

The Assessment Of Writing Materials Acquired From Creative Writing Approach Based On Creative Drama Method

Yaratıcı Drama Yöntemine Dayalı Yaratıcı Yazma Yaklaşımından Elde Edilen Yazılı Ürünlerinin Değerlendirilmesi

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to evaluate writing materials acquired from creative writing process based on creative drama method from the perspective of the development in writing. In the study, document analysis which is one of the qualitative research methods. The study is performed in Denizli/Central District, during six weeks, on the fifth grade students of a primary school. The sessions are applied for three course hours per week. In evaluating writing materials, "Evaluation Criteria for Creative Writing Form (ECCF)" developed by the researcher is used. In evaluating writing materials, themes of "retiring from taboos" and "unlimitedness" are determined. Related with these themes, codes such as elusion from religious taboos, elusion from social taboos, becoming extraordinary and externalizing freedom are found out. Moreover as a result of the investigation on writing materials of the test group, it is identified that they show positive developments in the field of creative writing.

Key Words: Creative Drama, Creative Writing, Qualitative Research, Primary Education.

Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı; yaratıcı drama yöntemine dayalı yaratıcı yazma sürecinden elde edilen yazılı ürünlerin, yazmanın gelişimi açısından değerlendirilmesidir. Araştırmada, nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden doküman analizi modeli kullanılmıştır. Çalışma, Denizli/merkez ilçede, altı hafta boyunca, bir ilköğretim okulunun 5. sınıfında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Yazılı anlatım ürünlerinin değerlendirilmesinde araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen "Yaratıcı Yazma İçin Değerlendirme Ölçütleri Formu" kullanılmıştır. Yazılı anlatım ürünlerinin değerlendirilmesinde "tabulardan uzaklaşma" ve "sınırsızlık" temaları belirlenmiştir. Bu temalara bağlı olarak da dinsel tabulardan sıyrılma, toplumsal tabulardan sıyrılma, sıra dışı olma ve özgürlüğün dışa vurumu kodlarına ulaşılmıştır. Ayrıca deney grubunun yazılı anlatım ürünlerinde yapılan inceleme sonucunda yaratıcı yazma konusunda olumlu gelişmeler oldukları olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Yaratıcı Drama, Yaratıcı Yazma, Nitel Araştırma, İlköğretim.

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether there are any relationships between creative writing achievement, writing attitudes and the amount of time spent reading and writing in a day. The Creative Drama Method is used in the study. "Creative Drama appears in a group composed of the individuals who act and interpret an experience or an event in a play adding their own experiences following a leader" (Adıgüzel, 2006, p. 23). "Creative Drama is individuals' interpretation and animation of an experience, an event, an idea, sometimes an abstract concept or conduct in the "play

like” processes by using theater or drama techniques like improvisation and role play, etc. in a group work by means of reorganizing old cognitive patterns, and revising of observation, experiences, and feelings (San, 2002, p. 81; San, 1999, 267).

Creative Drama requires participants to be active rather than passive. Through Creative Drama, individuals can discover their abilities, increase their self-confidence or gain self-confidence and self-esteem, acquire the ability to make decisions independently, and prepare for any different situations which they might meet (Chalmers, 2007; Zipes, 2004; Bryant, 2003; Dayton, 1990).

Writing is a complex skill to master, and it places multiple demands on writers. Mastering the writing process requires hard work, skill development, and years of practice. Many students do not write clearly or express their ideas well when they write (Applebee, Langer&Mullis, 1986; Ganopole, 1988; Collins & Cross, 1993; Collins & Parkhurst, 1996).

Writing is the expression of feelings, thoughts, wishes and schemes in black and white. Writing needs more skill than knowledge; and the skill develops by practice (Calkins, 1986; Graves 1983; Öz, 2006). In Turkish schools, a traditional point of view toward/on writing is to consider/considering “writing as an individual activity.” However, the overriding trend of the final years is far from this view. For Dyson (1995) writing is a situation that requires a social interaction more than being an individual activity. And Rayers (1987) maintains that for precipitating the writing process, youngsters who are the newcomers of this area must “write in a shared way.” Therefore, the learner will develop a better technical view for writing, realizing his/her responsibilities much more. For Sutherland and Topping (1999), the social interaction in writing is the main point of Vygotsky’s views. “Good writing has a close connection with good speaking” (Ünalın, 2006, p. 99). Social interaction increases the quality of writing. We wanted to reflect this trend of the recent years to this study. For the purpose of reinforcing the social interaction and sharing of the individual and in-group creative writing, we used the group dynamics character of the creative drama method.

For creative writing, points at issue are originality, to Express/expressing the known in a new form, and interestingness of the content. We should not criticize even the worst products of the students, but will support them creatively (Oral, 2003).

The purpose of this study is to assess comparatively the written statements obtained from creative writing Works based on the creative drama method. In the line of given purpose, the lower problem of this study has been stated as follows: How the creative writing group who works with the creative drama method developed its creative writing?

Method

To answer the lower problems of this study, we used the document analysis method which is one of the qualitative research methods (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yıldırım& Şimşek, 2005; Mayring, 2000, Translation: Gümüő & Durgun). The written products obtained from the study as pretest and final/posttest were comparatively assessed by the qualitative research method.

Sampling and Setting

The study has been carried out in the first term of 2007-2008 education year with 5th Grade students of middle-class families of a primary state/public school at the Denizli city center. In the six-week study, we designated every week three lessons time/period (45 minute x 3), and a 135 minute-period as a session. In the experiment/test group of 32-

subject, we use the creative writing based on the creative drama method (Female=18, Male=14), and in the control group of 36-subjects (Female=19, Male=18) Turkish Course Curriculum.

The Instrument

To create a foundation for creative writing works, we examined Turkish Courses Curriculum. In consequence of this examination, we set four acquisitions (MEB, 2005). Furthermore, the researcher added another acquisition. The research process has been directed as to total fifteen acquisitions; and we have prepared the sessions in that direction. Given difficulties in the assessment of creative writing works, we used “Evaluation Criteria for Creative Writing Form (ECCF)” developed by the researcher.

After the researcher had fixed the criteria and the points on these criteria, /she/ consulted with four expert lecturers in separate fields and with four class teachers. In line with the views of these experts, we put forward “Evaluation Criteria for Creative Writing Form (ECCF)” that is formed with six separate criteria and their points (total 100 points).

We have carried out a preliminary application work to understand whether ECCF was effective in the assessment of creative writing products, and learn its defective aspects. The preliminary application work has been carried out in Denizli with 4th and 5th Grades of 6 schools which have been selected by the Stratified Sampling Method. The pre-test work has been carried out with 288 students (Female=162, Male=126).

We gave points to the written works obtained in the preliminary application that have been read carefully in line with six criteria fixed in ECCF. To understand the consistency/coherence of the points given by the researcher, we got help from another lecturer, and examined the coherence/consistency coefficient of points given by the other lecturer. We found that the coherence/consistency coefficient of given points are 75 for the first criterion, ,81 for the second, ,67 for the third, ,74 for the fourth, ,72 for the fifth, and, ,83 for the sixth. Below you see the assessment criterion:

1. CRITERION: A definite novelty and some unusual novelties in the content of writing (20 points).
2. CRITERION: To express a usual element in a new way (20 points).
3. CRITERION: To include original smiles (15 points).
4. CRITERION: To explain new ideas in an understandable manner (10 points).
5. CRITERION: To put forward feelings and ideas in an effective and fluent manner (20 points).
6. CRITERION: To give the writing a reasonable title (15 points).

Collecting Data

Creative drama and creative writing activities planned through fifteen acquisitions and carried on in six sessions by the researcher who had been trained as a leader as well. In these creative drama works, activities such as rhythm, drawing, narrative poetry, arranging a TV program have been carried out in addition to techniques as station technique, using photographs, improvisation, frozen images, motion theater, to take picture, and corridor of consciousness. In the final stages of sessions, we have assessed the activity process. The plans covered three separate stages: 1. Preparing-Warming Up, 2. Animation, 3. Assessment-Discussion (Adıgüzel, 2006).

The creative writing and activities included personal stories, science-fiction papers, and writing poems using window technique, writing stories with group, writing graffiti, and mottos, creating heroes in a story, inventing new phrases and proverbs, and exercising with key words. In the arrangement of creative writing works, we tried to include works which enliven the students, increase imagination, develop problem solving skills, and allow for synthetically thinking and commenting.

Data Analysis

We asked students the following question in the experimental group and control group for pretest and posttest assessment: “Once God was bored with all things in the earth and creatures, and He decided to recreate the earth from the beginning. However, He gave you this task of recreating the earth. As the new God of the universe, what kind of world would you create?” According to the conclusion of the assessment based on ECCF, we read written products for each criterion separately.

While we read written products of the experimental group in accordance with the Document Analysis Method, we also put forward some codes. We predicted which codes will be gathered up, deciding themes (categories) that formed the main points of the study. We also explained and interpreted the codes under the set themes, and exposed the results in line with the aim of the study. Furthermore, we put forward the quotations from these written products to support the researcher’s comments, and to show how creativeness of the students was developed?

Findings

The lower problem of the study has been set as “What is the development of the creative writing group based on creative drama method in the field of creative writing? To answer this lower problem, we read the written expression products as pre-and post-test obtained from students of the experimental group comparatively. As we mentioned above, we asked a question as pre- and post-test: “Once God was bored with all things in the earth and creatures, and He decided to recreate the earth from the beginning. However, He gave you this task of recreating the earth. As the new God of the universe, what kind of world would you create?” We formed a code list when we read the products, gathered up the connected codes, and set a theme, naming these unites compromised of the codes.

When we examined the written products obtained as pre-and post-test, we found that the codes have highlighted the theme of “moving away from taboos.” In line with this theme, the written products have been assessed for the codes of “moving away from religious taboos” and “moving away from social taboos.” As a result of interrelationship of the codes, we obtained the second theme as “infinity.” The interrelated codes which allowed for the explanation of this theme were “being extraordinary” and “expressing of freedom.” Below you find the explanations on both themes and their codes.

At the beginning and at the end of the application process, the products obtained from the experimental group were examined for the code of “moving away from religious taboos” under the theme of “moving away from taboos.” At the beginning of the process, we found that the students often emphasized religious elements; even they avoided some views because of their religious beliefs. However, at the end of the process we saw that students had expressed their feelings and views more freely in their essays; so this restrictive element must be diminished.

“(...) If I were God, I would not recreate the earth. And I would not change any thing of God, because God is more powerful than me. Therefore, I do not want to use my

imagination. I do not want any change in the earth. (...) [Female]” At the end of the process, when we examined her essay, we saw a more different situation. *If I were God, I would create candy houses, chocolate goods and huge ivies. I wish the houses were in the heavens. I wish human beings and animals to be friend in forests; and animals could talk. (...) [Female]*”

We obtained very interesting results when we examined the essays for the code of “moving away from social taboos” under the theme of “moving away from taboos.” *(...) I would compel human beings to plant twelve trees every year. And if they did not plant these trees, I would not make things easier for them until they plant these trees. I would add tree planting holiday to other holidays. I would punish who did not plant trees. (...) [Male]* When we examined the quotation, we saw some severe tendencies as “to compel,” “not make things easier,” and “to give punishment.” Although these trends served a good aim, we could see a reflection of social rules in this oppressive conduct. But at the end of the process we found a different attitude of the same student. This student wrote completely compassionate and respectful essay. A small part of it is as follows: *(...)I would change even shapes of the human beings. For example, human beings would be transformed into every thing, such as birds, insects, and cars, etc. I would make everyone magical. I wish no one were pouting to each other, and everyone to be happy (...) [Male]*” When we compared the essays of the student obtained in the beginning and at the end of the process, we found that he sometimes got away a conduct of keeping down for enforcing social rules.

(...)If I were God, I would do every thing. For example, I would create things as magic and money... I would make everyone rich. ...I wish everyone had a house, a car and some peace. Everyone would get married and be happy (...) [Male]” In the beginning of the process, we found that the student’s view on happiness was related with money. For this student, to live happy is directly proportional to owning things as money, a house, a car, and etc. as well as social standards. For him, “a happy world” means “everyone should have much money” However, our activities of creative writing based on creative drama gave students the impression that there were indeed much more important things that give happiness. These activities should have opened a different gateway to the inner world of the student that he wrote his essay as posttest in a quite different view point: *(...)I would make all lifeless beings speak and walk. I wish lions, birds and every kind of animal would be friends of mine and we would wander together. I wish the houses would be built from clouds, not from earth; and human beings would be happy in these cloud-houses. I would create a toy land, and send there the children whenever they wished. (...) [Male]*” But, in his essay as posttest, we see that the student has quite different feelings and views, and he pops out standards of social happiness.

When we examined the essays for the code of “being extraordinary,” we found a great difference between them written in the beginning and at the end of the process. *(...)If I would create a new earth, it would be a sphere like our present earth. I would create an earth without any malice. I would make everyone literate (...) [Female]*” We did not find any different formation and originality when we considered these expressions; they were within the existent world. She did not prefer changing even the shape of the earth; so it is evident that thoughts had a quite logical structure. Still at the end of the process, we found that thoughts of the student were quite out of these standards and tedium of routine. *(...) In my world, roofs of houses would be triangle, and clouds would be square, triangle and circular. I wish all trees, flowers, animals and clouds would have mouths and faces. I would make sky informed when it rained. If every living being spoke and walked, no animals would die. (...) [Female]*” We found that the student

rather forced limits of extraordinariness when we examined the essay obtained in the last stage of the process.

We give below another quotation for examining the code of “being extraordinary”: “(...) *I wish everyone would live without working. I wish it always would be partly cloudy. I wish everyone would have much money. They would stuff themselves. (...) [Male]*” We saw ordinary solutions to problems of daily life when we examined this essay. We found that he expressed his views within bog-standards of daily life. On the other hand, the essay obtained at the end of the process has reflected quite a different view. The student who wanted to change the world in line with his own views presented a different attitude toward life by using his all imagination. “(...) *I would create human beings living on the clouds. I wish chocolate would flow into the rivers instead of water. I wish water would be the fruit of trees. I wish animals would speak to human beings. And I wish houses would be built from wood instead of concrete. (...) [Male]*”. As you can see from the quotations, in the beginning of the process the essays reflected the ordinary situations of daily life. However, in the essays written in the end of the process, we saw original views which were products of pure imagination, and could not be seen easily in the daily life.

When we examined essays obtained both from the beginning and end of the process for the code of “expression of freedom” under the “infinity” theme, we found that some students had stated quite different feelings and views. “(...) *Initially, I would create human beings. Then everyone would live in a luxurious house. Every thing you wish would exist instantly. Trees, etc. would be very different. If they stole something, this would be replaced. (...) [Female]*” This essay from the beginning of the process includes quite ordinary sentences for the subject matter of creative writing. She is far away from views stating her imagination, creativeness or courage. On the other hand, when we examine her essay written at the end of the process, we find a desire for infinity in the expression of inner-self. This case which we observe in essays of many students can be seen in the essay of this student as well. “(...) *I wish animals would be friends of mine, and they would carry me wherever I wanted to go. I wish birds would greet me. I would create a world that no one interfere each other, do harm and do whatever he/she wishes. I would enjoy freedom. I would make everyone live in this way as well. (...) [Female]*”

We observed rather great changes in students’ emotional and intellectual world when we examine the last two quotations carefully. Students put forward different products, wakening creativeness giant fallen asleep inside them. In this context, we can say that the statistical results obtained from the experimental group coincide with results obtained by the document analysis method; and both assessments support each other.

Discussion and Proposals

We examined essays obtained from the experimental group as pretest and posttest for themes of “moving away from taboos” and “infinity;” and we found that students have developed positive attitude toward both themes. In the examinations for code of “moving away from taboos,” we saw that at first students avoided expressing their views freely or gave much emphasis on religious elements, fearing prohibitions and sins. Furthermore, we found effects of social taboos in their essays. However, after a creative drama and writing process free from judging in which they expressed their views freely, and got support for different views, we observed that this state has been rather changed. So, students have progressed well in expressing their own views as out of taboos, and reflected their inner-selves.

In examinations for the theme of “infinity,” at the beginning of the process we found that essays were quite far from being original. Products obtained at the beginning of the process had traces of standards and routines of daily life. But essays obtained at the end of the process were different and original; they included rich colors of imagination. In the creative writing process based on creative drama, we encouraged them different thinking, imagination, and not felt ashamed for differences. Accordingly, we supported and approved originality in the essays; so these applications should be helpful for removing the limits of their views.

We made these proposals based on the study: 2004 Turkish Curriculum should be revised to increase the students’ creativeness and to support their imagination. Program should include activities which would develop this property; and during this effort creative drama and creative writing techniques and activities should be used much more. Students should be directed towards creating views free from social and religious taboos, and questioning their experiences. In the education and instruction process, different views of the students should be seen as normal; and they should be encouraged for expressing themselves freely.

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