners. Thus, what I expected was that the learners had negative attitudes towards writing and no idea about collaborative writing. In addition, I assumed that I would face with positive changes both towards collaborative writing and writing in general in terms of attitudes.

In summary, I conducted the study at AUPS, with 64 students and by the help of the instructor I worked with. I used two questionnaires twice and made learners do four collaborative writing during the data collection process.

## Chapter 4: DATA ANALYSIS

### Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find the general attitudes of learners towards writing and to discover the effects of collaborative writing on attitudes. My research questions are “What are the effects of collaborative writing on attitudes of learners towards writing?” and “Are there any differences between the proficiency levels in terms of attitudes of learners towards writing?”. Since I analyzed my data by two-tailed statistics, I used null-hypotheses. The first null hypothesis is that learners do not have negative attitudes towards writing at AUPS. The other null hypothesis is that there is not any difference between proficiency levels in attitudes towards writing. I conducted this study at AUPS. I will deal with participants and instruments, data analysis procedures and results in this chapter in the following sections. I will also give the tables.

### Participants and Instruments

61 upper intermediate and advanced level students at AUPS participated in my study. I used two questionnaires and four collaborative writing workshops during my study. The first questionnaire is about general attitudes of learners towards writing, and was administered twice, pre and post-treatment. The first administration determined if the attitudes of learners were negative or positive; and the last one, determined whether there was any change in attitudes. Between these two questionnaires, learners did collaborative writing. During these workshops the students responded to the second questionnaire, which elicited the attitudes of learners towards collaborative writing. It was administered after the first and the fourth workshops. In the discussion that

follows, the two administration of questionnaire one will be referred to as the first and the fourth questionnaires, and the two administration of the second questionnaire will be referred to as questionnaires two and three.

#### Data Analysis Procedures

As the first step of data analysis procedure, I looked at the proficiency level differences in attitudes in the mean scores of all of the questionnaire responses and since I did not find any difference between the upper-intermediate and the advanced levels, I did not do a further statistical study. The mean scores already showed that the upper-intermediate and the advanced level students gave nearly the same responses to the question items.

The discussion is organized into four main table groups. They are; frequency of trial of collaborative writing students had done before this study; attitudes towards writing in general; attitudes towards collaborative writing and the responses to open-ended questions. Within these four, the questions were grouped according to the following criteria:

In order to analyze the data, I first grouped the questionnaire items by taking the meaning of them and whether the statements are negative or positive into account. Each table includes at least one and at most six question items. So, there are one or more question items under the title of the same table.

I used t-test to see whether there are significant differences between the first and the fourth, and the second and the third questionnaire results in terms of attitudes. T-test is used for each question item in each table. So, when looked at the tables, the mean scores and the significance of difference can easily be seen.

I also used correlation within the first and the fourth questionnaires to find the relationship between the general positive and negative writing question items and positive and negative collaborative writing question items.

I drew tables for open-ended questions too. These are gathered under the title of “Responses to open-ended questions of second and third questionnaires”. Since there are four open-ended questions, there are four tables in this group. Numbers and percentages are written as well as the reasons and the explanations given by the participants in these tables. Open-ended questions are present only in the second and the third questionnaires, so the results these two questionnaires are written for each table. The results of both of the questionnaires follow each other under the title of the same table so that comparisons can be made between both question results.

### Results

When we look at the tables, the first impression is that there is positive change in attitudes of learners both towards writing in general and collaborative writing. The statistical calculation also proves this change.

Before moving onto the tables I will mention the difference between proficiency levels in terms of attitudes towards writing and collaborative writing. When I looked at the differences between the upper-intermediate and the advanced levels, I did not see any significant difference between those two levels. Since there is no difference, I do not present the data on proficiency levels.

In all of the tables, “N” stands for the number of participants; “Sig.” for the significance of the difference; “q” for question, and “Q” for questionnaire. The same

question items for the first and the fourth, and the second and the third questionnaires are presented in pairs.

Questions are analyzed in five scale items including strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). I interpreted the mean-scores from 3.6 to 5 as agreement; from 2.6 to 3.5 as neutrality; and from 1 to 2.5 as disagreement. While analyzing and interpreting the data, my main concern was the direction of the change and range of change rather than the mean-scores because the direction showed me whether the change is from negative to positive, or from neutral to positive, or vice versa. The baseline for the first and the fourth questionnaire results is negative or neutral and for the second and the baseline for the third questionnaire results is neutral.

Table 1 presents the data on whether 61 participants have ever tried collaborative writing before this study or not.

#### Tables

Table 1

Frequency of Collaborative Writing Students Had Done Before This Study

	often	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
<b>n</b>	0	0	2	5	54
<b>%</b>	0	0	3.27	8.19	88.5

N: 61

We see that 2 people which is 3.27 % of all participants said “sometimes”; 5 participants which is 8.19 % of all said “rarely” and 54 participants which is 88.5 % of

all participants said “never”. So, we understand that very few people rarely or sometimes had tried collaborative writing before this study; whereas, most of the participants had never tried it.

### T-test Results

#### Attitudes Towards Writing in General and Towards Collaborative Writing Before Any Trial of Collaborative Writing Workshops (First and Fourth Questionnaire Responses)

In these groups of tables, attitudes towards writing in general and towards collaborative writing before any trial (1<sup>st</sup> questionnaire) and after several trials (4<sup>th</sup> questionnaire) of collaborative writing workshops are displayed. This group of tables includes four tables. Tables in this group refer to the responses of the first and the fourth questionnaires. So, in each table, the results of the first and the fourth questionnaires are given to be able to make comparison.

Table 2  
General Positive Statements about Writing

	Mean	Std.Deviation	<i>t</i>
q 1 1 <sup>st</sup> Q	2.16	.95	14.90
4 <sup>th</sup> Q	4.18	.42	
q 5 1 <sup>st</sup> Q	2.52	.74	15.53
4 <sup>th</sup> Q	4.39	.55	
q 6 1 <sup>st</sup> Q	2.63	.75	15.49
4 <sup>th</sup> Q	4.52	.50	
q 7 1 <sup>st</sup> Q	2.47	.74	15.65
4 <sup>th</sup> Q	4.42	.53	
N: 61	df: 60	p< .000	

Question 1: I like to write in English.

Question 5: Writing in English improves my grammar.

Question 6: Writing in English improves my vocabulary.

Question 7: Writing in English improves the quality of my writing.

In this table, it is seen that learners' attitudes towards writing were negative in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> questions; and neutral in the 6<sup>th</sup> question. Yet, the fourth questionnaire results indicate that the attitudes of learners towards all four question items are positive. Four collaborative writing workshops have made a big change from negative and neutral to positive. It means that learners started to like to write in English and they started to believe that writing in English improves their grammar, vocabulary and the quality of their writing. This change might be the result of learners' sharing in group while writing collaboratively. Since they wrote in groups, the group members might have helped each other in correcting grammar mistakes; using more appropriate vocabulary; and using the language more effectively. These might have resulted in more success in writing and more successful papers, which must have affected the attitudes of learners towards writing in a positive way.

In summary, the results of question items in this table show that there is a big shift from negative to positive in attitudes of learners towards writing in general.

In Table 3, general negative statement about writing in the first and the fourth questionnaires are displayed. Four similar questions are examined in this group of tables.

Table 3

General Negative Statements about Writing

		Mean	Std.Deviation	<i>t</i>
q 2	1 <sup>st</sup> Q	3.86	.90	14.09
	4 <sup>th</sup> Q	2.04	.42	
q 3	1 <sup>st</sup> Q	3.81	.78	14.56
	4 <sup>th</sup> Q	2.21	.48	
q 4	1 <sup>st</sup> Q	3.14	.70	8.98
	4 <sup>th</sup> Q	2.00	.70	
q 9	1 <sup>st</sup> Q	3.96	.57	12.63
	4 <sup>th</sup> Q	2.26	.68	
N: 61		df: 60	p< .000	

Question 2: I am not good at writing in English.

Question 3: I have difficulty in concentrating on a topic and writing about it in English.

Question 4: Expressing ideas through writing in English seems to be a waste of time.

Question 9: I cannot explain my thoughts in writing easily.

In this table, learners agree with the statements that they are not good at writing in English; that they have difficulty in concentrating on a topic and writing about it; and that they cannot explain their thoughts in writing easily, but agreement changed into disagreement in the fourth questionnaire. In addition, their neutral attitudes in that



expressing their ideas through writing in English is a waste of time become positive since they disagree with that statement in the fourth questionnaire. So, in this table, we see a change from negative and neutral to positive in these four question items. The reason of this change might be students' learning that they can concentrate on a topic better; explain their thoughts more easily; and write more successfully in English in group. These results might be because the group members learned something about writing from each other.

To sum up, those four question results in this table display that attitudes of learners changed from agreement to disagreement with the negative statements, which means that the attitudes of learners shifted from negative to positive.

When we look at two tables showing attitudes of learners towards writing both in positive and in negative statements, we see that learners had negative attitudes towards writing in general in the first questionnaire, which turned into positive in the fourth questionnaire after four collaborative writing workshops

Table 4 is titled as “Positive Statements About Collaborative Writing”. Three similar questions are grouped and displayed under this title.

Table 4

Positive Statements about Collaborative Writing

		<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>t</i>
q 11	1 <sup>st</sup> Q	2.75	.76	9.95
	4 <sup>th</sup> Q	4.00	.48	
q 12	1 <sup>st</sup> Q	2.75	.76	10.23
	4 <sup>th</sup> Q	3.98	.46	
q 13	1 <sup>st</sup> Q	2.75	.76	9.54
	4 <sup>th</sup> Q	3.98	.53	
N: 61		df: 60	p< .000	

Question 11: I believe that writing with a group would improve my English grammar more than writing alone.

Question 12: I believe that writing with a group would improve my English vocabulary more than writing alone.

Question 13: I believe that writing with a group would improve the quality of my writing in English more than writing alone.

The results in this table indicate that learners were undecided about improvement in grammar, vocabulary, and quality of writing through collaborative writing in the first questionnaire. Four collaborative writing workshops changed their neutral attitudes to positive in the fourth questionnaire. It is quite normal for learners to be neutral or undecided about a method, which is not familiar to them. When collaborative writing is done and learners became familiar with it, they had opinions

about collaborative writing. So, learners developed positive attitudes towards collaborative writing after four treatments of it.

Overall, three question items in this table obviously display a change from neutrality to agreement which means a positive change in attitudes of learners towards collaborative writing.

Table 5 displays the negative statements about collaborative writing. There are two questions in this part.

Table 5  
Negative Statements about Collaborative Writing

	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>
q 8 1 <sup>st</sup> Q	3.85	.51	9.79
4 <sup>th</sup> Q	2.47	.84	
q 10 1 <sup>st</sup> Q	4.00	.54	15.20
4 <sup>th</sup> Q	2.26	.70	
N: 61	df: 60	p< .000	

Question 8: I prefer thinking alone before and during writing.

Question 10: I do not like sharing my thoughts with others while writing together with them in English.

In this table, it is seen that learners used to prefer thinking alone before and during writing and they used to feel negative about sharing their thoughts with other while writing together before any treatment of collaborative writing. But, they started to feel positive about these two statements after they did four collaborative writing. Their negative attitudes towards collaborative writing turned into positive.

Overall, the results of two tables displaying the attitudes of learners towards collaborative writing both in negative and positive statements, it is seen that there is a shift from negative to positive or to neutral.

In summary, four tables showing the attitudes of learners towards writing in general and collaborative writing display big changes from negative or neutral to positive. Differences in all question items in all four tables are significant according to t-test results.

Attitudes towards collaborative writing (second and third questionnaire responses)

This group is about attitudes towards collaborative writing. These are responses to the second and the third questionnaires.

Table 6 is titled as “General Attitudes Towards Collaborative Writing” which shows the responses to two questionnaires.

Table 6

General Attitudes towards Collaborative Writing

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>t</i>
q 1 2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	2.65	.91	11.21
3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	4.19	.44	
q 9 2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	3.16	.89	8.40
3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	4.24	.50	
N: 61	df: 60	p< .000	

Question 1: I'd rather write with a group than alone.

Question 9: I would like to write in a group again.

The results show that learners were neutral about the statements referring to the preference of group writing than individual writing and writing in group again. Yet,

they became positive about those statements in the third questionnaire. They were neutral in the second questionnaire, probably because they had done collaborative writing only once and it was not enough for them to make preferences. But, after three more treatments, they must have learned enough to prefer group writing and to want to write again in group.

To summarize, neutral attitudes of learners towards collaborative writing turned to positive after several collaborative writing workshops.

In Table 7, the individual positive statements are shown. Six questions are displayed under this title.

Table 7

Individual Positive Statements

		Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>
q 2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	3.19	.92	7.88
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	4.24	.43	
q 6	2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	2.90	.83	9.47
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	4.04	.46	
q 7	2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	3.01	.84	9.14
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	4.08	.45	
q 8	2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	2.93	.81	10.6 4
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	4.16	.48	
q 11	2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	3.05	.81	9.10
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	4.01	.39	
q 12	2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	3.13	1.46	5.80
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	4.31	.56	
N: 61		df: 60	p< .000	

Question 2: I got the chance to express my views in the group.

Question 6: I learned new ways to brainstorm from my group.

Question 7: I learned new ways to plan writing from my group.

Question 8: I learned new ways to organize a paper from my group.

Question 11: I felt more confident in group.

Question 12: Writing with a group had positive effects on my motivation.

Attitudes of learners towards six items in this table were all neutral in the second questionnaire. Yet, this neutrality changed to positive attitudes in the third one. Since they were not familiar enough with collaboration after the first treatment of collaborative writing, they were undecided about that they got the chance to express their views in the group; that they learned new ways to brainstorm, to plan writing, to organize a paper from their group; that they felt confident in a group; and that writing with a group had positive effects on their motivation. The results show that it took time and required more collaborative writing workshops for learners to change their neutral attitudes into positive.

Overall, the total mean score of six question items in the table of individual positive statements show a shift from neutral to positive in attitudes of learners towards collaborative writing.

Table 8, title of which is “Individual Negative Statements” includes the results of two questions.

Table 8

Individual Negative Statements

	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>
q 13 2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	4.19	.40	9.14
3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	3.01	.92	
q 16 2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	3.91	.49	9.19
3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	2.62	1.01	
N: 61	df: 60	P< .000	

Question 13: Writing in a group did not help to improve my writing skills.

Question 16: Disagreements in group demotivated me.

In this table, what is shown is that learners’ negative attitudes about the improvement of writing skills through collaborative writing and demotivation in group by disagreements turn into neutral. It is a positive change but we see that it is not from negative to positive. The reason for this might be that learners might have seen an improvement in their writing skills by the help of the group members, but they might have thought that this is not a very big improvement because writing skills need more time to develop. In addition, disagreements must have been in a high level in the first collaborative writing workshop, but as long as the students learned working in a group, disagreements might have decreased but not discarded totally. So, there is a change in attitudes but not completely into positive in these two statements.



In summary, two tables displaying the individual positive and negative statements show a positive change in attitudes towards collaborative writing although a change from negative to neutral is seen in Table 8.

In Table 9, which is titled as “Group Neutral Statements” we see three questions.

Table 9

Group Neutral Statements

	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>
q 3 2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	3.88	.36	18.11
3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	2.01	.67	
q 4 2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	3.88	.36	22.77
3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	1.80	.57	
q 5 2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	3.88	.36	17.29
3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	2.16	.61	
<hr/>			
N: 61	df: 60	p< .000	

Question 3: Writing together we spent more time planning papers than I do when I write alone.

Question 4: Writing together we spent more time checking, spelling, punctuation and grammar than I do when I write alone.

Question 5: Every member of the group worked equally in writing the papers.

The results show that learners used to agree that writing together they spent more time planning papers; checking spelling, punctuation, and grammar than they do when they write alone. It means that, since learners did not know how to work

effectively in collaboration, they were slower. But, after they did a few more collaborative writing, they learned how to be faster and more practical.

Another point is that learners were undecided about that every member of the group worked equally in writing the papers in the second questionnaire. So, they did not agree that everybody worked equally but they were not negative about it either. The reason for this might be that the effort of group members might have changed in different workshops because of some personal factors. So, the students about this statement must be undecided both in the second and the third questionnaires.

In summary, we see that learners had negative and neutral attitudes towards collaborative writing in the second questionnaire and those attitudes became positive or neutral in the third questionnaire, which means a positive change in attitudes of learners towards collaborative writing. We do not see a change only in question 5.

Under Table 10, which is titled as “Group Positive Statements”, we see the results of three questions.

Table 10  
Group Positive Statements

	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>
q 10 2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	3.44	.90	7.33
3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	4.49	.50	
q 14 2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	3.32	.92	7.93
3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	4.36	.54	
q 17 2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	3.31	.67	5.46
3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	3.90	.50	
N: 61	df: 60	p< .000	

Question 10: It is interesting to share ideas and write about them.

Question 14: Our writing was more creative in group writing.

Question 17: Group members learned something from me.

This table shows that learners used to feel neutral about the fact that collaboration is interesting, more creative and group members learned something from each other in the second questionnaire. Yet, neutrality became positive in the third questionnaire. The reason for this change is probably that learning to write in collaboration students found out interesting sides of it through seeing different and creative ideas of group members; through enjoying sharing; and through learning something from other members.

Results of group positive statements show a shift from neutral to agreement that is a positive change towards collaborative writing.

The last table of this group is Table 11, the title of which is “Group Negative Statements”. In this table one question, number 15, which states that there were too many conflicts between group members while writing, is displayed.

Table 11

Group Negative Statements

	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>
q 15 2 <sup>nd</sup> Q	3.88	.36	16.74
3 <sup>rd</sup> Q	2.22	.46	
N: 61	df: 60	p< .000	

Question 15: There were too many conflicts between group members while writing.

In the second questionnaire, people mostly agree with that statement; while, in the third one, people mostly disagree with that statement. It means that while the

participants were negative about that there were conflicts between group members, they start believing that there were not conflicts between group members in group writing in the third questionnaire. The difference is significant.

In the table of group negative statements, we see a change from agreement to disagreement that again means a positive change in attitudes towards collaborative writing.

In summary, the group statement, both the positive and the negative ones, display a positive change in attitudes towards writing either from negative to neutral or to positive.

In consequence, when we take neutrality as baseline for the second and the third questionnaire results, we see that there is a positive change in attitudes of learners towards collaborative writing. All of the differences between the second and the third questionnaire results are significant according to the statistical analysis.

Responses to open-ended questions of second questionnaire and third questionnaires

The last group of tables includes the responses to open-ended questions of the second and the third questionnaires. Table 12 and 13 include the numbers of participants who prefer writing alone; in group; and both with the percentages. They also show the reasons written by participants. One of these tables shows the results of the second and the other shows the results of the third questionnaire.

Table 12

Thoughts and preferences about collaborative writing

Second questionnaire responses

Reasons

Alone	n	18	People do not work equally in group writing; there is less responsibility in writing alone; writing alone is more motivating; more free; more creative; there is more concentration; easier; safer; many conflicts occur in group writing; difficult to compromise in group writing.
	%	29.5	
In group	n	8	Enjoyable; new ideas; more creative
	%	13.1	
Both	n	35	Both may be creative, enjoyable, motivating depending on the topic and the group members.
	%	57.3	

Table 13

Third questionnaire responses

## Reasons

Alone	n	5	Difficult to tell ideas in group; easier to concentrate on the topic in writing alone; feeling safer in writing alone.
	%	8.1	
In group	n	49	New ideas are learnt in group writing; writing becomes more creative; better organization is learnt in group; grammar rules and vocabulary are reinforced in group; productive; faster; more responsibility; new viewpoints; enjoyable; interesting; more active; more successful papers; better learning in group writing.
	%	80.3	
Both	n	7	Both may be creative, enjoyable, motivating depending on the topic and the group members.
	%	11.4	

Question 1: What do you think about writing in a group? Would you prefer individual or group writing? Why?

The second questionnaire displays that most of the participants prefer both of them by giving reasons. In addition, 29.5 % prefer individual and 13.1 % prefer group writing. There are some changes in the results of the third questionnaire. The percentages of individual writing and both decrease; while, the percentage of group writing increases. Reasons for each of them are given. So, learners gained positive attitudes towards writing in group after a period, in the third questionnaire.

We also see some changes in reasons. There are more reasons in preference of individual writing in the second questionnaire results, but, there are fewer reasons in the third questionnaire results. The reasons for such a change can be that learners learned to write in group more effectively and so the responsibility in group writing is shared more equally by time. So, group members must have started working more equally. In addition, learners must have been motivated by group writing after the first trial, so their opinions about motive of individual writing has changed. Furthermore, having tried collaborative writing several times must have taught many new things about collaborative writing and so they wrote more reasons in preference of group writing.

Tables 14 and 15 are the responses to the question; “While writing in group what are you good and bad at?”. The “subjects” include concentration, brainstorming, planning and organization, developing ideas, producing ideas, exchanging ideas, creativity, stating ideas and vocabulary and grammar. These subjects are taken from the responses of the participants and grouped under those titles. They are all the words used by the participants. I just grouped the similar items under one subject and formed those groups of the subjects. In the “good” part, we see the number of participants and percentages in each subject which the participants believe they were good at in collaborative writing; in the “bad” part, the numbers and percentages in subjects which the participants believe they were bad at; and in “DM” part, the number and the percentages of participants who do not mention these subjects. The numbers under each subject for good, bad, and, DM come from the number of participants who wrote each of the subjects. For instance, in the table of second questionnaire, we see 17 in the box

of good and concentration It means that 17 participants of 61 wrote that concentration in group is better than individual writing. 22 in the box of bad and brainstorming in the same table means that 22 people wrote that brainstorming is bad in collaborative writing.

Table 14

Good and bad sides of students in collaborative writing in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> questionnaires

Second questionnaire responses

Subjects	Conc.	Br.strm	Pln& Org.	Devlp. ideas	Prod. ideas	Exchnng. ideas	Crtvty.	Stating Ideas	Voc. and Grm.	
<u>Good</u>	n	17	9	16	29	27	8	29	16	6
	%	27.8	14.7	26.2	47.5	44.2	13.1	47.5	26.2	9.8
<u>Bad</u>	n	34	22	19	14	13	31	22	28	43
	%	55.7	36.06	31.1	22.9	21.3	50.8	36.06	45.9	70.4
DM	n	10	30	26	18	21	22	10	17	12
	%	16.39	50.8	42.6	29.5	34.4	36.06	16.39	27.8	19.6

Table 15

Third questionnaire responses

Subjects	Conc.	Br.strm	Pln& Org.	Devlp. ideas	Prod. ideas	Exchnng. ideas	Crtvty.	Stating Ideas	Voc. and Grm.	
<u>Good</u>	n	39	44	53	49	47	39	48	39	37
	%	63.9	72.1	86.8	80.3	77.04	63.9	78.6	63.9	60.65
<u>Bad</u>	n	12	8	8	7	11	18	13	15	13
	%	19.67	13.1	13.1	11.4	18.03	29.5	21.3	24.5	21.3
DM.	n	10	9	0	5	3	4	0	7	11
	%	16.39	14.7	0	8.1	4.9	6.5	0	11.4	18.03

Conc.: concentration

Pln. & org.: planning and organization

Br. Strm.: brainstorming

Devlp. Ideas: developing ideas



Prod. Ideas: producing ideas

Crtvty.: creativity

DM: does not mention

Exchng. Ideas: exchanging ideas

Voc. & grm.: vocabulary and grammar

Question 2: While writing in group what are you good and bad at?

When we compare the results of the second and the third questionnaires, we see that more people felt good at each subject in the third questionnaire. So, we see a positive change in the third questionnaire. I interpret this change as a result of learning how to work in collaboration and becoming aware of the good sides of collaborative writing.

In Tables 16 and 17, we see differences between collaborative and individual writing. There are two tables for the second and the third questionnaires each of which displays the statements taken from the responses of the participants to question 3: What are the differences between individual and group writing?.

Table 16

Differences between collaborative and individual writing

Second Questionnaire Responses

Individual writing	n	18	More time consuming than collaborative writing.
	%	29.5	
Individual writing	n	27	Hard to find different, interesting ideas.
	%	44.2	
Collaborative writing	n	31	Useful for learning about writing, grammar, new words and other things.
	%	50.8	
	n	27	Good for exchanging ideas.
	%	44.2	
	n	5	Good for more objective writing
	%	8.1	
	n	18	Better concentration on writing
%	29.5		
n	28	Better motivation	
%	45.9		
n	29	More enjoyable than individual writing.	
%	47.5		

Table 17

Third questionnaire responses

<u>Individual writing</u>	n	31	More time consuming than collaborative writing.
	%	50.8	
	n	43	Hard to find different, interesting ideas.
	%	70.4	
Collaborative Writing	n	49	Useful for learning about writing, grammar, new words and other things.
	%	80.3	
	n	52	Good for exchanging ideas.
	%	85.2	
	n	11	Good for more objective writing
	%	18.03	
	n	29	Better concentration on writing
%	47.5		
n	43	Better motivation	
%	70.4		
n	57	More enjoyable than individual writing.	
%	93.4		

Question 3: What are the differences between individual and group writing?

We, again, see a positive change in attitudes towards collaborative writing in percentages of responses of two questionnaires.

Again the reason of positive change is, most probably, that learners started to learn how to work more effectively and successfully in group. They also started to see

the positive effects of collaborative writing on their learning, exchanging ideas, concentration, and motivation.

Table 18 and 19, the title of which is “Was collaborative writing difficult or interesting? Why?” shows the responses to the questions whether collaborative writing was interesting or difficult and also reasons for them.

Table 18

Was collaborative writing difficult or interesting? Why?

Second questionnaire responses

	n	%	Reasons
interesting	33	54.09	Different ideas emerge; writing is enjoyable and fun.
not Interesting	12	19.6	There is no reason.
difficult	19	31.1	Sharing ideas is difficult; disagreements occur; everyone does not work equally.
not Difficult	29	47.5	There is no reason.

Table 19

Third questionnaire responses

	n	%	Reason
interesting	57	93.4	Funny, enjoyable and various kinds of ideas come into being; hearing and learning about new ideas made us feel excited; papers were more successful so feeling of pride was dominant.
no interesting	0	0	There is no reason.
difficult	13	21.3	It is difficult to compromise with people.
not difficult	42	68.8	There is no reason.

Question 4: Was group writing difficult or interesting? Why?

In the second questionnaire, 54.09 % of participants find it interesting; 19.6 % not interesting; 31.1 % find it difficult and 47.5 % not difficult. In the third questionnaire, 93.4 % of the participants find collaborative writing interesting; none of them find it uninteresting; 21.3 % find it difficult and 68.8 % do not find it difficult. So, the number of people finding it interesting increases, while, the number of people finding it difficult decreases. Four treatments of collaborative writing resulted in positive change in attitudes of learners towards collaborative writing.

In summary, the tables of open-ended questions support the positive changes towards collaborative writing. Learners' own writings indicate that they were undecided about collaborative writing and the effects of it; but after several trials of collaboration,, they changed their attitudes from neutral to positive.

In brief, when we evaluate the results of all of the questionnaires under 4 groups of tables, we can say that most of the people have tried collaborative writing for the first time in this study and we see somehow positive change in attitudes both towards writing in general and collaborative writing. So, it can be concluded that there are some changes between the first and the fourth; and the second and the third questionnaires in terms of attitudes towards writing in general and towards collaborative writing.

We see the strongest changes in attitudes of learners towards writing in general because attitudes of learners change from negative to positive. Shifts in attitudes towards collaborative writing are not as strong as the shift in attitudes towards general writing. Changes in collaborative writing are from neutral to positive. To summarize, there are big changes both in attitudes towards writing in general and towards collaborative writing but the strongest changes are seen in general writing attitudes.

## Correlation Results

In order to see the relationship between the general and collaborative positive statements within the first and the fourth questionnaires I used correlation. In the following tables the results of Pearson Correlation and the significance of the correlation are given. So, I will deal with them in explanation of each table.

Table 20

### General and Collaborative Positive Statement

#### (1<sup>st</sup> Questionnaire)

	q 11	q 12	q 13
q 1 Pearson Correlation	.000	-.069	.013
Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	.600	.920
q 5 Pearson Correlation	-.062	.025	-.034
Sig. (2-tailed)	.635	.846	.794
q 6 Pearson Correlation	-.137	.180	-.030
Sig. (2-tailed)	.292	.166	.821
q 7 Pearson Correlation	.065	.164	.143
Sig. (2-tailed)	.619	.207	.271

N: 61                      q: question



statements are not significant. Yet, when we look at Table 21, which shows the results of the fourth questionnaire, it is seen that the relationships correlated are all significant. So, there is a very big shift between the first and the fourth questionnaire results in terms of correlation. It means that, since the attitudes of learners were mostly negative or neutral towards writing in general and collaborative writing, the responses of learners to those question items were not related with each other. The reason for this is that the students had not tried collaborative writing before and they did not know anything about it yet. But, after four collaborative writing sessions, they learned collaborative writing and changes in their attitudes from neutral or negative to positive towards writing in general and collaborative writing became related to each other.

In summary, these correlation results strengthen the idea that the positive changes in attitudes of learners towards writing and collaborative writing in positive statements are the results of collaborative writing.



The following two tables display the correlation between the general and collaborative negative statements.

Table 22

General and Collaborative Negative Statements

(1<sup>st</sup> Questionnaire)

	q 8	q 10
Q 2 Pearson Correlation	.138	.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	.289	1.000
Q 3 Pearson Correlation	.016	.077
Sig. (2-tailed)	.905	.553
Q 4 Pearson Correlation	.108	.130
Sig. (2-tailed)	.408	.319
Q 9 Pearson Correlation	.153	.317*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.239	.013

N: 61 q: question

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 23

General and Collaborative Negative Statements

(4<sup>th</sup> Questionnaire)

	q 8	q 10
q 2 Pearson Correlation	.294	.403
Sig. (2-tailed)	.021*	.002**
q 3 Pearson Correlation	.333	.274
q 3 Pearson Correlation	.333	.274
Sig. (2-tailed)	.019*	.049*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.019*	.049*
q 4 Pearson Correlation	.235	.333
q 4 Pearson Correlation	.235	.333
Sig. (2-tailed)	.051*	.019*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.051*	.019*
q 9 Pearson Correlation	.256	.233

q 9	Pearson Correlation	.256	.233
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031*	.048*

N: 61

q: question

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Question 2: I am not good at writing in English.

Question 3: I have difficulty in concentrating on a topic and writing about it in English.

Question 4: Expressing ideas through writing in English seems to be a waste of time.

Question 9: I cannot explain my thoughts in writing easily.

Question 8: I prefer thinking alone before and during writing.

Question 10: I do not like sharing my thoughts with others while writing together with them in English.

In Table 22, the only significant correlation is seen between q 10 and q 9. Yet, when we look at Table 23, we, as in Table 21, see a big change. Correlation results in this table indicate that all relationships are significant. Then, it can be concluded that, not being familiar with collaborative writing in the first questionnaire, learners' responses to general and collaborative writing negative statements do not display a significant correlation. So, there was not any relationship between the attitudes of learners towards writing in general and collaborative writing in the first questionnaire. Yet, when learners did four collaborative writing workshops, the relationship became significant.

In summary, these tables and correlation results show strong evidence that changed learners' general attitudes towards writing in a positive direction.

Overall, t-test results display significant changes in attitudes of learners towards writing in general and collaborative writing. Correlation results' being non-significant

in the first questionnaire and becoming significant in the fourth one strengthens the argument that collaborative writing has positive effects on attitudes of learners towards writing.

## Chapter 5: CONCLUSIONS

### Overview of the Study

I investigated the effects of collaborative writing on attitudes towards writing and attitude differences between proficiency levels at Anadolu University Preparatory School. I used 61 upper-intermediate and advanced level students in this study. Two questionnaires and four collaborative writing workshops were my instruments to see the effects of collaborative writing on attitudes of learners towards writing. The first and the fourth questionnaires included the same items which were exploring the attitudes of learners towards writing in general. The second and the third questionnaires had question items which were about attitudes towards collaborative writing. Collaborative writing workshops started after the first questionnaire. An instructor and co-coordinator of writing at AUPS, helped me to conduct the study.

The data were analyzed by t-test and correlation. T-test, used between the first and the fourth and the second and the third questionnaires displayed the significance of difference between the means of those four questionnaires. The correlation was used between the general attitude questions and collaboration questions in the first and the fourth questionnaires. The purpose of using correlation was to see the relationship between the attitudes of learners towards writing before no trial and after four trials of

collaborative writing workshops. I used correlation both in the first and the fourth questionnaires to see the difference between the relationships in both questionnaires.

## Summary of the Results and Conclusions

### Differences between Proficiency Levels

The participants in the study were upper-intermediate and advanced level students. So, I worked with two different levels. While analyzing the data, I looked at the attitudes of advanced and upper-intermediate levels to see whether there is any difference between them. The results showed that there is no significant difference between the attitudes of upper-intermediate and advanced level students. We can conclude that proficiency level does not make any difference in attitudes towards writing (see Data Analysis, p. 39).

### Effects of Collaborative Writing on Attitudes of Learners Towards Writing

First of all, the results showed that most of the participants have not done collaborative writing before my study. The attitudes of learners towards writing in general were negative and attitudes towards collaborative writing were neutral. So, they generally did not like writing and did not believe that writing was helpful for improvement of target language. On the other hand, they did not have strong beliefs about collaborative writing.

Results showing negative attitudes towards writing in general are consistent with what Ghani (1986), Houseman (1999), Henschen & Sidlow (1990) and Edward

(2000) claim about the negative attitudes of learners towards writing. They all state that writing is a boring task because learners believe that they do writing to get good grades not to improve their language. They also claim that it is a difficult task because it requires understanding the topic, producing ideas, organizing the ideas, planning the paper, and writing about the topic. Grammar, vocabulary, quality and the content of writing also have importance in writing. So, there are many steps and processes in writing. Henschen & Sidlow (1990) add that “students often find writing a frustrating, isolated, irrelevant chore” (p. 29) because the only source of motivation and the only destination is grade. These reasons result in negative attitudes towards writing.

Powell (1984) and Peyton et al (1994) note that doing some different activities and workshops in writing will change negative attitudes of learners towards writing. I hypothesized that collaborative writing is one of the activities which can have positive effects on attitudes of learners towards writing. The 61 participants of my study took part in four collaborative writing workshops in a month. I gave them questionnaires about writing in general before and after collaborative writing workshops and questionnaires about collaborative writing during those workshops were being done. The results of all of the questionnaires indicated that learners’ negative attitudes towards writing in general and neutral attitudes towards collaborative writing changed to positive at the end of the study. So, it can be concluded that collaborative writing has positive effects both on attitudes of learners towards writing in general and towards collaborative writing. Clawson (1993) and Catanach et al (1997) support that collaborative writing has positive effects on attitudes towards writing. Catanach et al (1997) claims that collaborative writing reduces the burden of writing; improves

students' writing abilities and interpersonal skills; and it improves the quality of writing. Clawson (1993) supports these by stating that collaborative writing increases the awareness of learners about writing; provides communication between group members; leads to critical thinking and improvement in writing. Clawson (1993) and Catanach et al (1997) connect these to attitudes of learners directly and point that these change the negative attitudes of learners to positive. These conclusions are related with my study because the questionnaire results, especially the open-ended question responses display that students were mostly thinking that writing was boring, hard and they were not able to write well. They also state that collaborative writing helped them interact with group members and share their thoughts which were useful for them to improve their writing (see in Data Analysis, p. 54-62).

Another conclusion can be inferred from the correlation results. Those results showed that the correlation between the general negative and positive writing statements and collaborative negative and positive writing statements was not significant in the first questionnaire; whereas, it became significant in the fourth one. So, these results strengthen that the positive change in attitudes of learners towards writing are the result of collaborative writing.

According to two statistical analyses I used in this study; t-test and correlation, the null hypothesis, there will not be any difference between proficiency levels in terms of attitudes towards writing has been proved; while the null hypothesis that states collaboration in writing will not have positive effects on attitudes of learners and will not change negative attitudes towards writing into positive has been rejected.

In summary, my study showed that there is no difference between the attitudes of learners who are in advanced and upper-intermediate levels and that collaborative writing has positive effects on attitudes of learners towards writing. Correlation results, on the other hand, showed that learners had negative attitudes towards writing in general and neutral attitudes towards collaborative writing in the first questionnaire, but they gained positive attitudes both towards writing in general and towards collaborative writing. So, the relationship between the attitudes of learners towards writing and collaborative writing changed from insignificant to significant in a month after four collaborative writing workshops.

#### Limitations

There were certain limitations in my study which should be mentioned. Firstly, I worked with a limited number of participants. In addition, only two levels participated in my study; two upper-intermediate and one advanced levels. These are limitations because having more participants in different levels could have had some effects on the results. In my study, I found that there is no difference between the advanced and the upper-intermediate levels in terms of attitudes towards writing, but there might be some differences, for instance, between the beginner and the advanced levels or between the other levels.

Another limitation is that I worked with the classes of only one instructor and only that instructor helped me conducting the study. I did so because of time limitation and because of having more instructors helping would have introduced additional variables to account for. The positive change in attitudes of learners towards writing might have been affected by the attitude of the participating instructor towards

collaborative writing. The instructor' willing help may have influenced the positive changes. So, training more instructors and introducing a control group could have given different results.

Not having a control group is another limitation. Since I studied only with three classes of one instructor, having a control group meant working with another instructor, which as I mentioned in the previous paragraph is a limitation and another factor. In addition, there was not another advanced level group at Anadolu University Preparatory School. So, it was not possible for me to set the similar situations with the participants of the study and I did not have a control group. Yet, having a control group could have strengthened the study.

I mentioned "time limitation" as a reason for most of the limitations but time was a limitation in my study on its own. I conducted my study in only one month with only four collaborative writing workshops. If I had much more time, I would like to work on this study through at least a semester and it would have given more reliable results about the change in attitudes of learners. A month is a very short time to reliably measure a change in attitudes.

Not having trained the learners about collaborative writing workshop is another limitation. Time was limited both at Bilkent University and at Anadolu University Preparatory School at three classes who were the participants. So, I only explained collaborative writing briefly before students started to write.

The results of my study showed positive change towards writing but I think it is not possible to claim that this change is persistent and it is because of collaborative writing. Positive change might have occurred as a result of novelty since collaborative



writing was something new for the students. So, this positive change might be the result of trying a new method in class and can be valid only for that month. Since I did not check the change after that month in which I conducted the study, it is not possible to say that the change was permanent and directly related with collaborative writing.

### Further Studies

I would like to do some further studies to ensure the effects of collaborative writing on attitudes towards writing and to minimize the limitations in this study. I would like to work with more classes in preparatory school and with more writing instructors. Before the study starts, it would be good to give training to these the writing instructors and participants in how to do collaborative writing. In addition, it would be good to make sure that there will not be too much difference between the attitudes of them towards collaborative writing and towards the study.

I also would like to conduct the study through a semester or through a year to see if the changes in attitudes of learners towards writing are stable and persistent. More collaborative writing workshops, more questionnaires and even using different instruments like interviews might give different results from the study I did. Moreover, I would like to have a control group to measure that the changes are because of collaborative writing not because of other factors.

Another point I want to mention here is that I would like to use different types of writing such as comparative, argumentative, cause-effect, and so forth in addition to the story writing and narration.

In summary, I would like to repeat the study with more participants and more instructors by using more instruments in a much longer time period.

### Implications

This study has some implications which must be taken into account in writing classes at AUPS. Writing instructors first must remember that learners have negative attitudes towards writing. It is obvious that something must be done to change the attitudes of learners towards writing. As the study shows, collaborative writing has some positive effects on attitudes of learners. So, the writing instructors can include collaborative writing workshops in their syllabus.

It can also be inferred from the study that learners are open to try new activities in writing classes to enjoy the course and to improve their writing. Most of the participants in the study agreed with the positive effects of collaborative writing on creativity, motivation and improvement of the language. So, these must be born in mind. Moreover, instructors can learn from the study that they must search for different activities done in different institutions to apply at Anadolu University and to find out the best ways in teaching writing.

This study was done to display the attitudes of learners towards writing and effects of collaborative writing on attitudes. What the study showed can be very important in writing classes and for writing instructors to do some different things about the negative attitudes of learners towards writing.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

Thank you for participating in my study. Before starting to answer the questionnaire, please fill in the part below.

İlkay Gökçe

MA TEFL Program

Age:

Sex: F                      M

Department:

Proficiency level:

**A. Circle the item which is appropriate to you.**

1. I have written with a group. *never rarely sometimes usually often*

2. **B- Put a tick under the item which is appropriate to you.**

**SA= strongly agree      A= agree      UD= undecided**  
**D= disagree      SD= strongly disagree**

	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
1. I like to write in English.					
2. I am not good at writing In English.					
3. I have difficulty in concentrating on a topic and writing about it in English.					
4. Expressing ideas through writing in English seems to be a waste of time.					
5. Writing in English improves my grammar.					
6. Writing in English improves my vocabulary.					
7. Writing in English improves the quality of my writing.					
8. I prefer thinking alone before and during writing.					
9. I cannot explain my thoughts in writing easily.					



**SA= strongly agree**      **A= agree**      **UD= undecided**  
**D= disagree**      **SD= strongly disagree**

	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>10.</b> I do not like sharing my thoughts with others while writing together with them in English.					
<b>11.</b> I believe that writing with a group would improve my English grammar more than writing alone.					
<b>12.</b> I believe that writing with a group would improve my English vocabulary more than writing alone.					
<b>13.</b> I believe that writing with a group would improve the quality of my writing in English more than writing alone.					

## APPENDIX B

**A- Choose and put a tick under the appropriate item.**

**SA= strongly agree**

**A= agree**

**UD= undecided**

**D= disagree**

**SD= strongly disagree**

1. I'd rather write with a group  
than alone.
2. I got the chance to express my views  
in the group.
3. Writing together we spent more time  
planning papers than I do when  
I write alone.
4. Writing together we spent more time  
checking spelling, punctuation,  
and grammar than I do when  
I write alone.
5. Every member of the group worked  
equally in writing the papers.
6. I learned new ways to brainstorm  
from my group.
7. I learned new ways to plan writing  
from my group.
8. I learned new ways to organise  
a paper from my group.

	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
1. I'd rather write with a group than alone.					
2. I got the chance to express my views in the group.					
3. Writing together we spent more time planning papers than I do when I write alone.					
4. Writing together we spent more time checking spelling, punctuation, and grammar than I do when I write alone.					
5. Every member of the group worked equally in writing the papers.					
6. I learned new ways to brainstorm from my group.					
7. I learned new ways to plan writing from my group.					
8. I learned new ways to organise a paper from my group.					

**SA= strongly agree**      **A= agree**  
**D= disagree**

**UD= undecided**  
**SD= strongly disagree**

9. I would like to write in a group again.
10. It is interesting to share ideas and write about them.
11. I felt more confident in group.
12. Writing with my group had positive effects on my motivation.
13. Writing in a group did not help to improve my writing skills.
14. Our writing was more creative in group writing.
15. There were too many conflicts between group members while writing.
16. Disagreements in my group demotivated me.
17. Group members learned something from me.

	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
9. I would like to write in a group again.					
10. It is interesting to share ideas and write about them.					
11. I felt more confident in group.					
12. Writing with my group had positive effects on my motivation.					
13. Writing in a group did not help to improve my writing skills.					
14. Our writing was more creative in group writing.					
15. There were too many conflicts between group members while writing.					
16. Disagreements in my group demotivated me.					
17. Group members learned something from me.					

