

## Investigation of Fourth Grade Primary School Students' Creative Writing and Story Elements in Narrative Text Writing Skills

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### Abstract

In this research, creative writing of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in terms of children's gender, attendance of a keeping a diary, mother's educational background, father's educational background and the number of books read were examined. The sample of this study consisted of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. It was drawn from 6 primary schools in the city of Afyonkarahisar. 182 students participated in the study which took place in the spring term of the academic year 2017-2018. To collect the study data and answer the research questions, 'Writing Success' and 'Scale for Assessing Story Elements' scales were used. To analyze data, Mann Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis-tests were used. While texts written by students were evaluated according to subdimensions of originality, fluency of thoughts, flexibility of thoughts, lexical richness, sentence structure, organization, accuracy of style and grammar, it was found that their levels were close to average, their averages were found to be lower in terms of main character, locale, time, starter event, aim, initiative, result and reaction when examined in terms of narrative text writing of story elements. When the students' scores obtained from 'Writing Success Scale' and 'Scale for Assessing Story Elements' were evaluated, a significant difference was found in favor of the girls in terms of gender, and in favor of dairy writers in terms of keeping a dairy. According to the number of books read, there was a significant difference found in the favor of those reading at least three books compared to those who read a month in both assessment tools. In both assessment tools, there were no significant differences in terms of parents' educational background.

**Keywords:** creative writing, story elements in narrative text, primary school students, parents' education, keeping a diary.

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## INTRODUCTION

People express their feelings communicated through language and try to understand each other. “Language is the main point that makes communities a nation and provides their continuity by interceding culture transmission ” (Uçgun, 2014, p.227) Language is so important that language education is necessary. Language education aims to sharpen the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening (Coşkun, 2011). Writing skills that enable individuals to express themselves are also required to be developed in individuals having language education.

When we consider the definitions related to writing skill, it is obvious that the design of thoughts (Morris et al., 2007) is handled in terms of their visual transmission into writing. “Writing is not only an important way of communication but also it helps us develop, organize and reinforce our thoughts.” In addition, “writing is among the most difficult skills to teach and learn” (Morris et al., 2007, p.1). “Writing is the vehicle that most graduate programs embrace as the means for reviewing how well students are able to assimilate knowledge and integrate that knowledge into new ideas” (Ondrusek, 2012, p. 179). Writing is the expression of emotions, thoughts, wishes, and designs (Kavcar, Oğuzkan & Hasırcı, 2016; Öz, 2011; Aydın-Yılmaz, 2007). To be able to write on any subject requires acquisition of information, emotions and thoughts by means of reading; acquisition of experiment and experiences by means of listening and watching; and acquisition of ideas by means of exchange of conversations and opinions with others (Temizkan & Yalçınkaya, 2013). According to Akyol (2013) “writing is to produce necessary symbols and signs to express our thoughts motorically”. While Morris et al. (2007), Ondrusek (2012) and Öz (2011) emphasized the cognitive size of the writing skill, Akyol (2013) underscored the physical size, in addition to the cognitive size.

Writing skill consists of a range of operational stages. According to Özdemir (2002) writing consists of ideational skills such as choosing and limiting the topic, setting an objective, determining statements, planning determined opinions and the plan into writing. In that sense, writing skill entails proper uses of punctuation marks, correct spelling and grammar, coherence and cohesion, word use and text editing (Kellogg, Bascom & Raulerson, 2007). Researchers dwell on three stages to be followed during the acquisition and development of the writing skill. Wawryk – Epp, Harrison and Prentice (2004) contended that in the first stage, students should be discussed, opinions should be deliberated, planned and edited, brainstorming should be performed and information should be searched before writing. In the second stage, opinions should be written down, sentences should be improved, writing should be organized and written consistently during writing. The subject selection includes works before writing (brainstorming, information gathering, taking notes), writing, responding to draft, editing, responding to editing, correction, response to editing, correction, evaluation, publication and follow-up (Bekleyen, 2015). The process of writing can therefore be viewed as a primary means of fostering creativity in students, and axiomatically, stimulating creativity and the generation of ideas is an effective means of teaching writing skills (Cheung, Tse & Tsang, 2003, Eryaman, 2008). During the final stage, content should be edited and spell checking should be done after writing. Villanueva (2005) suggests that pre-writing accounts for %85 of an author’s time in that this stage includes some significant steps such as determining a topic, choosing a target audience and a fashion through which the topic is transmitted to readers. The author spends the remaining time doing research, using his/her imagination, giving feedback, making statements and redesigning. Demir (2013) believes that writing skill should be considered a critical thinking process rather than a mechanical one. Therefore, students are required to fully understand what they hear and read and then give a structure to this stuff in their brains. First, an aim, a method, a topic and a framework should be set and then content should be picked.

Some researches stress the importance of teachers’ support in students developing writing skills (Demir, 2013; Reid, 2009; Tahvildar & Zade, 2012; Tok, Rachim & Kuş, 2014). Reid (2009) states that teachers should help students to be productive during these stages. This support enables students to grasp how to associate writing theories with pedagogical practices. Tok, Rachim and Kuş (2014), following their study with students of 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades, stated that the main motive for writing is teacher encouragement. It has been claimed that if a teacher provides feedback and motivation spare

enough time regularly for writing, students' love for their teachers and the different methods would have an impact on students developing a writing habit. Demir (2013) states that students can help each other correct spelling mistakes, punctuation, inappropriate main ideas, illegible handwriting and irrelevant paragraphs. When developing writing skills, product-focused mentality is important as well as following the steps of process-focused writing and providing support. In this respect, editing from two different perspectives can be done at the end of writing process. One can focus on grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation while the other's focus point is on structural and content-related issues such as subject and theme of the article and other complementary details (Tahvildar & Zade, 2012).

Some researchers emphasize individual nature of authors in developing writing skills. According to Villanueva (2003) acquisition of writing skills is dependent on time spent by author, personality, working habits, maturity as a craftsperson and ability to bring together what is to be said. Tok, Rachım and Kuş (2014) claimed that psychological reasons, family encouragement, personality traits, personal interest, reading habit, competitions and published articles are among the factors that may help students develop a writing habit. In the research conducted by Pajares (2003) it has been established that students' confidence and motivation to write have an effect on their success in writing. Hence they can write faster and it can be said that writing is a multidimensional process with its cognitive, psychological, individual and operational aspects.

According to the Language and Lecture Curriculum (MEB, 2005), the narrative types are indicated as storytelling, descriptive, enthusiastic, and excitatory, epic, instructive, informative, explanatory, controversial, demonstrative, dreaming, talking about the future, and humorous expression (Gürler & Yaylacık, 2015). In elementary school, storytelling and informative texts are used. Students understand the storytelling texts more easily than informative texts. "Storytelling is a form of narrative in which a real or designed event is taken from a certain point and developed and delivered to the conclusion. Here, the event is decisive". (Yakıcı et al. 2012, p. 238). Storytelling texts are a story format in which storyline is described in a way to include elements such as main character, locale, time, aim, response, etc. Stories are the kind of things that students generally interest in the first year of elementary and middle school. Reasons for such interest in this genre among students may include some features such as the presence of real characters, being interesting and the ability of children to identify themselves with heroes. In such texts, the message requested to be given-in contrast to the informational texts-is not expressly given but left to reader's inferences (Üründü, 2011). The reader must be knowledgeable about such texts in order to understand the narrative fiction written in a literary language (Kurnaz & Akaydın, 2015). When both application and research-based applications are examined, more storytelling text is printed for students in elementary school than other narrative types.

Many people have difficulty in developing writing skills which affect academic achievement as well as language acquisition (Tok, Rachım & Kuş, 2014). Ulusen (2009) believes that most people do not know what writing exactly means and writers end their writing process with a lot of spelling mistakes. Griffin & Anh (2005) found that students usually use simple sentence structure and only a limited number of words in primary school students' creative writing classes. On the other hand, it has been revealed that students' writing skills are below the required level with further research (Coşkun, 2005; Kaynaş & Akalın, 2015; Yasul, 2014). A study carried out by Coşkun (2005) has shown that the average success rates of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in story elements are not high in accordance with the criteria of main character (73.5%), starter event (73%), locale (59.5%), time (58.5%), result (58.5%), initiative (52%), aim (51%), reaction (50.5%).

The overall average success in all story elements in narrative text writing skills was 58.3%. In a study by Kaynaş & Akalın (2015), students had 9 points on average out of 19 points. Proficiency means adequate performance on challenging writing tasks, but scoring at a basic level or below indicates difficulty with one or more aspect of writing (Salahu-Din, Persky, & Miller, 2008). In writing education, often, deficiencies in the written narrative of students have been one of the reasons for complaints (Tağa & Ünlü, 2013). Because writing skills require more technical information than

other fields, students are not very keen on the writing process because of perception of difficulty of writing process and the reason for fear of writing and considering writing as a waste of time (Tok & Ünlü, 2014). It is safe to say from this result that students' story writing skills could not even reach midlevel. In their study with 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students, Meulenbroek and Van Galen (1986) has found that students use short writing patterns. In today's national education system, evaluation is mainly based on multiple choice tests, which leads to many students having difficulty in writing from first grades to university level. Among the reasons for this incapability are very little time spent on writing, lack of teachers (Genlott & Grönlund, 2013), product-based writing mentality instead of a process-based one (Yılmaz, 2011), lack of ideas, grammar incompetency, students' unwillingness to participate in productive skills such as writing (Etemadzadeha, Seifi & Roohbakhsh Far, 2013).

Some skills like research, selection, interpretation, analysis, reproduction of information have become important and it is now more essential that schools teach all students these skills. Some works that analyse students' writing skills by several variables (Demir, 2011; Karakuş-Aktan, 2013; Maki, Voeten, Vauras & Poskiparta, 2011; Pajares, Johnson & Usher, 2007; Tüfekçioğlu, 2010; Yasul, 2014; Yılmaz, 2011) and that study some methods' effect on development of writing skills (Akdal, 2011; Ergün, 2007; Temizkan, 2011; Urhan, 2016) have been unearthed. At the level of writing skills, Karakuş-Aktan (2013), Maki et al. (2001), Pajares et al (2003), Tüfekçioğlu (2010) and Yılmaz (2011)'s research found in favor of female students, Pajares et al (2003)'s research found significant difference in favor of students with high motivation to write. The results of the research show that girls and students with high motivation to write are more successful in the writing skills. Selection of mixed groups (gender, writing motivation etc.) rather than homogenous ones especially in cooperation-based works will help students lacking adequate writing skills a lot as a supporter and a role model. The research is quite important to interpret writing skills demographically and to associate it with other studies analysing primary school students' skills. The aim of this study is to investigate 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' native language creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills when a number of variables are considered.

This study will attempt to find answers to questions below:

1. Is there a significant difference in 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing skills when the following variables are considered: gender, nursery school, keeping a diary, mother's educational background, father's educational background and the number of books read?
2. Is there a significant difference in students' story elements in narrative text writing skills if the variables of gender, nursery school, keeping a diary, mother's educational background, father's educational background, the number of books read are considered?

## METHOD

### Research Model

In this research, general survey model, which is part of survey approach pertaining to descriptive methods, has been used. General survey models are descriptive arrangements made on a group, a sample taken from the entire universe in order to arrive at a general judgment about the universe in an environment composed of a large number of elements (Karasar, 2005). This study attempted to detect and classify the relations between dependent (creative writing and story elements levels) and independent (gender, keeping a diary, mother and father's educational background, number of books read) variables.

## Population and Sample

In the research, easily accessible sampling method was used in sampling method. Easy-to-reach sampling allows researchers to select a segment from the universe in the direction of the sample size. This type of sample provides researcher both time and cost-effectiveness (Aypay et al., 2012). The population for this study was 4<sup>th</sup> grade students of primary schools in the city of Afyonkarahisar. 233 students participated in the study which took place in the spring term of the 2017-2018 academic year. 182 surveys were statistically analysed. 51 surveys were discarded due to some unmarked questions, repetitive answers, noncompletion of the story. 182 of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students 96 of them (47.3%) constituting the sample are male while 86 of them (52.7%) are female.

## Data Collection Tools

In this study data collection tools consisted of 3 parts:

A personal information form was used with the aim of gaining information on the study variables of gender, keeping a diary, mother's educational background, father's educational background and the monthly number of books read.

Creative Writing Scale was designed by Öztürk (2007) with the purpose of detecting and assessing students' creative writing levels. This tool is composed of eight sub-dimensions, which are originality, fluency of thoughts, flexibility of thoughts, lexical richness, sentence structure, organization, accuracy of style and grammar. Each sub-dimension is on a scale from 1 to 5. A student can get between 8 and 40 on this tool. Students were asked to write stories about the events that happened to a child who moved to a new neighborhood. A reminder visual was placed at the beginning of the study paper. The students were informed before the study that their stories would be evaluated with 'Creative Writing Scale' and 'Scale for Assessing Story Elements'. The dimensions contained in the scales were explained individually, and students were provided with attention to these criteria in the process of writing stories.

Coşkun's (2005) Turkish adaptation of 'Scale for Assessing Story Elements' has been used to analyse narrative texts in terms of story elements. The eight different sub-dimensions on the scale are main character, locale, time, starter event, aim, initiative, result and reaction. On this scale 8 elements composing a story are ranked with different scores. The main character, locale, time, starter event, result, reaction were scored between 0-2 and the aim was scored between 0-3. The initiative was scored between 0-4.

## Data Analysis

The texts written by the students were examined by two specialists (both working in the field of reading and writing skills) and calculated the percentage of match between them. The match rate, which is defined as the rate of the number of items that scorers match to total evaluation or observation number, is used as percentage of the two scorers' points or match of scores given by scorers if they score a behavior twice (Meyer, 1999). The match percentages that demonstrate the reliability among independent observers were calculated as .84.

Collected data have been analysed through statistical methods compliant with the purposes of the study. Non-parametric tests are used when suppositions of parametric tests are not met. First, normality test has been applied to find out whether data range normally; it was found that data did not range normally across all variables. Mann Whitney U-test was used to analyse the effects of the variables of gender and keeping a diary while Kruskal Wallis H-test was utilized to analyse the effects of the variables of mother's background, father's background and the number of books read on students' writing levels. Data were analysed using SPSS 21.0 and the level of significance was set as alpha less than 0.5.

## FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics regarding the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' assessment scores of creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics regarding the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' assessment scores of creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills**

Dimension	N	$\bar{X}$	SS
Creative Writing Skills	182	19.81	9.68
Story Elements in Narrative Text Writing Skills	182	6.69	3.82

As shown in Table 1, the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing assessment mean was 19.81 and the standard deviation was 9.68. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' story elements in narrative text writing assessment mean was 6.69 and standard deviation was 3.82. The evaluation sub-dimensions of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills are given in Table 2.

**Table 2. Evaluation sub-dimensions of classroom students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills**

Creative Writing Skills	$\bar{X}$	Story Elements in Narrative Text Writing Skills	$\bar{X}$
Originality	2.46	Main Character	1.07
Fluency of Thoughts	2.54	Locale	.43
Flexibility of Thoughts	2.54	Time	.77
Lexical Richness	2.56	Starter Event	.82
Sentence Structure	2.49	Aim	.82
Organization	2.45	Initiative	1.29
Accuracy of Style	2.37	Result	.87
Grammar	2.25	Reaction	.58

Examining the Table 2, it was determined that students' creative writing skills were not at low levels considering their scores from sub-dimensions of creative writing skills [originality ( $\bar{X}$  =2.46), fluency of thoughts ( $\bar{X}$  =2.54), flexibility of thoughts ( $\bar{X}$  =2.54), lexical richness ( $\bar{X}$  =2.56), sentence structure ( $\bar{X}$  =2.49), organization ( $\bar{X}$  =2.45), accuracy of style ( $\bar{X}$  =2.37), grammar ( $\bar{X}$  =2.25). Similarly, considering the students' story elements in narrative text writing skills evaluation scores, it can be seen that main character ( $\bar{X}$  =1.07), locale ( $\bar{X}$  =.43), time ( $\bar{X}$  =.77), starter event ( $\bar{X}$  =.82), goal ( $\bar{X}$  =.82), action ( $\bar{X}$  =1.29), ending ( $\bar{X}$  =.87) and reaction ( $\bar{X}$  =.58).

Mann Whitney U-test, was used to determine whether assessment points of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills differ significantly when the variable of gender, is considered. The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Mann Whitney U-Test result regarding the assessment points of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills by the variable of gender**

Dimension	Gender	N	Sum of orders	Rank order	U	Z	p
Creative Writing Skills	Male	86	78.33	6736	2954.50	-3.199	.001
	Female	96	103.30	6736			
Story Elements in Narrative Text Writing Skills	Male	86	77.85	6695.50	6695.50	-3.320	.001
	Female	96	103.72	9957.50			

As shown in Table 3, assessment points of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills differed significantly when the variable gender ( $p < 0.5$ ) considered. Considering the rankings on both assessment tools, it is clear that this difference is in favour of female students. The results of Mann Whitney U-test, applied in order to determine whether assessment points of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills differed significantly when the variable of diary considered, are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Mann Whitney U-Test result regarding the assessment points of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills by the variable of diary**

Dimension	Diary	N	Sum of orders	Rank order	U	Z	p
Creative Writing Skills	Yes	75	115.81	8686	2189	-5.222	.000
	No	107	74.46	7967			
Story Elements in Narrative Text Writing Skills	Yes	75	104.60	7867	3030	-2.820	.005
	No	107	82.32	8808			

As shown in Table 4, assessment points of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing was a difference significantly when the variable of keeping a diary ( $p < 0.5$ ). It was found out that students keeping a diary have higher average rankings. There was a significant differed in favour of students keeping a diary as for assessment of story elements in narrative text writing skills ( $p < 0.5$ ). The results of Kruskal Wallis H-test, applied in order to determine whether assessment points of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills differed significantly the variable of mother's educational background considered, are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. Kruskal Wallis H-Test result regarding the assessment points of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills by the variable of mother's educational background**

Dimension	Mother's Educational Background	N	Rank order	sd	X <sup>2</sup>	p
Creative Writing Skills	Primary School	71	99.80	3	5.139	.162
	Middle School	61	90.90			
	High School	42	83.94			
	University	8	62.13			
Story Elements in Narrative Text Writing Skills	Primary School	71	96.61	3	5.937	.115
	Middle School	61	87.24			
	High School	42	96.54			
	University	8	52.25			

As shown in Table 5, assessment points of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills weren't difference significantly by the variable of mother's educational background ( $p > 0.5$ ). The results of Kruskal Wallis H-test, applied in order to determine whether assessment points of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills differed significantly when the variable of father's educational background considered, are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6. Kruskal Wallis H-Test result regarding the assessment points of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills by the variable of father's educational background**

Dimension	Father's Educational Background	N	Rank order	sd	X <sup>2</sup>	p
Creative Writing Skills	Primary School	56	90.56	3	3.254	.354
	Middle School	52	90.43			
	High School	51	87.76			
	University	23	104.48			
Story Elements in Narrative Text Writing Skills	Primary School	56	89.41	3	1.697	.638
	Middle School	52	82.59			
	High School	51	98.92			
	University	23	100.28			

As shown in Table 6, assessment points of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills weren't difference significantly by the variable of father's educational background ( $p > 0.5$ ). It was shown that students whose fathers are university graduates have higher average rankings. The results of Kruskal Wallis H-test, applied in order to determine whether assessment points of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills change significantly the variable of the number of books read, are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7. Kruskal Wallis H-Test result regarding the assessment points of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills by the variable of the number of books read**

Dimension	Number of Book	N	Rank order	sd	X <sup>2</sup>	p	Significant difference
Creative Writing Skills	1	37	40	2	51.082	.000	2-1
	2	57	90.76				3-1
	At least 3	88	113.63				3-2
Story Elements in Narrative Text Writing Skills	1	37	57.38	2	26.135	.000	2-1
	2	57	86.40				3-1
	At least 3	87	109.15				3-2

As shown in Table 7, assessment points of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills were difference significantly by the variable of the number of books read ( $p < .05$ ). There was a significant differed in favour of students least 3 books.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It was determined that students were not at a very good level considering their creative writing overall scores. In addition to the fact that 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' levels of creative writing were not adequate in terms of originality, fluency of thoughts, flexibility of ideas, organization of stories, vocabulary richness, originality, sentence structure and writing style, fluency of thoughts, flexibility of ideas and compliance with the rules of grammar. Research findings are consistent with studies conducted on this subject. In the research conducted by Boosone and Troyke (1976), it was determined that many students developed and organized subideas in their descriptive compositions. Students often have problems with text organization in both content reading and expository writing (Taylor, 1982). During process construct short, choppy, or incomplete sentences with numerous errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and capitalization (Alkan, 2007; Deniz, 2000; İnce, 2006; Kline, Schumaker, & Deshler, 1991). In these studies, presence of students' deficiencies in spelling and punctuation in each level shows that there are problems in teaching and learning rules of spelling and punctuation in schools. When examining curriculum and textbooks, spelling and punctuation rules are



taught every school year. Nevertheless, occurrence of these errors in each level suggests that the methods used to teach spelling and punctuation rules should be changed (Ari, 2010). Also they were not at good level in terms of basic character, locale, time, starter event, aim, initiative, result and reaction in their story elements in narrative text writing skills. Research findings are consistent with studies conducted on this subject (Ulu, 2018).

This study has attempted to investigate whether or not assessment points of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills change significantly by the variables of gender, keeping a diary, mother's educational background, father's educational background and the number of books. In consequence of analyses, it has been seen that assessment points of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills change significantly in favour of female students by the variable of gender. The result of the study is consistent with other research (Karakuş-Aktan, 2013; Maki, Voeten, Vauras & Poskiparta, 2001; Pajares, Johnson & Usher, 2007; Tüfekçioğlu, 2010; Yılmaz, 2011). It has been ascertained in Karakuş-Aktan's (2013) study with 9<sup>th</sup> grade students that female students have more advanced writing skills than male students; in Maki's et.al (2001) study that female students write more coherent stories than males; in Tüfekçioğlu's (2010) study that female students' overall success average in writing compositions is 74.64 while that of male students is 39.45; in Yılmaz's (2011) study that female students are more successful than males in terms of written expression skills. In addition, a study by Pajares et.al (2009) has shown that female students are considered better writers by their teachers. It can be argued that females' language skills being more developed due to the fact that they learn to talk earlier might be one of the reasons why females have more advanced writing skills than males. Another reason is that females are more docile, and males are more likely to concentrate more on writing activities because they are more independent. It was determined that girls had a more positive attitude in terms of gender as well as cognitive dimensions (Ceran, 2013). Gender was an important variable that affected writing skills in terms of cognitive and sensory aspects.

Assessment points of creative writing have been found to be in favour of students keeping a diary by the variable of keeping a diary. Keeping a diary is an activity that requires creative writing skills. Ergün (2007) and Temizkan (2011)'s study reveals that creative writing activities help boost students' skills in question. The study that examines students' writing skills by the variable of keeping a diary has been conducted by Karakuş-Aktan (2013). The study shows that writing skills of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students do not change significantly by the variable of keeping a diary, which draws a similarity with the results of this study. Assessment points of story elements in narrative text writing skills have been found to be in favour of students keeping a diary by the variable of keeping a diary. Ergün's (2007) study indicates that creative writing programme has an impact on the development of students' aforementioned skills. Demir (2013) has reached a positive, low-level and statistical correlation between creative writing skills of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and total scores of grammar and usage skill sub-dimension of self-efficacy scale. Temizkan's (2011) study indicates that there has been a significant change in favour of the experimental group in terms of sub-dimensions of main character, locale and time of creative writing programme. In this respect, it is safe to say that free composition activities such as poems, diaries and tales and building education with this purpose will be an important step to promote students' creative writing skills.

Assessment points of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing do not change by the variable of mother's educational background. This result is consistent with Tüfekçioğlu's (2010) study; however, it differs from the results of the study of Karakuş-Aktan (2013) and Demir (2011). According to Tüfekçioğlu's (2010) study, the difference between students' achievement scores in creative writing by the variable of mother's educational background is not statistically significant. Assessment points of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' story elements in narrative text writing skills do not change by the variable of mother's educational background. It has been seen that notable works are still needed as there are not any works on record relatable to this result.

Assessment points of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing skills do not change significantly by the variable of father's educational background. The result of this study is consistent with the study of Tüfekçioğlu (2010) and Karakuş-Aktan (2013) while it is not consistent with Demir's (2011) study. Demir has reached the conclusion in his studies on creativity that creativity is proportional to father's educational background. On the other hand, assessment points of story elements in narrative text writing skills do not change significantly by the variable of father's educational background. However, it cannot be overgeneralized as there are not any works on record relatable to this result.

Assessment points of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing and story elements in narrative text writing skills change significantly by the variable of the number of books read. The result of the study is consistent with Yasul's (2014) study. With respect to points from both assessment tools, the fact that students who have read at least 3 books have higher average rankings is consistent with Yılmaz's (2011) study in which students' writing skills are proportional to the number of books students have read over the last year. On the other hand, it has been revealed in the study of Karadağ & Kayabaşı (2011) that reading newspapers has an impact on interest in writing, knowledgeability about writing process, correctness of language and expression; in the study of Urhan (2016) that tale reading programme has an impact on students' creative writing skills; and in the study of Akdal (2011) that intertextual reading approach has an impact on 5<sup>th</sup> grade students' creative writing skills. Therefore, it is inevitable that reading skills affect writing skills as reading improves some skills such as expansion of vocabulary, knowledge acquisition, analytical thinking.

Social and cultural theory dwells on creative writing skills based on cooperation. The variable of gender can be taken into consideration when forming cooperative learning groups. Female students' supremacy in creative writing can be considered during group-forming process. Thus, Wass, Littleton, Miell & Jones (2008) have stated that peer learning contributes remarkably to class based creative writing activities in terms of development of material, encouragement and improvement. It is claimed that cooperative activities are a signal of common focusing and information sharing thus fastening mutual inspiration during content formation steps of writing activities.

Creative writing programmes can be organized to improve students' writing skills. Different types of activities can be included in these programmes. These can be diversified with tales, stories, poems, diaries etc. Education of these genres will promote development in the fields of organization, fluency, word selection, grammar etc. The study of Sidekli (2012) has shown that story pyramid develop students' writing skills in terms of title, subject, main idea, introduction, body, conclusion, portrayal of heroes, introduction of place, time, establishment of cause and effect relation and thematic integrity. Cutler and Graham (2008) stress the importance of extension of the time students spend on writing, establishment a relation between writing strategies and skills, building a more solid bond of writing between home and school, integration of computers into writing programme during process-based education. In this regard, education should be planned to create an environment in which individuals express their opinions and feelings comfortably and fluently; and to train individuals who enjoy writing and consider writing an activity (Temizkan, 2011).

Students can be encouraged to read books of different genres. Conceptual information about the qualities of these genres will have a positive effect on the development of their writing skills. Paquette (2007) states that picture books pave the way for motivating students and encouraging them to write as for introduction of children's literature to children. Book sharing experiences in small and big scale groups can lead to fruitful writing discussions and practices. Picture books pose a model in terms of ideas, organization, word selection, fluency of sentences and they serve as a bridge which enables students to apply these writing qualities into their original texts. Paul and Elder (2006) believe that students are in need of understanding their ideas establishing a conceptual link between reading and writing skills.

Based on the findings of the study the following suggestions are developed:

- Substantial research has shown that there is a direct relation between writing skills and gender, keeping a diary and number of books read. Mixed groups (female-male) can be formed in order that students lacking required writing skills can work with those with advanced writing skills.
- A progress can be made in their writing knowledge and skills thanks to peer support & learning. Teachers can organize different types of creative writing activities like keeping a diary. These activities' being continuous and planned will develop their relevant skills. In addition, earning them a habit of reading will bring along a larger vocabulary with it.
- Stimulent-rich, democratic education environments in which children can express themselves comfortably should be created based on the idea that creating such environments have a positive impact on their linguistic development.
- Students may be encouraged to read books. Informative and narrative books will contribute positively to writing skills by providing students with the imagination and development of their vocabulary.
- However, there has not been enough consistency with the other variables (mother's educational background, father's educational background) yet. Therefore, further quantitative and qualitative research will be of help for absolute certainty.
- Guides and student books prepared for education programmes are not sufficient for the development of students' writing skills. Since creative writing is one of the top skills, books and courses can be organized to develop this skill.

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