

The Effect of Story Wheel Method on Creative Writing Skills, Story Elements and Word Numbers

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the effect of story wheel method on creative writing skills, story elements information and word number. The research was designed as an experimental model. It consisted of seven weeks, including pre and post tests. The research group consisted of 13 third grade students attending at a school in Siirt during the 2019-2020 academic year. The data collected using a story wheel material which was developed by researchers and Creative Writing Rubric (Ozturk, 2007). In the study, at the stage of obtaining the pre-test data, the students were asked to write a story according to their wishes and the number of words they used in this story, the significance level of the texts and which story elements they included were noted. During the post-test process, students were asked to write a story according to their wishes and the same procedures were carried out at this stage. Paired sample t-test was conducted in SPSS to investigate the relationship between story wheel method and creative writing skills. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data on story elements and word numbers. The findings show that story wheel method has a positive effect on students' creative writing skills, story elements information and word numbers.

Keywords: Story Wheel, Creative Writing Skills, Story Elements

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is the one of the most precious parts of a language for enabling students to express their ideas and feelings freely. It is considered to be a complex and lengthy process that involves writing; planning, designing, reviewing and reassessing, a skill that contribute to individuals in all kinds of academic activities in order to explain ideas and bring them together by forming a meaningful sentence appropriately (Arıcı ve Ungan, 2013; Bala, 2017; Richards and Schmidt, 2002). The reasons why writing is a skill gained over such a long period of time is that it requires knowledge, accumulation, equipment and experience (Özkan, 2016).

The development of writing skills gives the individual many advantages in his or her life. Some of these advantages are development of memory and making information more permanent, ability to express yourself comfortably, to encourage the individual to communicate, to develop thinking skills and to gain the ability to present logical and convincing arguments (Akbayır, 2011; Chapel, 2011; Akt. Klimova, 2014).

Pawliczak (2015) states that creative writing practices are the most effective way to develop writing skills. Creative writing skill is described as a skill that offers students the opportunity to understand and explore the value and functions of writing and contributes to the development of students' reading and writing skills (Essex, 1996; Shanahan, 2006; Shatil, Share ve Levin, 2000; Tompkins, 1982; Akt. Barbot, Tan, Randi, Donato ve Grigorenko, 2012). Creative writing skill is an accomplishment which is outside of the generally accepted values by most of the people, it is rare and beyond the cliché and it is only accomplished by those who come up with different ideas by using their imagination (Küçük, 2007). Although creative writing is a skill specific to the individual, it is limited for individuals who do not have this skill because it is a skill that requires being a good reader. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that individuals think differently in order to develop creative writing skills. In addition, they should be encouraged to write unique texts and develop problem-solving skills on topics they have not encountered before, and they should be encouraged to read on different subjects to develop their creative writing skills (Diakidoy ve Kanari, 1999; Winterson, 2012; Akt. Akkaya, 2014). It has been observed that individuals with advanced creative writing skills have a higher level of language acquisitions such as grammar and vocabulary compared to other individuals (Smith, 2013). The vocabulary possessed by individuals can be defined as knowing the meanings of the written and oral words. This definition implies the conceptual knowledge of the word beyond the simple definitions of words in the dictionary (Snow, Griffin ve Burns, 2005). Knowing more words allows us to understand what we read and listen better. It also enables us to express ourselves better in speaking and writing (Heng, 2011). When some studies in different regions are examined, it has been observed that the narrative and informative texts written by individuals with sufficient vocabulary in the 5th, 8th and 11th grades are higher in quality (Grobe, 1981; Akt. Olinghouse ve Wilson, 2013). In addition, Olinghouse and Leaird (2009) stated in their study that vocabulary diversity has an important role on the meaningful story writing skill at the second and fourth grade levels. Moreover, Karakoç and Köse (2017) state that vocabulary plays a key role in ensuring active use of language in writing.

When the relevant literature was examined, it was observed that individuals with creative writing skills also have skills such as other writing skills, the ability to have sufficient vocabulary and writing stories of higher quality in terms of meaning. The aim of this study is to determine whether the story wheel developed by the researchers has an increase in the creative writing skills of elementary school 3rd grade students, their use of story elements and the number of words they use while writing the story.

METHODOLOGY

Research Model

This research in which the effect of the story wheel method on understanding the elements of a story and creative writing skill was studied was designed using a pre-test and post-test experimental design without control group as a quantitative research. In this design, the effectiveness of the experimental intervention made is tested with a single group. The measurements for the dependent variable of the participants of research are tested before and after the application as pre-test and post-test by using the same measuring device with the same participants (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz ve Demirel, 2012). The experimental process of the research is given below.

Table 1. Experimental process of research

Group	Pre-test	Intervention	Post-test
G	O1	X	O2
	An original story example	Story examples written in five weeks with the story wheel	An original story example

Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of primary school 3rd grade students studying in the city center of Siirt in the 2019-2020 academic year, and the sample consists of 13 third grade students who were selected among these students using the convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a sampling method based on choosing a situation that is close to the researcher and easy to access (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2013). The reason for using convenience sampling in the research is to quickly access the closest data due to the lockdown.

Data Collection Tools

In the research, the story wheel material which was developed by the researchers and the Creative Writing Rubric developed by Öztürk (2007) were used during the collection of data.

Story Wheel

The story wheel is a tool designed to overlap from small to large, with all the story elements in a story. It was developed by researchers to provide students with comprehensive knowledge of story elements and improve their creative writing skills. In this measuring tool, the innermost circle is the part where the readers determine the main character and supporting characters that they want to include in the story, the second circle is the scene and setting indicating where the story takes place, the third circle is the part how the problem starts, the fourth circle is the part what is the problem in the story, the fifth circle is the way to solve the problem and the sixth circle is the part where the result is included. Two classroom teachers and two experts helped during the development of this wheel. The story wheel is shown in Figure 1.

Pre-test and Post-test Data for Word Numbers and Story Elements

Before teaching with the story wheel, the students were asked to write a story on any topic they wanted, and these stories were analyzed according to word count and story elements. After the pre-test and post-test applications, the data obtained about the story elements and how many words they wrote in the texts are presented below.

Table 2. Pre-test and post-test data on word numbers

Students	Word Numbers pre-test results	Word numbers post-test results
S1	76	117
S2	35	132
S3	104	110
S4	24	186
S5	71	144
S6	109	271
S7	84	332
S8	56	145
S9	50	93
S10	76	60
S11	23	103
S12	46	98
S13	34	51

When the pre-test and post-test data for the number of words obtained from the study were examined, it was seen that the stories written by the students for the pre-test application were between 23 words and 109 words. It was observed that the stories they wrote for the post-test application were between 51 words and 332 words. It was determined that there was only a decrease in the post-test data of S10 among the students. The reason for this decrease is that this student wrote a known story at first in the post-test text. The student, who was warned by the researcher, deleted the text he wrote and started to create an original text. Because the time given to him to write the story was shortened, he could not finish the story and had to deliver a story with few words. When the pre-test and post-test results of other students were examined, it was observed that all students wrote longer stories in the post-test applications.

Table 3. Pre-test and post-test data on story elements

	Story elements pre-test results						Story elements post-test results					
	Characters	Settings	The beginning the problem	Problem	Solution	The end of the story	Characters	Settings	The beginning the problem	Problem	Solution	The end of the story
S1	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+
S2	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
S3	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	+
S4	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
S5	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
S6	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
S7	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
S8	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
S9	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

S10	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
S11	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	+
S12	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
S13	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-

As a result of the pre-test, it was observed that almost all of the students included the characters in their stories, only four students mentioned the setting, three students mentioned the fact what started the problem in their stories, only two students mentioned the ways to solve the existing problem and the number of students who included a conclusion part to the story was four. In the pre-test phase, it was observed that some students could specify only the characters from the story elements. This finding shows that they have some problems with story elements. When the post-test data obtained from the students were examined, it was observed that the majority of the students included almost all story elements.

Pre-test and Post-test for Creative Writing Skills

Before teaching with the story wheel, the students were asked to write a story on any topic they wanted, and these stories were analyzed according to Creative Writing Rubric. After the pre-test and post-test applications, the data obtained about the creative writing skills are presented below.

Table 4. Pre-test and post-test results of creative writing skills

Students	Pre-test	Post-test
S1	6	14
S2	6	8
S3	6	8
S4	6	13
S5	6	18
S6	9	8
S7	8	17
S8	9	16
S9	8	10
S10	6	6
S11	6	10
S12	6	7
S13	6	8

When the pre-test results obtained from the students were scored through the creative writing scale, it was observed that the students got very low scores. While only a few students could get 2 points in some sub-dimensions, all students got 1 point in the originality dimension of the ideas. When the post-test data were examined, it was observed that the students improved, and only one student got the same score as the pre-test score. To determine whether these data show a significant difference, dependent variables t-test was conducted. The results of this test are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Creative writing skills t-test results

Creative writing skills	N	\bar{X}	S	df	t	P
Pre-test	13	6,76	1,23	12	-3,851	0,002
Post-test	13	11	4,1			

As a result of the analysis, it was observed that the story wheel method provides a significant increase in students' creative writing skills, $t(12) = -3,85$, $p < .05$. While the creative writing average score of the students was $\bar{X} = 6.76$ before the research, the average score obtained after the applications with the story wheel increased to $\bar{X} = 11$.

Students' Views on the Story Wheel

Some of the student views on the story wheel are presented below.

S1. Writing stories using story wheels was better. Because it was a lot of fun. It would be nice if there were more characters in the wheel

S2. Story wheels have developed our imagination. So we wrote better stories. It was a good activity for us.

S4. That was so fun. It improved our story writing skills. It would be nice if there were more characters in the wheel. It would be better if the wheel was bigger.

S6: It improved my writing skill. I wish the story wheel was bigger. I wish we could write more stories with story wheel.

S7. It would be nice if there were more different places / settings. I improved my reading and writing skills with story wheel.

S9. Writing stories with story wheel was a little tiring for me. It was a little difficult to write new stories.

S10. I improved my writing with story wheel. We could decide together how it would be shaped.

S11. I wish we could have made the story wheel ourselves. So the story wheels could be the size we wanted.

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This research was conducted to help primary school 3rd grade students to develop their creative writing skills, to gain familiarity with story elements and to increase the number of words they include in their stories. When the results of the study were examined, it was observed that the story wheel method improved creative writing skills. It is necessary to ensure that individuals think differently in order to develop creative writing skills. In addition, they should be encouraged to write unique texts and develop problem-solving skills on topics they have not encountered before, and they should be encouraged to read on different subjects to develop their creative writing skills (Diakidoy ve Kanari, 1999; Winterson, 2012; Akt. Akkaya, 2014). The story wheel which was developed in this study prevented having a rotary structure in itself and thus students were prevented from writing stories with words that exist in their minds or words that they are familiar with. The words on the wheel are in fixed position. First, the students were asked to spin the wheel. After the wheel stopped, they were asked to create a meaningful story using the words in front of them. In this way, students were encouraged to write unique texts that enable them to think differently on topics other than their interests. In addition, students stated that writing activities became much more enjoyable. Mahendra and Rosa (2014) state that the story wheel provides a fun environment for students who are reluctant

to write because of its fun nature. Also, the story wheel helps students to be more creative in combining and developing stories in written form. This finding support the results of the research.

As a result of the research, it was observed that the story wheels which were given to the students during the application process, raise the students' awareness of paying attention to the story elements and increase the number of words in their stories. Mahendra and Rosa (2014) also state that the story wheel provides them with many interesting story element options.

The fact that story wheel applications contributed to students' creative writing skills indirectly had a positive effect on their vocabulary. Smith (2013) observed that individuals with advanced creative writing skills have higher language acquisitions such as grammar and vocabulary than other individuals. Craik and Lockhart (1972) states that creative writing is effective at all levels of language development, especially grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and speech (Akt. Tok ve Kandemir, 2014). In the study, the development of students' vocabulary has increased the number of words in the stories they wrote. Knowing more words allows us to understand what we read and listen better. It also enables us to express ourselves better in speaking and writing (Heng, 2011). Olinghouse and Leaird (2009) stated that having a rich vocabulary has a significant effect on meaningful and creative story writing skill at the second and fourth grade levels. If a story is long, this does not mean that the story is rich in meaning. However, when the results are examined, it can be said that stories written using more words are also meaningful stories, as the students' vocabulary increased and their creative writing skills improved. As a result, the story wheel method has a positive effect on creative writing skills and also it can be said the story wheel method has an effect on word numbers and story elements information indirectly. So this method can be used to improve students' creative writing skills.

Since this research was carried out during the pandemic process, it was not possible to increase the sample size. More useful research can be provided by using larger sample groups and improved story wheels.

Keywords that are considered to be important in these courses can be determined among the acquisitions determined for courses such as mathematics, science or social studies, and story wheels can be created about these words. In this way, students can improve their vocabulary for some important concepts in these lessons. In addition, it is thought that these lessons will become more fun for students with the story wheel method.

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