

Comparison of Writing Skills of Students of Different Socioeconomic Status ¹

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Abstract

This study compares the writing skills of students with different socioeconomic statuses, using the quantitative research method designs of “survey study” and “causal-comparative study”. The study group included 67 Turkish teachers and a total of 120 eighth-grade students from four different middle schools in the province of Gaziantep, Turkey, and the study was conducted during the 2016–2017 academic year. The socioeconomic status determination survey was applied to the students in order to ascertain their socioeconomic status. The students’ written texts and the teachers’ responses to the questionnaire were used as the study data. The written expression texts were evaluated by two experts according to the written expression evaluation form. NCSS (Number Cruncher Statistical System) 2007 (Kaysville, Utah, USA) software was used to analyze the data. In the analysis of the data, in addition to descriptive statistical methods (mean, standard deviation, median, frequency, ratio, minimum, and maximum values), Mann-Whitney U test was used for the paired comparison of data which did not display a normal distribution. The results revealed there to be a significant difference between the students with high and low socioeconomic status, in favor of the group with high socioeconomic status in terms of the form, content formation, content organization, word choice, and grammar dimensions of the written expressions. The results failed to show a significant difference between the two groups in terms of the students’ skills in “conducting research on the writing subject” and “building a draft of the text to be written” but did show a significant difference in “evaluating their writing”, in favor of the students with high socioeconomic status.

Keywords: Socioeconomic status, language skills, writing skills

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Introduction

Although the idea of equality of opportunities in education has been a main goal, even from ancient times, and a great amount of effort has been put into securing this, the differences in opportunities in education are still present today and maintained on the basis of social classes. The efforts of many national and international institutions to provide equality of opportunities in education have not succeeded to the extent desired. Factors such as the social class of the parents and their corresponding socioeconomic and cultural conditions based on the area of residence, and the parents' educational level, professions, values, and future goals impact adults' and particularly children's chances of benefitting from education opportunities and of achieving success in the educational process (Kemerlioglu, 1996, p. 106). Social and cultural factors are, quite naturally, the primary components of the sociocultural environment; that is, social and cultural approaches, beliefs and customs in a society form the sociocultural environment. When discussing the socio-economic environment, the economic dimensions tend to be emphasized. A social environment encompasses all of the social conditions corresponding to the social roles affecting individuals of a group, which includes any societies and institutions that the individual interacts with in his or her culture (Güler, 2013).

Child-rearing constitutes part of the common values system represented by individuals of a particular socioeconomic status (SES). For example, parents with a low SES tend to apply stricter education demands, apply more punishment in educating their children, particularly physical punishment (Elder, 1965), and engage in less verbal communication with their children. On the other hand, parents with a high SES mostly focus on rewards, privation of love, or rational justifications to develop the desired behaviors in their children (Liebert et al., 1977, p. 427, as cited in Kuzgun, 1986). The effect of this and similar behavior patterns observed in children's education has inevitable consequences on the development of their knowledge skills. In this context, family experiences and behaviors stemming from socioeconomic characteristics are thought to play a dominant role in the development of children's basic language skills.

Social linguistics is a field of study that combines the concept of sociology, which investigates the aforementioned social environment and its different social strata, and the concept of linguistics, which investigates the effects these features of sociology have on linguistic behaviors. Social linguistics examines language in terms of its function in society. Society and language are two concepts that cannot be distinguished. In other words, social life cannot be considered outside of language nor language outside of social life. Social linguistics, since it focuses the effect of the environment on an individual's use of language, first examines the structure of the society and the corresponding structure of the language (Selen, 1989, p. 1). There are theories that are prominent in the field of social linguistics, Basil Bernstein's sociolinguistic theory of deficiency and William Labov's theory of separation, the latter of which is generally a critical response to the first theory (Güven, 2012). In applying the deficiency theory to the relationship between a society's social strata and speech forms, it is highlighted that the language attainment and use of individuals from low or proletarian layers differ from those of individuals from high layers. In a study comparing the speech patterns of individuals within low, mid, and high social strata, it was found that individuals from a low stratum, compared to those from high and mid strata, had a narrower vocabulary and communicated using simpler sentences (Öztürk Dağabakan, 2012, p. 90). The theory of separation, on the other hand, is used to explain the variety of language in terms of linguistics. In the framework of this theory, an investigation into how and to what degree linguistic systems function is carried out, looking specifically at the regional, social, and functional forms, in addition to standard form/forms, that exist in a spoken language (İmer, 1987).

How the social environment and different social strata affect individuals' education and development becomes apparent in their communicative and linguistic behaviors. Based on the view that the social environment of individuals might have an effect on recipient language and generative language skills, it is assumed that there are certain differences between individuals who were raised and live in different socioeconomic environments, in terms of their basic language skills and various

readiness levels (Eryaman, 2008). In fact, Erkan (2011) investigated the school readiness level of students with low and high SES and found that the children with high SES had a higher readiness level, compared to their peers with low SES. On the other hand, a study by Katırcı Ağačkıran (2016) revealed that first-grade students' scores on reading comprehension and reading speed differed by SES, and that as SES increases, students' scores on reading comprehension and reading speed improve. In a study by Calvo and Bialystok, (2014), where six-year-old children were classified into four groups based on SES, the results failed to indicate any difference between the children's basic intelligence levels but did find that SES had an effect on language skills and fulfilling tasks. Similarly, Çelen (1993, p. 86) indicated that SES starts to affect the language development of a child starting at 18 months, and that children who are raised in relatively good environments have a richer vocabulary, and a better syntax and sentence structure. Hoff-Ginsberg (1998) conducted a study on children between the ages of 18–29 months and observed that children raised by parents with mid and high SES have a higher level of lexical and grammatical development. The results of the aforementioned study further indicated that SES and social environment are important variables in the attainment or development of basic language skills.

Writing is one of the basic language skills on which the effect of socioeconomic difference should also be observed. Writing attainment involves multiple variables. First, since writing it is an expression of emotion and thoughts through symbols, it requires knowledge about writing. Secondly, writing is related to thought, as it is a reflection of our thoughts and designs. Lastly, it is a tool that involves a psychological aspect, considering that it is an expression of wishes and desires. In addition to these, it is rule-based, limiting the individual with various rules regarding writing, grammar, and text. At the same time, it is artistic in that it enables the choice of wording and individual creativity (Hamzadayı, 2010). Writing, being interbedded with mental processes in addition to language skills, contributes to the development of many skills. It particularly helps students to expand their thoughts, organize and enrich their knowledge, use the language, and broaden their vocabulary (Güneş, 2014, p. 159). Results reported by some studies in the literature put forward that students experience certain problems in the writing process, including inadequate planning, lack of paragraph knowledge, the inability to order thoughts, repetition (Yılmaz, 2013, p. 259), and titles lacking correspondence to content. The SES of students could serve as the basis of these problems. In fact, SES might have an effect on many variables, from the study conditions of the students, to their attitudes toward the lesson.

Determining and resolving the problems experienced in the field of education requires that all these variables be taken into consideration. Therefore, today, where social stratification in terms of economics and social status is an inevitable feature of society, there is a need for studies that investigate, describe, and compare the behaviors of individuals with low and high SES.

Significance and Purpose of the Study

The literature review conducted as part of this study revealed that much of the research on this subject in question has involved examination of the effectiveness of methods, techniques, and strategies on the writing process (Conti, 2004; Eryaman, 2007; Maden & Durukan, 2010; Hamzadayı & Çetinkaya, 2011; Temizkan, 2011; Topuzkanamış, 2014; Bai, 2015; Dölek & Hamzadayı, 2016) and evaluation of students' attitudes and anxiety towards writing (Schweiker-Marra & Marra, 2000; Kurt & Atay, 2007; İşeri & Ünal, 2012; Ceran, 2013; Bayat, 2014). While there were some studies focusing on the importance of socioeconomic status in terms of language skills, there was only a limited number of studies encountered that examined the writing skills of students of different socioeconomic status (Deniz, 2003). The results obtained in this study shall serve to assist practitioners tasked with improving the writing skills of students. In this context, this study aimed to compare the writing skills of students of different socioeconomic status. In line with this main aim, the following research questions were developed for the study:

- 1) Is there a significant difference between the scores of students of different socioeconomic status of the "form" dimension of writing?

- 2) Is there a significant difference between the scores of students of different socioeconomic status on the “content formation” dimension of writing?
- 3) Is there a significant difference between the scores of students of different socioeconomic status on the “content organization” dimension of writing?
- 4) Is there a significant difference between the scores of students of different socioeconomic status on the “word choice” dimension of the writing?
- 5) Is there a significant difference between the scores of students of different socioeconomic status on the “grammar” dimension of writing?
- 6) Is there a significant difference between the written expression general scores of students of different socioeconomic status?
- 7) Is there a significant difference between students’ skills of “writing different types of texts” in terms of their socioeconomic status?
- 8) Is there a significant difference between students’ skills of “evaluating their own writing” in terms of their socioeconomic status?
- 9) Is there a significant difference between students’ skills of “conducting research on the writing subject and developing a draft of the text to be written” in terms of their socioeconomic status?

Method

Design of the Study

This study compared the writing skills of middle-school students of different socioeconomic status by applying the quantitative research method designs of “survey study” and “causal-comparative study”. Survey studies quantitatively describe tendencies, attitudes, or views of a sample derived from a population, with the researcher drawing inferences from this sample (Creswell, 2016, p. 155). A questionnaire is generally applied in these studies (Bal, 2009, p. 60). The questionnaire is a self-statement-based data collection tool that each participant of the study fills out (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p. 162). Causal-comparative studies, on the other hand, aim to determine the reasons for differences between groups of individuals and their conclusions, without making any interventions in either the conditions or the participants. While the results from causal-comparative studies can help to identify differences, they are unable to precisely indicate the factors leading to these differences (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016, p. 16–17).

Study Group

The study group included 67 Turkish teachers and 120 eighth-grade students from four different middle schools in the province of Gaziantep, Turkey. The study was conducted during the 2016–2017 academic year. The purposeful sampling technique was used to select the schools from which the teachers and the students would be chosen for participation in the study. By selecting data-rich situations, purposeful sampling enables an in-depth investigation. The aim of this sampling technique is to discover and explain natural and social events or phenomena in the context of the situations selected (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016, p. 90). In applying purposeful sampling, the socioeconomic environment of the schools was considered. In this context, students from academically the most successful classroom of the schools selected in two different socioeconomic regions participated in the study.

Information on the average monthly income of the students of different socioeconomic status is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Average Monthly Incomes

	Low-level	High-level
Average monthly income	1433 TL	3591 TL

Table 1 shows the parents' educational status and family size data by income level group (average monthly income of 1433 TL and 3591 TL).

Table 2. Data on Educational Status of Parents and Family Size

		Low-level f(%)	High-level f(%)
Father's educational level	Illiterate	-	-
	Literate but did not attend school	-	-
	Primary school	26	6
	Middle school	30	16
	High School	4	16
	University (undergraduate)	-	20
	University and above (graduate)	-	2
Mother's educational level	Illiterate	16	-
	Literate but did not attend school	4	2
	Primary school	32	12
	Middle school	6	20
	High School	2	16
	University (undergraduate)	-	6
Average number of people living at home		5.7	4.8

In looking at the fathers' educational levels in Table 2, it can be seen that there is a greater concentration of fathers who only had completed primary and middle school in the low-level SES, whereas in the high-level SES, there is a greater concentration of fathers who had completed high school and university. Similarly, for the mothers' educational level, there is a greater concentration of them who were illiterate or had completed only primary school at the low-level SES, while at the high-level SES, there was a greater concentration of them who had completed middle-school and high school. In addition, in the low-level SES, the average number of people in the families was slightly higher than that of the high-SES group.

Data Collection and Analysis

Part of the data for the study was obtained from the students' written texts. The Written Expression Evaluation Form, developed by the researchers, was used to analyze the written texts. Three experts examined the form and based on their feedback, certain items were changed before finalizing the form. In order to obtain some of the data, like "planned writing" and "students' evaluation of their writings", which were not possible to derive from written texts, a nine-item questionnaire was used for the students' writing process. Opinions from five experts were taken to ensure the content validity of the questionnaire and its understandability. Based on the experts' feedback, some of the items were corrected while others were excluded from the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to a pilot sample taken from the target audience before being finalized.

A socioeconomic status survey was applied to the students in order to determine their socioeconomic status. This survey included questions on the educational level of parents and their monthly income. The average monthly incomes were considered in the classification of students by socioeconomic status.

NCSS (Number Cruncher Statistical System) software was used to analyze the study data (Kaysville, Utah, USA). In addition to descriptive statistical methods (mean, standard deviation, median, frequency, ratio, minimum, and maximum values), Mann-Whitney U test was used for the paired comparison of data which did not display a normal distribution. The significance level was accepted as $p < .05$.

Results and Interpretation

The results of the study are presented in two parts. The first part includes the significance of the differences between the students' written texts, while the second part includes the results of the teachers' responses to the questionnaire.

Results from the Students' Written Texts

Table 2. Analysis of the students' scores on the items in the written expression evaluation form according to the socioeconomic status of the schools

Skills		School's Socioeconomic Status		<i>p</i>
		Low (n=60)	High (n=60)	
<i>Form</i>				
1. Setting appropriate margins, and paragraphs and line spaces	<i>Min-Max</i>	1-4 (2)	1-5 (2.5)	0.001**
	<i>(Median)</i>			
	<i>Mean±SD</i>	2.06±0.68	2.67±0.93	
2. Writing smooth and legibly	<i>Min-Max</i>	1-4.5 (2.5)	1.5-5 (3.3)	0.001**
	<i>(Median)</i>			
	<i>Mean±SD</i>	2.49±0.69	3.22±0.81	
<i>Content Formation</i>				
3. Giving depth to the subject	<i>Min-Max</i>	1-3.5 (2)	1.5-5 (2.5)	0.003**
	<i>(Median)</i>			
	<i>Mean±SD</i>	2.27±0.57	2.74±0.83	
4. Supporting the main ideas and emotions with supplementary ideas and emotions	<i>Min-Max</i>	1-3 (2)	1.5-5 (2.5)	0.001**
	<i>(Median)</i>			
	<i>Mean±SD</i>	2.23±0.48	2.81±0.92	
5. Reaching the main idea intended to be communicated in the text	<i>Min-Max</i>	1-3.5 (2.5)	1.5-5 (3)	0.001**
	<i>(Median)</i>			
	<i>Mean±SD</i>	2.36±0.50	3.08±0.81	
6. Starting the text with an appropriate introductory statement	<i>Min-Max</i>	1-4 (2.5)	1.5-5 (3)	0.003**
	<i>(Median)</i>			
	<i>Mean±SD</i>	2.51±0.59	2.94±0.90	
7. Having an impressive conclusion statement that summarizes the topic	<i>Min-Max</i>	1.5-3.5 (2)	1.5-5 (2.5)	0.001**
	<i>(Median)</i>			
	<i>Mean±SD</i>	2.25±0.46	2.79±0.89	
<i>Content Organization</i>				
8. Having a title related to the topic	<i>Min-Max</i>	1-4 (2)	1-4.5 (3.5)	0.001**
	<i>(Median)</i>			
	<i>Mean±SD</i>	2.19±1.12	2.98±1.26	
9. Presenting the topic in a logically consistent and harmonious manner	<i>Min-Max</i>	1.5-3 (2)	1.5-5 (3)	0.001**
	<i>(Median)</i>			
	<i>Mean±SD</i>	2.30±0.44	3.01±0.86	
10. Addressing a single thought or emotion in each paragraph	<i>Min-Max</i>	1.5-3 (2)	1.5-5 (2.5)	0.001**
	<i>(Median)</i>			
	<i>Mean±SD</i>	2.07±0.30	2.63±0.79	
11. Avoiding repetition of thoughts in the text	<i>Min-Max</i>	1.5-3 (2)	1.5-5 (3)	0.001**
	<i>(Median)</i>			
	<i>Mean±SD</i>	2.24±0.37	2.91±0.71	
<i>Word Choice</i>				
12. Using words in the right place and with the right meaning	<i>Min-Max</i>	1-4 (3)	1.5-5 (3.5)	0.001**
	<i>(Median)</i>			
	<i>Mean±SD</i>	2.88±0.55	3.48±0.69	
13. Avoiding the use of words that might have the same meaning in a sentence	<i>Min-Max</i>	1.5-3.5 (2)	2-5 (3)	0.001**
	<i>(Median)</i>			
	<i>Mean±SD</i>	2.32±0.43	3.15±0.73	

Grammar				
14. Obeying writing rules	<i>Mean±SD</i>	1.5-4 (2.5)	2-5 (3)	0.001**
	<i>Min-Max (Median)</i>	2.50±0.54	3.08±0.76	
15. Using punctuation in the right place	<i>Mean±SD</i>	1.5-3.5 (2)	1.5-5 (3)	0.001**
	<i>Min-Max (Median)</i>	2.29±0.46	2.78±0.84	
16. Forming sentences that conform to grammar rules	<i>Mean±SD</i>	1.5-3.5 (2.5)	1.5-5 (3)	0.001**
	<i>Min-Max (Median)</i>	2.47±0.49	3.18±0.74	
Mann Whitney U Test	**p<0.01			

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *setting appropriate margins, and paragraphs and line spaces* was 2.06±0.68, while the mean score of the students with high SES was 2.67±0.93. The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on this skill ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$).

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *writing smooth and legibly* was 2.49±0.69, while the mean score of the students with high SES was 3.22±0.81. The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on this skill ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$).

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *giving depth to the subject* was 2.27±0.57, while the mean score of the students with high SES was 2.74±0.83. The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on this skill ($p=0.003$; $p<0.01$).

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *supporting the main ideas and emotions with supplementary ideas and emotions* was 2.23±0.48, while the mean score of the students with high SES was 2.81±0.92. The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on this skill of ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$).

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *reaching the main idea intended to be communicated in the text* was 2.36±0.50, the mean score of the students with high SES was 3.08±0.81. The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on the skill ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$).

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *starting the text with an appropriate introductory statement* was 2.51±0.59, while the mean score of the students with high SES was 2.94±0.90. The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on this skill ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$).

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *having an impressive conclusion statement that summarizes the topic* was 2.25±0.46, while the mean score of the students with high SES was 2.79±0.89. The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on this ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$).

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *having a title related to the topic* was 2.19±1.12, while the mean score of the students with high SES was 2.98±1.26. The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on this skill ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$).

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *presenting the topic in a logically consistent and harmonious manner* was 2.30±0.44, while the mean score of the students with high SES was 3.01±0.86. The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on this skill ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$).

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *addressing a single idea or emotion in each paragraph* was 2.07 ± 0.30 , while the mean score of the students with high SES was 2.63 ± 0.79 . The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on this skill ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$).

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *avoiding repetition of thoughts in the text* was 2.24 ± 0.37 , while the mean score of the students with high SES was 2.91 ± 0.71 . The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on this skill ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$).

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *using words in the right place and with the right meaning* was 2.88 ± 0.55 , while the mean score of the students with high SES was 3.48 ± 0.69 . The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on this skill ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$).

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *avoiding using words that might have the same meaning in a sentence* was 2.32 ± 0.43 , while the mean score of the students with high SES was 3.15 ± 0.73 . The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on this skill ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$).

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *obeying writing rules* was 2.50 ± 0.54 , while the mean score of the students with high SES was 3.08 ± 0.76 . The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on this skill ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$).

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *using punctuation in the right place* was 2.29 ± 0.46 , while the mean score of the students with high SES was 2.78 ± 0.84 . The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on this skill ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$).

The mean score of the students with low SES on the skill of *forming sentences that conform to grammar rules* was 2.47 ± 0.49 , while the mean score of the students with high SES was 3.18 ± 0.74 . The mean score of the students with high SES was found to be significantly higher than that of the students with low SES on this skill ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$).

Table 3. Analysis of the students' scores on the sub-dimensions of the written expression evaluation for according to the schools' socioeconomic status

Skills		The schools' socioeconomic status		p
		Low (n=60)	High (n=60)	
Form	Mean±SD	2-7 (4.5)	3.5-10 (5.5)	0.001**
	Min-Max (Median)	4.55±1.14	5.88±1.53	
Content formation	Mean±SD	5.5-17 (11.5)	7.5-24.5 (13)	0.001**
	Min-Max (Median)	11.59±2.18	14.37±4.16	
Content organization	Mean±SD	4.5-11.5 (9)	7-19.5 (11.3)	0.001**
	Min-Max (Median)	8.78±1.43	11.53±3.02	
Word choice	Mean±SD	3-7.5 (5)	3.5-10 (6.5)	0.001**
	Min-Max (Median)	5.19±0.86	6.63±1.37	
Grammar	Mean±SD	4.5-11 (7.3)	5-15 (9)	0.001**
	Min-Max (Median)	7.25±1.38	9.01±2.31	
Total	Mean±SD	20-53 (37.8)	29.5-79 (43.8)	0.001**
	Min-Max (Median)	37.36±5.55	47.39±11.48	

Mann Whitney U Test **p<0.01

A significant difference was found between the students' scores on the "*form, content formation, content organization, word choice, and grammar*" sub-dimensions of the written

expression evaluation form ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$). The scores of the students with high SES, compared to the scores of the students with low SES, were higher on the sub-dimensions of *form*, *content formation*, *content organization*, *word choice*, and *grammar*

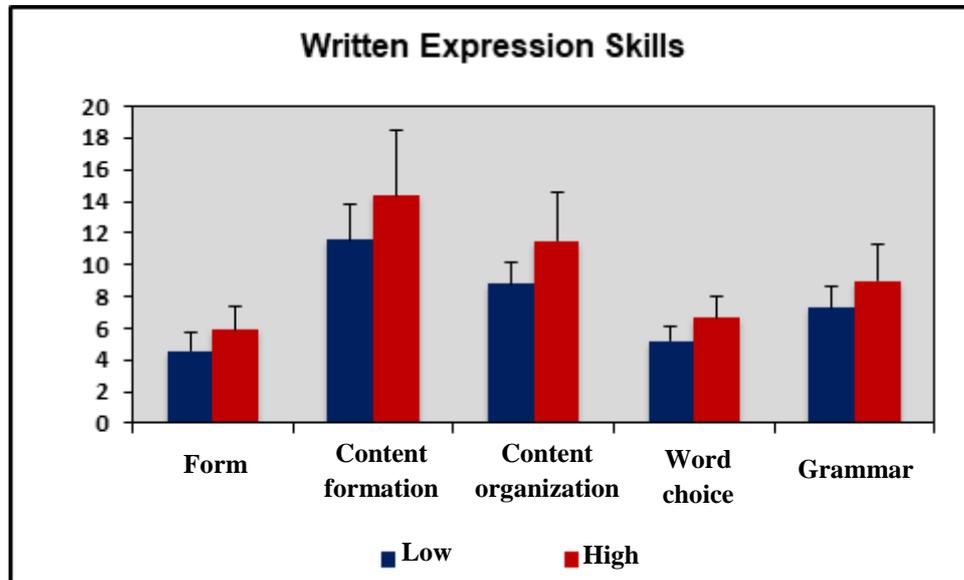


Figure 1: Distribution of the students' scores on the sub-dimensions of the written expression evaluation form

A significant difference was also found between the students' *written expression total scores* ($p=0.001$; $p<0.01$). The *written expression total scores* of the students with high SES were higher than the scores of their peers with low SES.

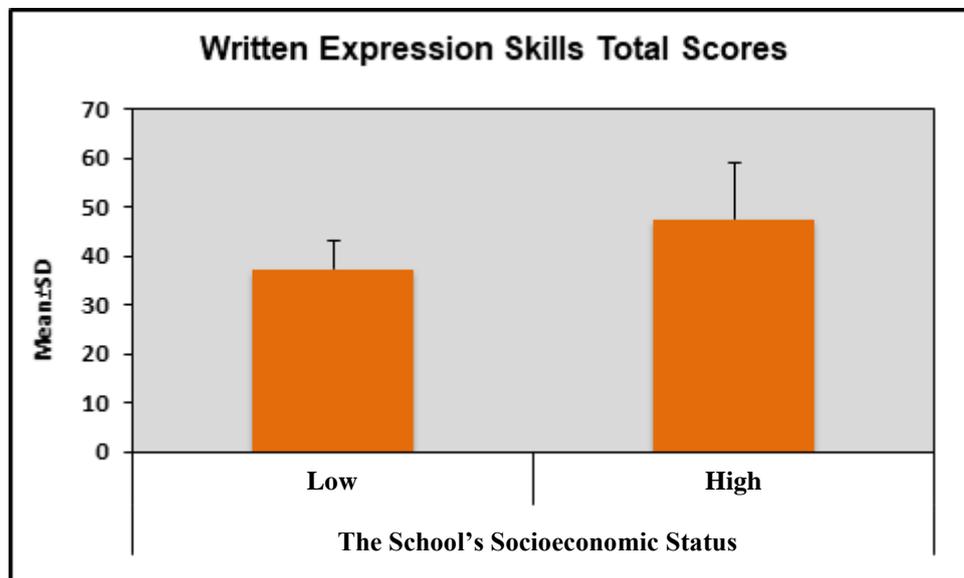


Figure 2: Distribution of the students' writing expression skills general scores

2.Results from the Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

Table 4. Comparison of the Teachers' Evaluation of Students' Performances in Writing Activities

Objectives		The School's socioeconomic status		<i>p</i>
		Low (n=45)	High (n=22)	
<i>Planned writing</i>				
1. Students can conduct research on the writing subject.	<i>Mean±SD</i>	1-5 (3)	2-4 (3)	0.063
	<i>Min-Max (Median)</i>	2.73±0.96	3.18±0.80	
2. Students can build a draft of the text to be written.	<i>Mean±SD</i>	1-5 (3)	1-4 (3)	0.762
	<i>Min-Max (Median)</i>	2.87±0.99	2.91±0.81	
<i>Writing different types of texts</i>				
3. Students can write event texts.	<i>Mean±SD</i>	2-5 (4)	2-5 (4)	0.148
	<i>Min-Max (Median)</i>	3.64±0.71	3.86±0.56	
4. Students can write essays	<i>Mean±SD</i>	1-4 (3)	2-4 (3)	0.433
	<i>Min-Max (Median)</i>	2.93±0.86	3.14±0.64	
5. Students can write statement texts.	<i>Mean±SD</i>	1-5 (3)	2-4 (3)	0.783
	<i>Min-Max (Median)</i>	3.13±0.81	3.09±0.68	
6. Students can write poems.	<i>Mean±SD</i>	1-5 (4)	2-5 (4)	0.846
	<i>Min-Max (Median)</i>	3.53±0.89	3.59±0.80	
<i>Evaluating their own writing</i>				
7. Students can evaluate their writing in terms of form and content.	<i>Mean±SD</i>	1-4 (3)	2-4 (3)	0.096
	<i>Min-Max (Median)</i>	2.78±0.90	3.18±0.80	
8. Students can evaluate their writing in terms of language and expression.	<i>Mean±SD</i>	1-4 (3)	2-4 (3)	0.049*
	<i>Min-Max (Median)</i>	2.67±0.88	3.14±0.83	
9. Students can evaluate their writing in terms of spelling and punctuation rules.	<i>Mean±SD</i>	1-4 (3)	2-5 (4)	0.006**
	<i>Min-Max (Median)</i>	2.73±0.99	3.45±0.86	
Mann Whitney U Test		* <i>p</i> <0.05	** <i>p</i> <0.01	

No significant difference was detected between the performance scores the teachers assigned to the skill of “conducting research on the writing subject” ($p=0.063$; $p>0.05$). Nevertheless, it is striking that the scores assigned by the teachers from the school with high SES, compared to the scores of their counterparts from the school with low SES, were higher. Similarly, no significant difference was determined between the teachers' scores on the students' skills of “building a draft of the text to be written and writing event and statement texts, essays, and poems” and on “evaluating their writing in terms of form and content” ($p=0.762$, $p=0.148$, $p=0.433$, $p=0.783$, $p=0.846$, $p=0.096$; $p>0.05$).

A significant difference, in favor of the teachers from the school with high SES, was found between the teachers' performance scores assigned to the students' skills of “evaluating their writing in terms of language and expression” ($p=0.049$; $p<0.05$)” and “evaluating their writing in terms of spelling and punctuation rules” ($p=0.006$; $p<0.05$).

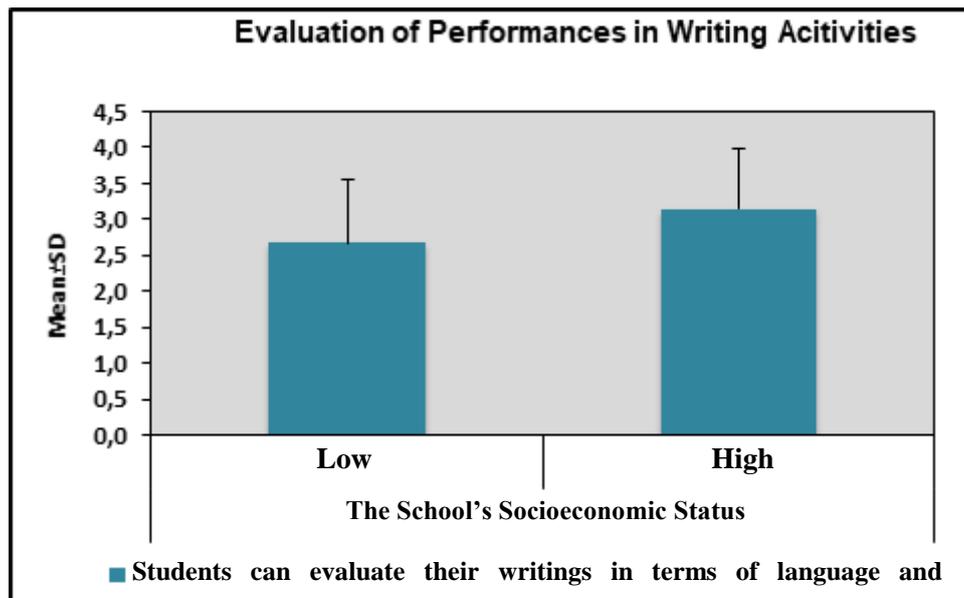


Figure 3: Distribution of the students' level of evaluation of their own writings in terms of language and expression

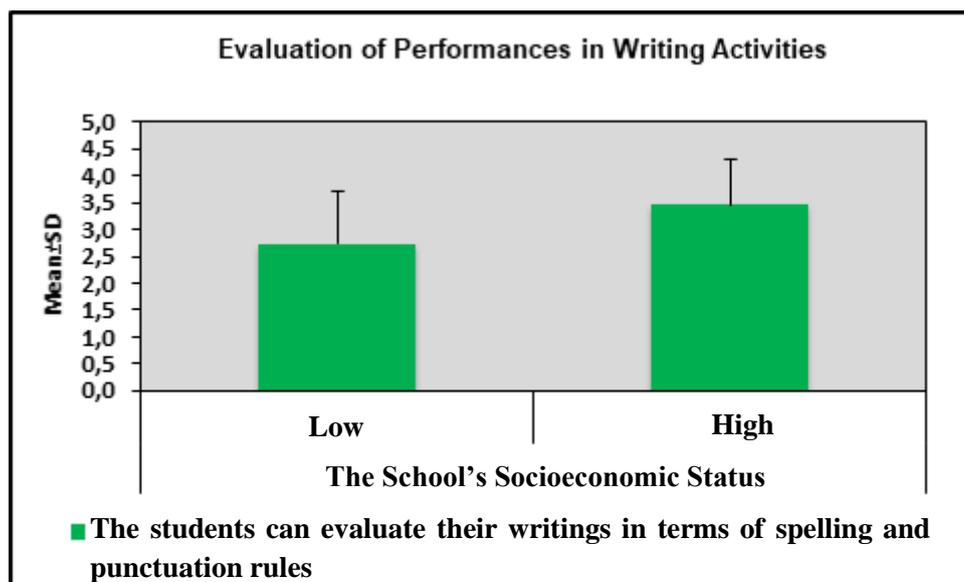


Figure 4: Distribution of the students' level of evaluation of their own writings in terms of spelling and punctuation rules

Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

This study investigated the writing skills of middle school students with different SES. The results showed that both the students with low SES and the students with high SES had the most difficulty in the skills of “*setting appropriate margins, and paragraphs and line spaces*” under form dimension; “*supporting the main ideas and emotions with supplementary ideas and emotions*” under the content formation dimension; “*addressing a single thought or emotion in each paragraph*” under the content organization dimension, and “*using punctuation in the right place*” under the grammar dimensions. These results indicate that the two groups with different SES had the same difficulties in writing.

Despite both groups having the same difficulties, the results showed that the students with high SES were more successful than their peers with low SES in all dimensions of the writing skills. In terms of the different dimensions of writing skills (form, content formation, content organization, word choice, and grammar), the biggest difference between the students with low and high SES was in the dimensions of content formation and content organization, the results of which could be related to the students' level of readiness in cognitive processing for writing.

On the other hand, the results derived from the teachers' responses to the questionnaire failed to indicate a significant difference between the two groups in the dimensions of "planned writing and writing different types of texts" but did find a significant difference in the dimensions of "evaluating their writings in terms of language and expression, and spelling and punctuation." The significant difference between the groups in terms of "evaluation", which functions as the highest level in Bloom's cognitive taxonomy, implies that students with high SES have better cognitive competencies. Bernstein (1990) also stated that children with low SES are unable to fulfill the cognitive necessities of educational applications due to their parents' cultural and linguistic inadequacies (As cited in Avci, 2013).

The results of this study were corroborated by the results of studies in the literature investigating the relationship between SES and writing skills. Bartscher, Lawler, Ramirez, and Schinault (2001) listed low SES and the different lifestyles stemming from this situation as the reasons for the inadequacies in students' writing skills. Magnifico (2010) argued that writing does not only involve recall based on complicated schema types or an inherent operation, but it also is a skill that is interwoven with the author's ability to interpret, the linguistic society, social position, values, and world actions. Deniz (2003) revealed there to be a significant difference between rural and urban primary school students, in favor of the urban students in terms of writing skills, and concluded that various socio-economic and cultural conditions based on the area of residence were the effective factors responsible for this difference. Neumann (2016) and McKenzie (2015) similarly found that parents' SES had an effect on early literacy.

The results of this study were similar to the results of other studies in the literature examining the relationship between SES and language skills. Taner and Bařal (2005), in their study, revealed that the language development of students with mid and high SES, compared to the language development of their peers with low SES, were higher. řahin (2011) carried out a study to determine sixth-grade students' awareness of listening skills and found there to be a significant difference in favor of students with high SES. In a different study, řahin (2009) detected a high-level significant relationship between reading habits, which have been shown to have an indirect effect on basic language skills, especially reading skills, and SES, and it was concluded that as SES increases, the level of reading habit also increases. Regarding the skills of reading comprehensions and effective reading, some studies have indicated that students with high SES are more successful than students with mid and low SES (Dökmen, 1994; Avcioglu, 2000; Cořkun, 2003). In addition, SES has been shown by some studies in the literature to also have an impact on students' levels of academic achievement (Suleman, Hussaini Khan, & Nisa, 2012; Cedeño, Martínez-Arias, & Bueno, 2016; Asiegbu & Ezeugbor, 2018).

This study clearly indicated that SES has effects on the form, content formation, content organization, word choice, and grammar dimensions of the middle school students' texts. Demir (2013) stated that parents of high SES tend to raise their children in a freer and stimulant-rich environment, are more democratic in the relationship with their children, and create a setting where their children can express themselves more comfortably, all of which contribute to the language development of children. For this reason, schools should be designed with rich stimuli to minimize the effect of SES differences on basic language skills, and affective domains, such as students' confidence, motivation and self-efficacy, should be kept at the level desired.

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