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### Review of Primary School English Coursebooks in Terms of Creative Writing Activities

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## **Review of Primary School English Coursebooks in Terms of Creative Writing Activities**

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### **Abstract**

In this paper, the writing sections in Primary School English Coursebooks were reviewed to determine the creative writing activities and content analysis method was used in the context of document review. In this process, the coursebooks published by Ministry of National Education Publications and private publishing houses were both selected from each grade level. Results of the review showed that, creative writing types are not included enough in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks. Though 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade books have a large number of creative writing activities, they do not have enough genre types. In addition to that review, writing skill learning outcomes given in the syllabi and the writing activities in the books reviewed in this paper are also compared. After a comparison of the books of the publications was made, it is revealed that the private publishing houses' textbooks have more types of genre than the other ones have.

**Keywords:** Creative writing; English; Primary school English course; Coursebooks.

### **Introduction**

It is inevitable for nations around the world to keep pace with the developing and advancing world with the increasing knowledge and the transformation of science into technology, facilitating the sharing of information among people and the rapid spread of information. Indeed, as a result of the emergence of these conditions, the need mastering the languages used to meet the needs of people to communicate with other individuals and societies emerged. Communication needs of humanity, which seem to have personal dimensions such as sharing information, establishing friendships, strengthening science, are transported to international media over time and keep growing. A world where strong and fast communication is established is no longer a large land mass, but it becomes as small and accessible as our home.

According to The Key Data on Teaching Language in Schools in Europe report published by the European Commission (European Commission, 2012), children are reported to start learning foreign languages at an earlier age in Europe and most students start learning foreign languages at the age of 6-9. The vast majority of countries or regions have lowered the beginner age level for compulsory language learning over the past 15 years, and some of these countries have even started offering foreign language education in pre-school education. For example, the German-speaking community in Belgium provides foreign language learning for children under 3 years old. The report also confirms that English is the most widely taught foreign language in almost all European countries, followed by French, Spanish, German.

In a research conducted in a cancer center in New York (Kim, Relkin & Lee, 1997), brain maps of bilingual people were examined by the MR (Magnetic Resonance) technique and it was determined that the second language acquired at the age of children was kept in the same place as the native language in the brain. Based on this study, it can be said that the second foreign language acquired at an early age will have more permanence and fluency in use. Thus, around the world, many administrations have drawn English language education to primary school level, depending on the idea that the process will be easier, profitable and better for children who start English language education at an early age. (Brewster, Ellis & Girard, 2003). Mirici (2001) clearly states that practices in major European countries that starting foreign language education in the early stages of primary education is important. For example, foreign language education begins in the first year in Greece and the Netherlands and in the third year in Germany and Italy. Today, in Turkey, English language education, starts in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade primary education level, continues in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

There are four different skills, namely listening, reading, speaking and writing, which focus on the language education process. According to Richard (2002) “Writing is the most difficult skills for second language learner to master of putting together strings of grammatically correct sentences”. Based upon this, we can say that writing skills are the most difficult of the four, as many foreign language students and foreign language teachers state. For any writing activity, even in the native language, there may not be enough time in the lesson for writing activities compared to listening, reading and speaking activities due to the limited duration of the lessons. In addition, the students' lack of some basic writing skills to do their writing activities may be another reason to ignore these activities for the teachers. The importance of writing skills becomes more evident when it comes to English, which is an international communication tool. Hyland (2003) believes that language development performance is possible with the development of writing skills. It is believed that the piece written by an English-language student must be logical, content-consistent, clearly formed, fluent, richly worded, and mechanically well organized. However, since writing activities are regarded as a part of grammar teaching rather than having a mechanical teaching on their own, independent from other language skills, these activities are not given sufficient importance in the language teaching process and thus the resulting works are not satisfactory. In addition to that, Demirel (1999) mentioned that some foreign language teachers also consider writing as an assignment outside the classroom rather than classroom teaching activity.

Creative Writing has growingly become the subject of research interest just because academics benefited from today's literary and cultural theory in order to create new methodology in pedagogy and to understand the importance of Creative Writing for modern cultures well (Dawson, 2005). Just to explain the significance of teaching creative writing and including it in textbooks and lessons we need to talk about the definition of it at first. Ramet (2006) explains creative writing as “having the power to create an imaginative, original literary production or composition”. Also, according to Orhon (2003) creative writing means one's putting his or her ideas and feelings about a particular topic on paper by using his or her imagination freely. Creative writing depends on expressing the impression of outer world in an alternate way and it offers freedom to students to pick their own writing subjects and strategies. The significance of creative writing is undubitable to improve the cognitive and communicative abilities of youngsters (Christopher, 1996). Starting from this point of view it can be said that creative writing activities applied to improve writing skills in English lessons, should not be restricted with certain types of literature, such as memories, poems, stories, etc. Students should be improved by carrying out activities related to different types of literature. While Chamcharatsri (2012, 2013) was performing creative writing activities involving different types of literature, he wanted to bring a different perspective on the use of the emotions of the writer and guide them in this regard. He stated that performing different types of creative writing activities enables participants to take different roles in terms of emotional expression. From this standpoint, it can be said that the use of different creative writing activities in the lessons contributes to the development of emotional intelligence of students by entering different emotions and also has an important place in the development of their literary abilities. Harris (2015) states that the students who learn English as a second language have only written expression skills and lack internal consistency and commitment to the main subject. For this reason, solutions can be produced for these problems with frequent and regular writing tasks related to different types, and potential future problems related to writing skills in foreign language can be prevented at the primary level.

Based on this significance of creative writing as highlighted in the related literature, this study aims at determining the frequency of creative writing activities usage in primary school English textbooks in order to determine how strong the basis of the foreign language was at the primary level where the students meet the foreign language for the first time.

## Literature Review

In this section, common and similar studies take part to show the studies which have been done relating to the subject of this study.

Acar (2006) investigated the effectiveness of the textbook *Spotlight on English* used in the state primary schools in Turkey based on the post-use textbook evaluation practice and ultimately to develop a new model which will compensate for the weaker parts of the textbook. In another study on the primary school ELT coursebooks Arıkan and Tekir (2007) got the opinions of 7th grade students' and teachers' on *Let's Speak English 7* and as a result of this study they suggested that both teachers and the students have rather negative feelings about *Let's Speak English 7*, the teachers having more negative feelings towards it. Also, Kırkgöz (2009) completed an evaluation of the three English textbooks which were used in grade 4 classes by the Turkish Ministry of

National Education in state primary schools. In her study, 37-item textbook evaluation scheme (Smiley Questionnaire) was asked to be responded by teachers and students to reflect their ideas about varied aspects of the textbooks and she resulted that the three books are carefully designed to meet the MoNE curriculum goals and objectives. Inal (2006), in his research on the problems of written expression lesson, in order to improve the writing skills of students in our country, concluded that different writing programs from the simplest level to the most advanced level should be included in the syllabus, and teachers who are experts in the field of written expression alternately should help students with writing skills on certain days of the week. Considering the results of this study, the fact that creative writing activities should be organized based on one of the principles of teaching English, from simple to complex, should be introduced to students with a guide at an early age. Göçen (2019) examined the effect of creative writing activities on students' success and concluded that creative writing activities had a positive effect on students' creative writing success, writing attitude and motivation. In their study, Tok and Kandemir (2015) examined the effect of creative writing activities on 7<sup>th</sup> grade students' writing activities in English and concluded that the use of creative writing exercises had a positive effect. In his research on writing activities in high school textbooks, Kıray (2013) stated that the types of literature included in coursebooks are sufficient, but the amounts are insufficient, and stated that the effectiveness of the writing activities is controversial, believing that the purpose of the given types is not clear but hidden. Ak (2011) states that as a result of the study named "The effect of creative writing techniques on written expression skills of Turkish 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in Turkish lesson", he found a significant difference in favor of the experimental group in their final test success scores. In other words, it is clearly stated that creative writing activities contribute to activities in the mother tongue. In his research, Pelcova (2015), examined the use of creative writing as a tool in teaching English and concluded that the English teachers involved in the study did not have sufficient knowledge about the application of creative writing activities, but teachers had the opinion that these activities had positive effects on students' writing skills. In addition to ones mentioned before, in a study conducted in Hong Kong (Cheung, Tse & Tsang, 2011), although the elementary teachers in their study liked creative writing activities and thought it would be useful to use these activities in the lesson, revealed the fact that many of them applied classical teaching methods. For this reason, including creative writing activities in textbooks and course contents is not only enough, but also teachers who can master these activities should be responsible for having a meaningful effect.

### **Problem Statement, Purpose Statement And Significance**

The problem of the research is to determine how often creative writing activities are used in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English course books. As a result of the comprehensive literature study, no study on the review of creative writing activities in primary school English textbooks has been found. For this reason, with this study, it was aimed to determine the frequency of creative writing activities usage in primary school English textbooks in order to determine how strong the basis of the foreign language was at the primary level where the students meet the foreign language for the first time. In the TOEFL test score report (ETS, 2018) by Educational Testing Services (ETS), published in 2018, Turkey has a writing skills average score of 20 out of 25 points. At the same time, in the report, including all countries' GRE scores, published by ETS in 2018 (EST, 2018a), Turkey's Analytical Writing section score average is 3.1 out of 6. In the report released in 2018 (the British Council, IDP Education, Cambridge Assessment, 2018), which has IELTS exam performance scores, Turkey's writing skills average score is 5.7 over 9 of both Academic and General Training exams. In Graduate Management Admission Council's (GMAC) Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) GeoChart Tendency Report in 2018 Turkey's general average score is mentioned but there is no special writing section result score special for the country. There is no special result section for Turkey in the results reports of the international English placement tests such as Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT). It can be clearly understood that Turkey's exam results remained at average or below average by looking at the exam score results of the non-native English spoken countries' average. In the writing sections of these exams, candidates who take the exam are asked to write articles that require the use of creative writing skills and are evaluated according to the resulting product. For this reason, it can be said on the basis of this data that it is important to include creative writing activities on English writing skills from the beginning of primary school education in textbooks. Thus, it is possible to help students think both analytically and start writing fictional articles, and to achieve more successful results in the writing sections of the international English placement tests by having them work in different types of literature in a foreign language at an early age. In the light of all this, it is thought that this research will be significant and useful, as it will present suggestions for the wide range of creative writing activities in English textbooks, taking into account students' developmental situations.

## Method

In this research, the data were analyzed by using content analysis, which is one of the qualitative research methods, within the framework of document review. The data needed during the document review; can be provided without the need for observation or interview. Textbooks can be used as a data source while conducting document reviews in educational researches (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008).

In the English Course Education Program (Primary and Secondary Education, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades) published by Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education (MoNE, 2018),

*"As the CEFR considers language learning to be a lifelong undertaking, developing a positive attitude toward English from the earliest stages is essential; therefore, the new curriculum strives to foster an enjoyable and motivating learning environment where young learners/users of English feel comfortable and supported throughout the learning process. Authentic materials, drama and role play, and hands-on activities are implemented to stress the communicative nature of English. At the 2nd and 3rd grade levels, speaking and listening are emphasized; while reading and writing are incorporated in higher grades as students become more advanced. Throughout each stage, developmentally appropriate learning tasks provide a continued focus on building the learner autonomy and problem-solving skills that are the basis for communicative competence" (p.3).*

statement is located. For this reason, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade textbooks were excluded and 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> grade English textbooks are included in this study and examined. The books that were taught at primary level and included in the study were determined using the purposive sampling method. Two different textbooks were selected for each grade level, as long as one from the Ministry of National Education Publications (MoNEP) and one from a private publishing house. These books were obtained from the website of the Ministry of National Education's Education Information Network (EBA) and included in the scope of the research. For the 4<sup>th</sup>-grade level, *Elementary School-Learn with Bouncy-Student's Book 4* from the MoNEP and *Primary School English 4* textbooks from FCM Publishing; for the 5<sup>th</sup>-grade, *Secondary School and Imam Hatip Secondary School English 5* from MoNEP and *Secondary School and Imam Hatip Secondary School English 5* textbooks from Özgün Publications; for the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade, *Secondary School and Imam Hatip Secondary School English 6* from the MoNEP, and *Secondary School and Imam Hatip Secondary School English Route 6* books from Monopol Publications; for the 7<sup>th</sup>-grade level, *Secondary School and Imam Hatip Secondary School 7* from the MoNEP and *Secondary School and Imam Hatip Secondary School English 7* from Kök Yayıncılık; for the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade level, *Secondary School and Imam Hatip Secondary School Mastermind English 8* from the MoNEP and *Secondary School and Imam Hatip Secondary School Upswing English 8* from Tutku Yayıncılık were selected.

The sections, including writing activities of these textbooks, were examined and the activities in these sections were classified using the "Types of Creative Literature" table developed by the researchers. Over the course of developing the table, after a long literature review process, a pool of genres was established. After that, as a result of discussions and opinions of experts (one in curriculum design, one in English teaching, one in creative writing), "Types of Creative Literature", which comprises 14 genres, was finalized. Types of literature in this table are Memoir, Biography, Essay, Travel Writing, Journal, Card-Note-Poster, Non-Fictional Story-Tale, Fictional Story-Tale, Letter, Byword-Slogan-Aphorism, Speech, Poetry, Depiction, Theater Play-Sketch. Species with similar characteristics were collected under the same title.

## Findings

In this section, the number of these creative literature types located in the selected textbooks for the study were specified. In each chart, only one book's data from one publishing house is shown.

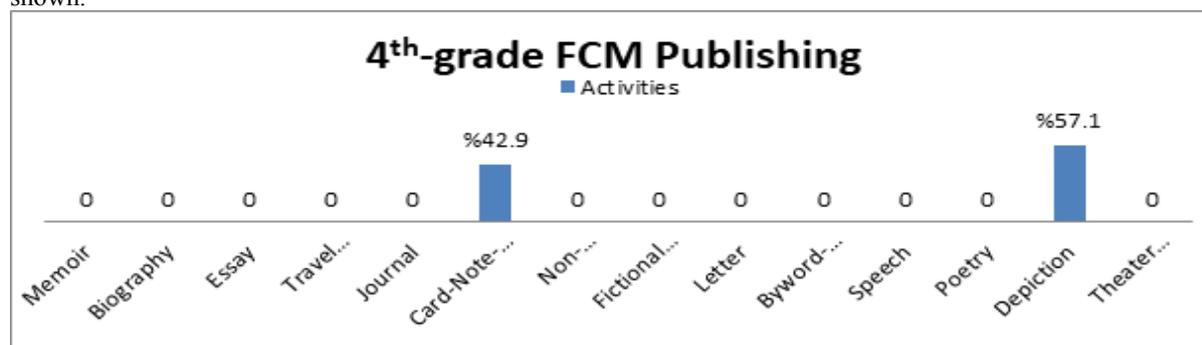
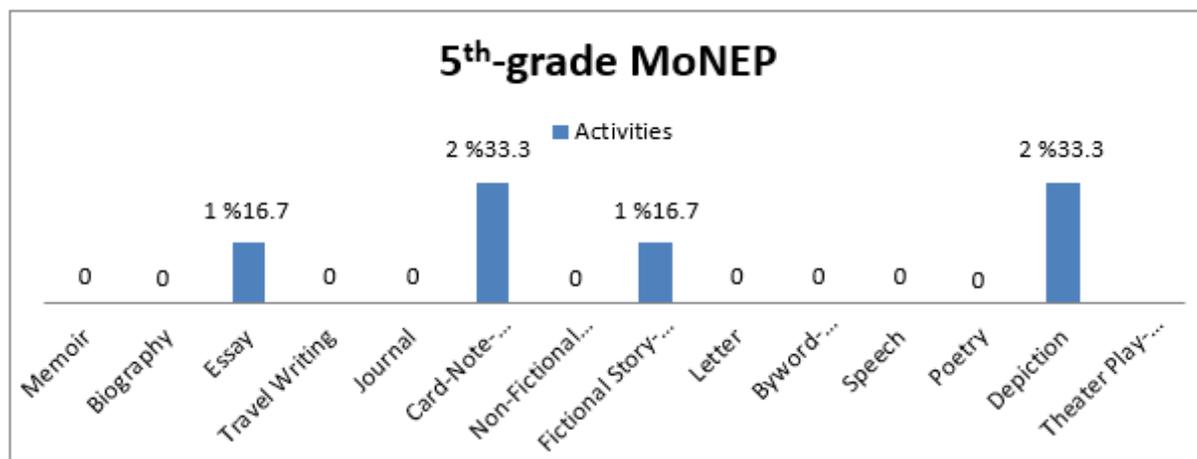


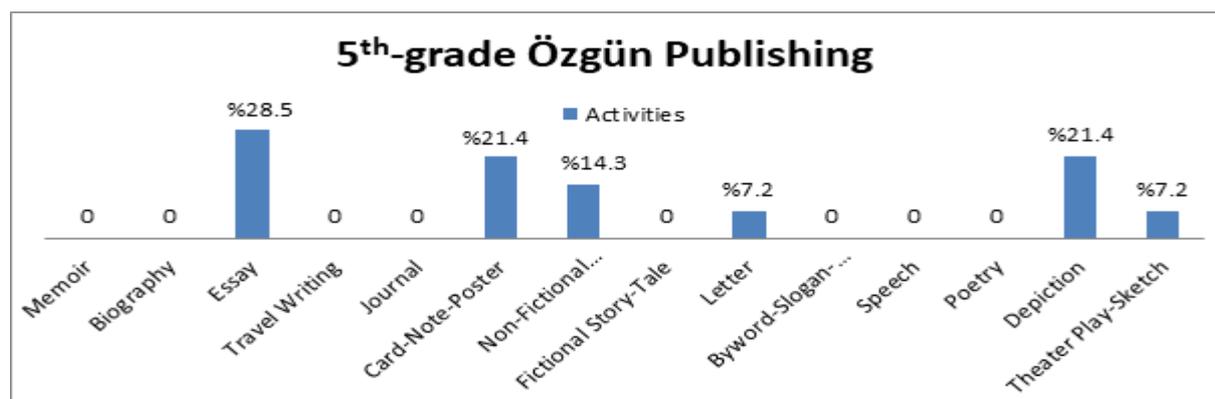
Chart 1: Genres in the 4th grade FCM Publishing book

English lessons are taught in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades at the primary school level. Within the framework of the research, two different books of 4<sup>th</sup> grade were examined: one from MoNEP and one from FCM Publications. It can be seen that the one from MoNEP includes listening and speaking activities but does not have writing activities at all. However; 4 different kinds of literature types, in a total of 7, were encountered in the English course books and these were classified as 3 Cards-Notes-Posters (%57,1 of all), 4 Depictions (%42,9 of all), in Chart 1.



**Chart 2:** Genres in the 5th grade MoNEP book

It was observed that 4 different types of literature -6 in total- are included in the 5th-grade textbook published by MoNEP 1 (%16,7 of all) Essay, 2 (%33,3 of all) Cards-Notes-Posters, 1 (%16,7 of all) Fictional Story-Tale, 2 (%33,3 of all) Depictions were detected, and it was confirmed that other types of writing were not included. All these statistical data are shown in Chart 2.



**Chart 3:** Genres in the 5th grade Özgün Publishing book

In Chart 3, frequencies of creative writing activities in the English textbook published by Özgün Publications are given. In this textbook, it was seen that a total of 6 different types of literature were included 14 times. It was observed that 4 (%28,5 of all) Essays, 3 (%21,4 of all) Cards-Notes-Posters, 2 (%14,3 of all) Non-Fictional Stories-Tales, 1 (%7,2 of all) Letter, 3 (%21,4 of all) Depictions and 1 (%7,2 of all) Theater Play-Sketch were found but it was actually clear that there were no other types of literature.

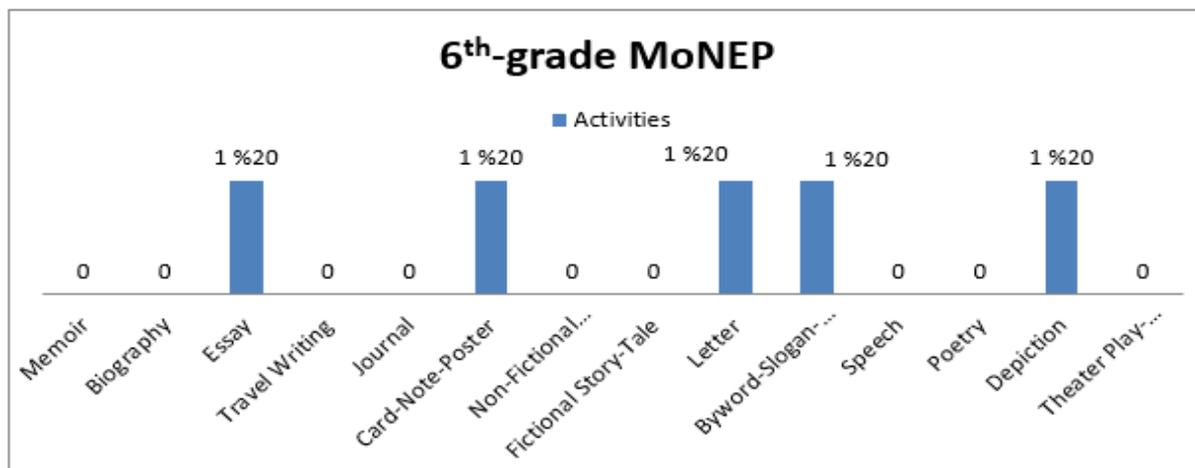


Chart 4: Genres in the 6th grade MoNEP book

As it is seen in Chart 4, a total of 5 different types of literature are included 5 times in the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade textbook published from the MoNEP 1 (%20 of all) Essay, 1 (%20 of all) Card-Note-Poster, 1(%20 of all) Letter, 1(%20 of all) Byword-Slogan-Aphorism, 1 (%20 of all) Depiction were encountered but there were no other types of literature.

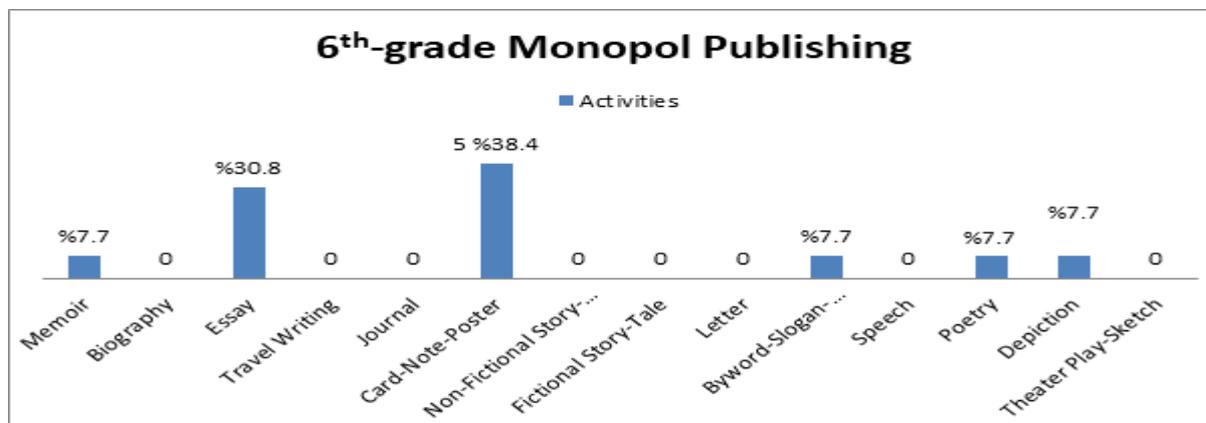
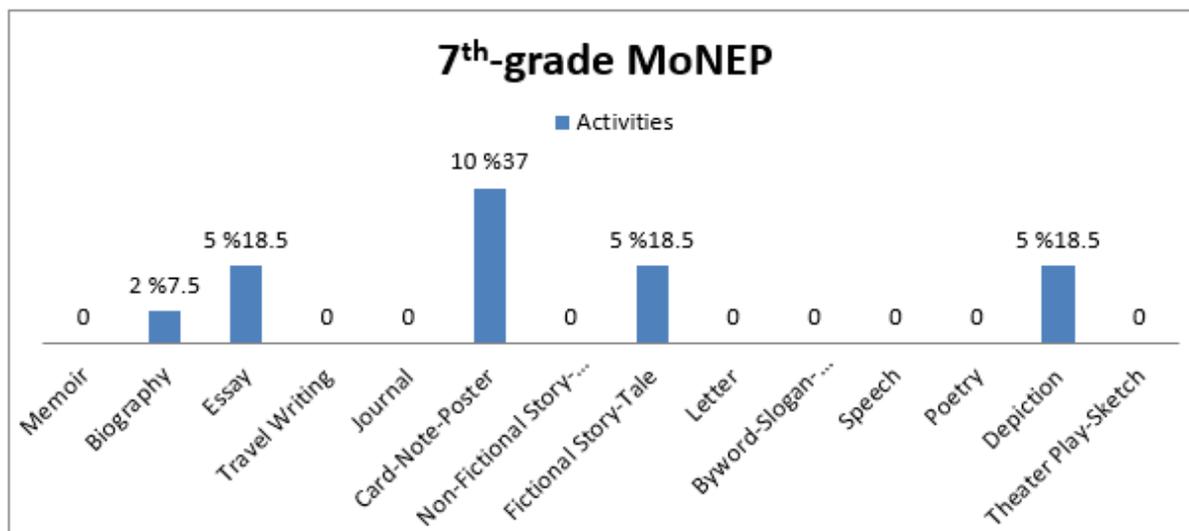


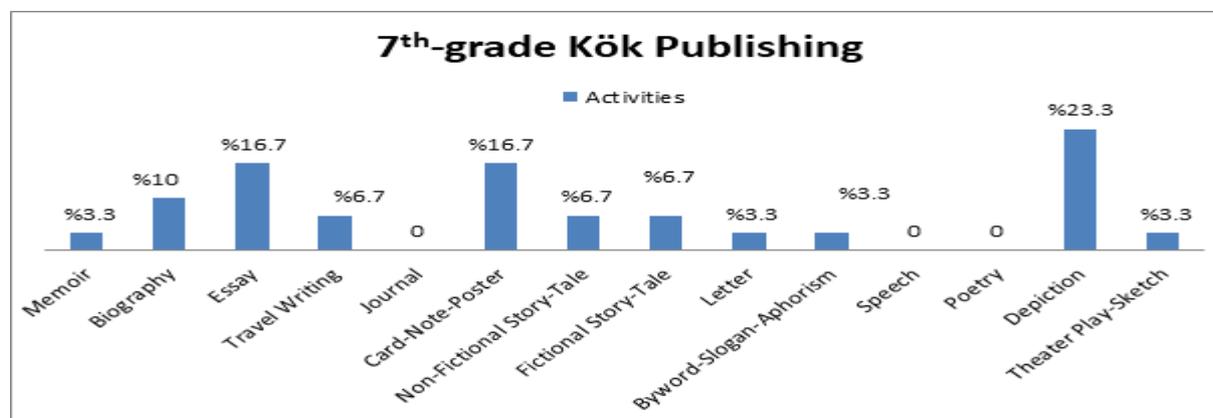
Chart 5: Genres in the 6th grade Monopol Publishing book

In Chart 5, activities in the textbook in the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade from Monopol Publications are shown. In this book, it was observed that a total of 6 different types of literature were included 13 times. 1 (%7,7 of all) Memoir, 4 (%30,8 of all) Essays, 5 (%38,4 of all) Cards-Notes-Posters, 1 (%7,7 of all) Byword-Slogan-Aphorism, 1 (%7,7 of all) Poetry, 1 (%7,7 of all) Depiction were observed but other types were not observed at all.



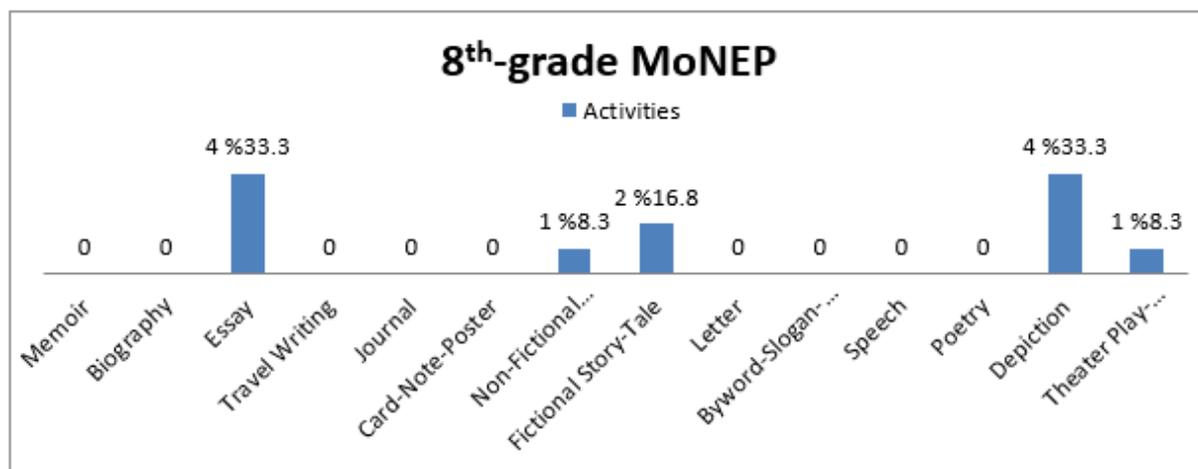
**Chart 6:** Genres in the 7th grade MoNEP book

In Chart 6, activities in the textbook in the 7<sup>th</sup>-grade from MoNEP are shown. In this book, it was observed that a total of 5 different types of literature were included 27 times. 2 (%7,5 of all) Biographies, 5 (%18,5 of all) Essays, 10 (%37 of all) Cards-Notes-Posters, 5 (%18,5 of all) Fictional Stories-Tales, 5 (%18,5 of all) Depictions were found, but other types were not included in the book.



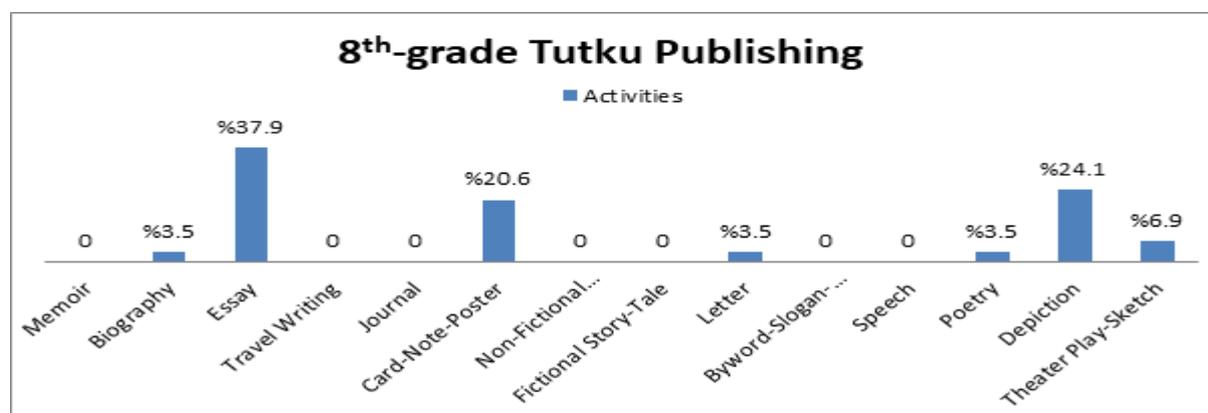
**Chart 7:** Genres in the 7th grade Kök Publishing book

As can be seen in Chart 7, 11 different types of literature were included 30 times in total in the textbook published from Kök Yayıncılık at the 7<sup>th</sup>-grade level. 1 (%3,3 of all) Memoir, 3 (%10 of all) Biographies, 5 (%16,7 of all) Essays, 2 (%6,7 of all) Travel Writings, 5 (%16,7 of all) Cards-Notes-Posters, 2 (%6,7 of all) Non-Fictional Stories-Tales, 2 (%6,7 of all) Fictional Stories-Tales, 1(%3,3 of all) Letter, 1 (%3,3 of all) Byword-Slogan-Aphorism, 7 (%23,3 of all) Depictions, and 1 (%3,3 of all) Theater Play-Sketch were found and it was observed that there were no other types of literature.



**Chart 8:** Genres in the 8th grade MoNEP book

When Chart 8 is analyzed, it is seen that in the textbook published from the MoNEP in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, 5 different types of literature are included 12 times in total. 4 (%33,3 of all) Essays, 1 (%8,3 of all) Non-Fictional Stories-Tales, 2 (%16,8 of all) Fictional Stories-Tales, 4 (%33,3 of all) Depictions, 1 (%8,3 of all) Theater Play-Sketch were determined, and the remaining types of literature were not found in the book.



**Chart 9:** Genres in the 8th grade Tutku Publishing book

It was determined in the textbook, which was published at the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade level, from Tutku Publications, that 7 different types of literature were included 29 times in total and it was shown in Chart 9. 1 (%3,5 of all) Biography, 11 (%37,9 of all) Essays, 6 (%20,6 of all) Cards-Notes-Posters, 1 (%3,5 of all) Letter, 1 (%3,5 of all) Poetry, 7 (%24,1 of all) Depictions, 2 (%6,9 of all) Theatre Plays-Sketches were found but the other types of literature were not.

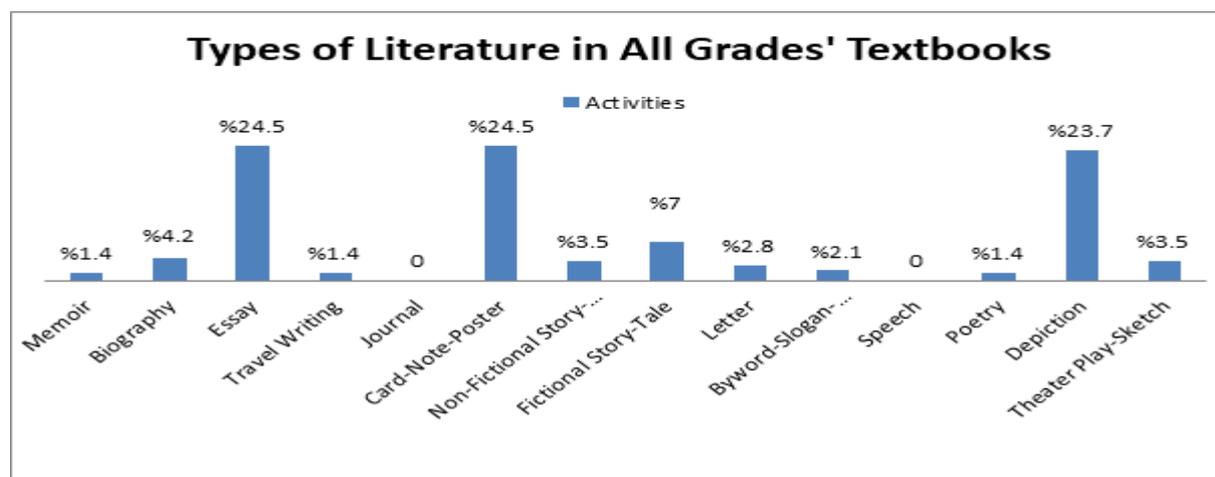
Considering the 10 books examined, 328 writing activities were examined, 143 of these activities were evaluated as creative writing activities. The other 185 activities were not included in the evaluation of creative writing because they consist of filling or matching activities and 143 creative writing activities were used as a dataset. There were 7 creative writing activities at the 4<sup>th</sup>-grade level, 20 at the 5<sup>th</sup>-grade level, 18 at the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade level, 57 at the 7<sup>th</sup>-grade level, and 41 at the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade level. Although it was observed that the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade English textbooks have relatively more creative writing activities than the 4<sup>th</sup>-grade level books have, this increase between grade levels was found to be ups and downs rather than regular. When the textbooks are classified into two categories as the books published by MoNEP and private publishing houses, it turns out that there is a significant difference.

No activity was found in the textbook at the 4<sup>th</sup>-grade level from the MoNEP, and 7 creative writing activities were found in the textbook from the private publishing house. Six creative writing activities were determined in the 5<sup>th</sup>-grade textbook published by MoNEP, and 14 activities were identified in the one from the private publishing house. There were 5 creative writing activities in the book at the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade level from MoNEP and 13 in the book from private publishing. The richest grade level of the textbooks series in terms of creative writing activities was determined as the 7<sup>th</sup>-grade level; 27 of 57 activities were in the textbook published by MoNEP and 30 were found in the textbook published by the private publishing house. Although it is not as high

as the 7<sup>th</sup>-grade textbooks, there are more activities in 8<sup>th</sup>-grade level books than the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>-grade books.

According to the Elaboration Theory of Charles M. Reigeluth (1983) a curriculum should be designed as pursuant of an increasing system of complexity for the good of learning. This approach offers simple to complex sequence that is applied to main structure of a period and for curriculum. The strategy provides a simple and general education and an outlook or prospect of main topic of educational content and in the following of training gradually deals with more expansion and description of topic. This theory suggests using spiral approach in designing a curriculum and educational materials as well. In a spiral curriculum, topics, subjects, or themes are revisited iteratively during the course. A spiral curriculum is more than just a series of lessons on the same subject. It also necessitates its growth, with each encounter building on the one before it (Bruner, 1960). Thereby, it can be stated that the contents of the textbooks are supposed to be prepared by respecting the principle of spiral approach in foreign language teaching, as the number of activities increases as the grade level increases. Therefore, the selection of subject and writing focus at the 4<sup>th</sup>-grade level, such as preparing birthday cards, posters with graphics and pictures, introducing people or family members shows that this principle is respected. However, it is important to include examples of bywords and aphorisms in textbooks thus, this makes it easy facilitating the transition of students by using short sentences to write thinkpiece, and also letting them start poetry. The contents in 5<sup>th</sup>-grade level books are rich in terms of both the number of activities used and the types of literature in comparison to the contents of 4<sup>th</sup>-grade level books. 6<sup>th</sup>-grade textbooks are at the same level as 5<sup>th</sup>-grade books in terms of the number of literature types, but relatively few examples are found in the books of this level. In this case, it can be concluded that the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade textbooks are not at the expected level in regard to including creative writing activities despite the increase in the grade levels and no progress was made in literature types and diversity.

The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade textbooks are the richest books in the series in terms of both the number of samples and the number of literature types. Especially the 7<sup>th</sup>-grade English textbook from Kök Publishing stands out as the richest book in terms of creative writing activities by including 11 different types of creative literature and 30 different examples. The 8<sup>th</sup>-grade level is expressed as a level where students reach A2 level and is the stage just before moving to secondary education, where English grammar development is largely grounded. In this context, it can be easily stated that 8<sup>th</sup>-grade level English textbooks are expected to be the richest books in terms of creative writing activities, number of genres and number of uses of these genres. However, it can be seen that, in both textbooks, a total of 9 different types of literature were included 41 times, and it was observed that these books were insufficient in terms of creative writing activities to meet students' development levels.



**Chart 10:** Genres in all books

12 of the 14 different categories in the Creative Literature Types, created by the researcher, are included in textbooks at all grade levels, but it is striking that Journal and Speech genres are not included in any grade-level textbooks. Whereas students need to express themselves easily and put their feelings into words, thus using journal writing activities in textbooks is important in terms of English grammar practice because students generally have the chance to use and practice tenses as they describe what they did before, what they are doing at the moment, and what will they do in the future. And also; it is also important to include the Speech genre in the textbooks. To improve the person's rhetoric, to make clear speeches against people and to express himself/herself easily, it is necessary to give importance to the use of Speech genre. The frequency of using other types of literature is shown in Chart 10. According to this chart, the most common types of literature used

in the textbooks of all grade levels were Card-Note-Poster (%24,5 of all) and Essay (%24,5 of all). The frequency of the other types of literature is as follows; Depictions 34 (%23,7 of all) times, Fictional Story-Tale 10 (%7 of all) times, Biography 6 (%4,2 of all) times, Theater Play-Sketch and Non-Fictional Story-Story 5 each (%3,5 of all), Letter 4 (%2,8 of all) times, Byword-Slogan-Aphorism 3 (%2,1 of all) times, Memoir (%1,4 of all), Travel Writing (%1,4 of all) and Poetry (%1,4 of all) are twice in all grade-level books.

In addition to these, it has been analyzed whether the expected learning outcomes of the writing skill according to the grades (MoNE, 2018) in the English Course Education Program of the Ministry of National Education and the writing activities in the books are compatible with each other. As a result, the activities related to writing skills given to students according to the expected learning outcomes and grade levels are compared in the table below. There is no writing skill learning outcome given in the 4th, and 5th grade syllabuses that's why those grades' syllabuses are not included in the table. Likewise, there is no writing skill learning outcome in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade syllabus from the first unit to the 6<sup>th</sup> unit.

Table 1. Comparison of books and desired outcomes

Grades	Writing Skill Learning Outcomes in the English Language Syllabus	Writing Activities in the Books
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Unit 6/ Students will be able to produce a piece of writing about occupations and the dates. Unit 7/Students will be able to write short and simple pieces in various forms about holidays. Unit 8/Students will be able to write about past events with definite time. Students will be able to write about the locations of people and things. Unit 9/ Students will be able to write simple pieces about the protection of the environment. Unit 10/Students will be able to write simple pieces about concepts related to democracy.	1 Memoirs, 5 Essays, 6 Cards-Notes-Posters, 1 Letter, 2 Bywords-Slogans-Aphorisms, 1 Poetry, 2 Depictions.
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Unit 1/Students will be able to write simple pieces to compare people. Unit 2/Students will be able to write pieces about routines/daily activities by using frequency adverbs. Unit 3/Students will be able to write a short and simple report about past events. Unit 4/Students will be able to write pieces describing wildlife. Unit 5/Students will be able to write pieces about daily routines and preferences. Unit 6/Students will be able to write invitation cards. Unit 7 /Students will be able to write pieces about predictions and future events. Unit 8/Students will be able to write pieces about explanations with reasons. Unit 9/Students will be able to write short, simple messages about environment. Students will be able to write short description of a process. Unit 10/ Students will be able to write short and basic descriptions of facts and general truths.	1 Memoir, 5 Biographies, 10 Essays, 2 Travel Writings, 15 Cards-Notes-Posters, 2 Non-Fictional Stories-Tales, 7 Fictional Stories-Tales, 1 Letter, 1 Byword-Slogan-Aphorism, 7 Depictions, 1 Theater Play-Sketch
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Unit 1 /Students will be able to write a short and simple letter apologizing and giving reasons for not attending a party in response to an invitation. Unit 2/ Students will be able to write a short and simple paragraph about regular activities of teenagers. Unit 3/ Students will be able to write a series of simple phrases and sentences by using linkers to describe a process. Unit 4 /Students will be able to write short and simple conversations. Unit 5/Students will be able to write a basic paragraph to describe their internet habits. Unit 6/ Students will be able to write a short and simple paragraph comparing two objects. Unit 7/Students will be able to design a brochure, advertisement or a	1 Biography, 15 Essays, Cards-Notes-Posters, 1 Letter, 1 Poetry, 1 Non-Fictional Stories-Tales, 2 Fictional Stories-Tales, 11 Depictions, 3 Theater

postcard about their favorite tourist attraction(s). Unit 8/Students will be able to write short and simple poems/stories about their feelings and responsibilities. Unit 9/Students will be able to write simple descriptions of scientific achievements in a short paragraph. Unit 10/Students will be able to write a short and simple paragraph about reasons and results of natural forces and disasters.	Play-Sketches
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When we look at the Table List 1 carefully, it is clear that the expected learning outcomes and the writing activities in the books almost overlap, but the low number of literary types may reduce the impact on the permanence of learning and the usability of the desired learning outcome.

### Suggestions

If we ask ourselves the reason why we write, the first answer to this question may be to convey the information we need to transmit to someone we are not able to speak at that moment. The second answer (especially when we think of the needs of society as a whole) is that the knowledge and memories are not forgotten throughout our lives, as the human brain has to store more than it can remember; it may be healthy storage and transfer (Brookes & Grundy, 1998). In foreign language education, writing activity is learned at school even if it is a native native language. For this reason, many teachers and students think that students' writing skills should be taken into consideration during the planning period of writing. Course contents and textbooks should be designed and prepared for the development of students so that the content can be made unique at each grade level over the years.

Table 2. Model English Language Teaching Program (for 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>-grades)

Levels [CEFR*] (Hours/Week)	Grades	Skill focus	Main activities/Strategies
1 [A1] (2)	2	Listening and Speaking	
	3	Listening and Speaking Very Limited Reading and Writing <sup>o</sup>	TPR/Arts and crafts/Drama
	4	Listening and Speaking Very Limited Reading and Writing <sup>o</sup>	
2 [A1] (3)	5	Listening and Speaking Limited Very Limited Writing <sup>o</sup>	Drama/Role-play
	6	Listening and Speaking Limited Limited Writing <sup>o</sup>	
3 [A2] (4)	7	Primary: Listening and Speaking Reading and Writing	Theme-based <sup>∞</sup>
	8	Primary: Listening and Speaking Reading and Writing	

As seen in Table List 2, although the language focus of writing skills is very limited, it is included in the scope of teaching activities in the Model English Language Teaching Program (for 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>-grades) located in the English Course Teaching Curriculum released by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education (MoNE., 2018). However, when the books were reviewed, it was found that the 4th grade English textbooks did not have enough writing activities, besides filling in the blanks, word matching or open-ended questions. Considering the competency of students on their native language and the familiarity of the foreign language even if they are in the initial stage of learning a foreign language, it is possible to make it easier for them to move to the next grade levels with easy-to-write literature types such as Poetry, Card-Poster and Aphorism.

Kirby, Liner and Linz (1988) suggested that not all types of writing should be tried at the beginning of creative writing activities. Otherwise, they stated that the students would get bored and deviate from the focus of the activity. Thus, a good start to writing types can be achieved by using some creative writing techniques such as free writing, brainstorming, and anecdotal use after the initial activities.

Orhon (2008) provides ideas that can help developing creative writing skills, writing poetry by looking through an imaginary window, writing stories with the group, writing stories by deriving words, creating original sayings, creating a dialogue with stuff. Such activities can be included in the textbooks for being used in the classroom, or they can also be used as additional activities.

Ögeyik (2007) emphasized that poetry can be a useful tool in language teaching with her phrase "performing poetry teaching at the basic level in the context of foreign language teaching to children may require poetry to be used as a tool rather than teaching poetry." Also, Kirby, Liner and Linz (1988) stated that collaborative and classroom poetry activities can be used to start poetry activities in the course. In this activity, each student anonymously participates in poetry with a verse, and the teacher writes each verse on the board so that a whole poem is created together. Therefore, repetition and practice of basic grammar structures are also provided with such activities in order to increase the numbers of poetry writing activities and them effective in the textbooks.

Within the framework of principles of Spiral Program, which is generally used in organizing the content of foreign language lessons, taking into account the learning backgrounds of the students, the types of memoirs, travel writings, diaries and letters can be included more in English textbooks. Students can be more courageous and creative when it is necessary to write about topics that are close to them and have knowledge about. For example, students can write their experiences using guided writing activities such as "Write an interesting event that happened on your summer vacation" or "Describe a place you went with your family during your summer vacation". In addition, students may be asked to record their summer holidays as project assignments at regular intervals by using the English grammar structures they cover all year long before going on a summer vacation. In this way, a kind of preliminary to the next year's curriculum.

Based on both the European Language Portfolio and the developmental characteristics of students, it is expected that creative writing activities in textbooks should be enriched in terms of type, number and content as the grade level increases. For this purpose, it is expected that more detailed creative writing activities will be included in the textbooks at each grade level in order to increase the foreign language grammar competencies of the students and to give them the frequency of applying the knowledge they have acquired. Thus, the basis can be provided for students to strengthen their mastery of all types of literature, to minimize anxiety about writing activity and to get higher grades in the writing sections of international English placement exams.

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