

Creative writing exercises study in 1-8th grade Turkish textbooks

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ABSTRACT

Improving students' writing ability enables self-expression development as well as high-order thinking skills such as creative thinking. Alongside the active teaching in the classroom, the suitability of textbooks for creative writing contributes to the development of students' writing skills. In this regard, the purpose of this study is to examine the distribution of creative writing exercises in Turkish primary school textbooks in terms of grade level, theme, instruction, and text type. The data of this study conducted on the strength of the qualitative approach, was based on the document analysis. The data sources were derived from 1-8th grade Turkish textbooks and workbooks belonging to various publishers approved by the Ministry of National Education (MEB) between the academic years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. In the scope of the research, Turkish textbooks and workbooks, which are affiliated with the MEB and private publishers, were analyzed. The content analysis method was used in evaluating the data. According to the results obtained from the research, it was identified as there is no balanced distribution in terms of grade level, theme, instruction, and text type. Some suggestions were made in accordance with the research findings.

Keywords: Turkish textbooks, creative writing exercises, writing skills.

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INTRODUCTION

With the available technology today, it is substantially significant to raise individuals who question, interpret and come up with the genuine outcomes through using their creativity. The countries put emphasis on creativity in many parts of life, aspire to raise a generation that can make his/her country a better place to live through personal progress, and become capable of handling problems with high order thinking and perception skills. Thereby, they reconstitute the education system aiming at raising conscious individuals about national and global values (Uyğun and Çetin, 2020). Regarding this, many countries, including Turkey, place creativity and creative thinking skills at the center of the education programs. Along with the individuals with creative thinking ability, it is more likely to get ahead for countries in competitions such as social, economic, scientific, technology, cultural and military (Yeşilyurt, 2020: 3904).

As a talent, creativity has an important role in the evolution of society and human beings. It exists in every

person and appears in every period of his/her life. It is also a whole set of processes with a wide range of fields, an attitude and a course of action from daily life to scientific studies. With creativity, one can generate new things aside from the existing one; perceive the events and interpret them accurately. It is an intense increase of awareness and consciousness (Maltepe, 2006: 59). Creative person discovers the inner world is free and limitless no matter how challenging the outside conditions are. Everyone has creative potential. This potential awaits to be discovered and used by the owner. Once the creativity is discovered, the real production process starts (Ataman, 2006).

In all educational disciplines from primary school to university, improving individuals' creativity and their creative thinking skills is the main purpose. The conducted studies show that everybody has this ability and it can be developed through education (Yeşilyurt, 2020: 3877). Therefore, educators have a significant

mission in enabling individuals to use and advance their creativity.

One of the skills which let individuals use their creativity is writing. Not only are writers, students, teachers, or researchers in need of improving their writing skills, but people from other fields involved in writing also should advance themselves (Brien, 2006; Mayers, 2009). Creative writing is one of the methods that enable people to reveal their vision because writing is a holistic process associated with creativity and thinking (Ataman, 2009: 101). It forms the parts of creative thinking about writing (Yalçın, 2018: 372). In literary studies from 1880 to 1940, creative writing was perceived as an experience rather than knowledge. This experience was considered as inclusive, variable methods and a set of standards to generate new texts (Myers, 1993).

According to Oral (2014), creative writing is the free writing of one's feelings and thoughts. Demir (2013: 88) defines creative writing as a new writing activity by deconstructing existing information, concepts, events, sounds in memory, images, dreams and associating them with each other; as the free writing requires to use the imagination. The creative writing approach allows the student to reflect his/her observations, imagination and perceptions towards the outside world based on his/her own life and experiences. It is a writing approach enabling students to use the language effectively and creatively by making them active at every stage of the writing teaching process (Maltepe, 2006: 65). According to Göçer (2014: 112), creative writing is one of the methods to improve personality. It is the key to self-improvement and self-consciousness and a tool in terms of expressing, pursuing self-belief, and looking toward a bright future (Forsell et al., 2020).

Creative writing differs from other types in terms of the content. It contains features of imagination and ingenuity, which are not similar to the regular events met in everyday life and the accustomed ideas of the public (Susar-Kırmızı, 2015: 96). According to Yılmaz (2006: 249), creative writing is perceived in two categories as literary texts and educational/entertaining ones. The former one is a literary text type such as novels, stories and theatre fictionalized or inspired by imagination and experienced events. The latter includes overcoming the common obstacles faced in schools, at work and writing through plays and scripts by arranging thoughts in order. The main purpose in education is to discuss the latter one (Yılmaz, 2006: 249).

The goal of creative writing is not to train a writer, but to reveal the hidden power and talents within students (Gündüz and Şimşek, 2012: 229). Bishop (1993) states that creative writing is considered as a field only appealing to writers to gain fame or to produce a masterpiece which resulted in ignoring the improvement of creative writing ability (Bishop, 1993). Yıldırım-Bilgili and Kana (2018) state that creative writing has an impact on breaking individuals' prejudices against writing by revealing skills such as originality, observation,

imagination, and questioning. Since Product/Text Oriented Approach deters the students from writing, Process/Cognitive Oriented Approach should be used as the process will prepare them to attach importance to writing (Göçer, 2019). In order to fulfill creative writing exercises, students should make an effort, preparation and practice in advance (Temizkan and Yalçinkaya, 2013; Zimmerman and Risemberg, 1997). Temizkan and Yalçinkaya (2013) ventilate this process as revealing the knowledge and ideas by using different strategies; and writing these in a draft form as planned after evaluating the observations of the outside world. In this respect, Process/Cognitive Oriented writing exercises should be adopted in creative writing studies rather than Product/Text Oriented Approach writing exercises.

Students can perform entertaining, different activities in the creative writing process. Bishop (1993) states that students only compose topics assigned by the teacher in limited length and form. According to the studies, there are exercises for students aiming at improving and evaluating creative writing. These exercises can be listed as story, fairy tale, letter, composition, dialogue, fairy tale completion, combining fairy tales, depicting character and space in the text, authoring a resume for characters, writing a paragraph in line with a question, problem situation, word, word group, visual, story element, thought clusters, object, imagination, eagerness, writing a story, fairy tale, text, a news report based on a design, rewriting the story by replacing himself or herself with the protagonist and by changing the story elements, introduction to the text, adding development and conclusion chapter, rewriting the text by changing the narrator, writing advertising copy for a product (Bishop, 1993; Duru and İşeri, 2015; Kaufman and Baer, 2012; Taylor et al., 2020; Temizkan, 2010; Vass, 2007).

Writing is the most difficult one of all the language skills to improve. This requires both a long time and an intense effort. As designated in the conducted studies, students are not in favor of writing, show reluctance to do it, get bored of it and they have anxiety about writing and failure (Babayigit, 2019; Forsell et al., 2020; Göçer, 2019). There are different factors based on students' negative attitudes towards writing and for experiencing difficulties and also psychological problems and inability (Ahmadi, 2019). In this sense, creative writing exercises can positively affect students' attitudes. It is a substantial cognitive teaching method helping students and individuals to express their thoughts, desires, dreams and emotions explicitly, inventively, and effectively (Demir, 2012; Sahin and Polatcan, 2019). Therefore, improving students' writing ability is considerably important.

The number of research studies about creative writing has been gradually increasing. In the conducted studies, students' creative writing and cooperative creative writing works were reviewed (Ahmadi, 2019; Taylor, Kaufman and Barbot, 2020; Vass, 2007). The impacts of the learning station technique, digital stories, and creative drama method were detected (Ataman, 2006; Maden and

Durukan, 2010; Susar-Kırmızı, 2015). Moreover, the effects of creative writing exercises upon students' reading and writing attitudes; their motivations, success, values education, approaching towards Turkish lesson and academic achievement and advanced reading skill awareness were examined (Akkaya, 2011; Babayigit, 2019; Göçen, 2019; Susar-Kırmızı, 2009; Sahin and Polatcan, 2019). Creative writing skills have a positive effect on reading skills, attitude towards the lesson, and values education. Thus, including creative writing exercises in the teaching process is the starting point of this research. Additionally, Bishop (1993) states that unless creative writing exercises are performed and experienced with students, the writing identity will not develop.

According to Demir (2013: 88), all elements in the learning process (teacher, content, program, etc.) should encourage students to write creatively. Textbooks can be easily included in Demir's expression. Among the previous studies on the subject, no research has been found which examines Turkish textbooks in terms of creative writing activities. Therefore, this research is thought to be important in determining the quality and frequency of creative writing exercises in Turkish textbooks. According to Donnelly (2019), teachers' lesson plans and their initiatives to research and develop new insights that affect teaching ways should be investigated in terms of creative writing. Thus, identifying the quality and frequency of writing exercises in textbooks will provide information about teachers' inclusion. On the other hand, although some studies have surveyed the convenience of writing acquisition for creative writing (Sarıkaya, 2020), there are no studies about creative writing exercises in textbooks. Thereby, this research will provide an insight into composing the exercises in the textbooks along with filling the gap in the field.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to examine the creative writing exercises in Turkish textbooks. Hence, the following questions are used to develop answers:

- How is the distribution of creative writing exercises according to grade level in Turkish textbooks?
- How is the distribution of creative writing exercises according to the themes in Turkish textbooks?
- How is the distribution of creative writing exercises according to the instructions given in Turkish textbooks?
- How is the distribution of creative writing exercises according to the text type in Turkish textbooks?

METHOD

Document analyzing is the most eligible data collecting method serving the aim of the research. Regarding that,

a qualitative research approach was preferred in this study.

Research design

The case study pattern was used in the research focused on creative writing exercises in Turkish primary school textbooks. The case study is a qualitative approach allowing investigation and description of a limited system thoroughly (Merriam, 2015). It reveals a case description by collecting data in detail through a researcher's real life, a current limited system (a case) or multiple limited systems in a certain time period (such as observations, interviews, audio-visual materials and documents and reports) or case themes (Creswell, 2016: 97). The limited system mentioned is Turkish primary school textbooks. The purpose of the case studies is "to discover, to define in detail and to interpret a situation, a person or a case in their authentic environment" instead of generalizable results (Paker, 2015, cited in Pamuk, 2020: 218).

Cases are units of the analysis. What a case is or what a unit of the analysis is usually determined in the design process (Patton, 2018: 447). The case and unit of analysis discussed in the research are shown in Table 1.

According to the research, which was structured based on the case study pattern, examined in Table 1 the case of "creative writing exercises in Turkish textbooks" was thoroughly investigated in 19 analysis units.

Sample

In the research, the purposive sampling method was used. The sample of the research was formed with 19 Turkish textbooks and workbooks in total for 1-8th grades. These books are published by various publishers which are approved by the Board of Education (Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı), and have been taught during 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years in primary and middle schools in many provinces of Turkey. In order to diversify and enrich the data source, the Turkish textbooks, which have been taught in the last two years, were included in the sample group. No ethical committee approval was required in the research since it was conducted through textbooks.

Data source

As stated before, the data source of the research was formed with 1-8th grade Turkish textbooks and workbooks which are approved by MEB and TTKB. The information about the reviewed Turkish textbooks and workbooks in the research are given in Table 2.

When Table 2 is examined, the data source of the research consists of 2 Textbooks and 1 workbook of 1st Grade Level (3 in total); 1 Textbook and 1 workbook of

Table 1. Case and unit of analysis.

Case	Unit of Analysis
Creative Writing exercises in Turkish textbooks	1st Grade Turkish Textbook (2 pieces)
	1st Grade Workbook (1 piece)
	2nd Grade Turkish Textbook (1 piece)
	2nd Grade WorkBook (1 piece)
	3rd Grade Turkish Textbook (2 pieces)
	3rd Grade WorkBook (1 piece)
	4th Grade Turkish Textbook (2 pieces)
	4th Grade WorkBook (1 piece)
	5th Grade Turkish Textbook (1 piece)
	6th Grade Turkish Textbook (3 pieces)
	7th Grade Turkish Textbook (3 pieces)
8th Grade Turkish Textbook (1 piece)	

2nd Grade Level (2 in total); 2 Textbooks and 1 workbook of 3rd Grade Level (3 in total); 2 Textbooks and 1 workbook of 4th Grade Level (3 in total); 1 Textbook of 5th Grade Level; 3 Textbooks of 6th Grade Level; 3 Textbooks of 7th Grade Level; 1 Textbook of 8th Grade

Level. In the academic years of 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, it was detected that there was only 1 textbook of 5th grade level by a private publisher and 1 textbook of 8th grade level by MEB publishing. In addition to that, there was no workbook at the level of middle school.

Table 2. The Turkish textbooks reviewed as documents.

No	Turkish textbooks	Publisher
1	Primary School Turkish Textbook 1st grade	Cem Web Ofset Industry and Trade Incorporated Company
2	Primary School Turkish 1 Textbook	MEB Publishing
3	Primary School 1st Grade Turkish Work Book	MEB Publishing
4	Primary School Textbook Turkish 2nd Grade	Koza Publishing
5	Primary School 2nd Grade Turkish Work Book	MEB Publishing
6	Primary School Turkish 3 Textbook	SDRİPEK Yolu Publishing
7	Primary School Turkish Textbook 3	MEB Publishing
8	Primary School 3rd Grade Turkish Work Book	MEB Publishing
9	Primary School Turkish 4 Textbook	MEB Publishing
10	Primary School Turkish 4 Textbook	Koza Publishing
11	Primary School 4th Grade Turkish Work Book.	MEB Publishing
12	Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School Turkish Textbook 5th Grade	Anittepe Publishing
13	Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School Turkish 6th Grade Textbook	Ekoyay Publishing
14	Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School Turkish 6 Textbook	MEB Publishing
15	Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School Turkish 6 Textbook	MEB Publishing
16	Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School Turkish 7 Textbook	MEB Publishing
17	Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School Turkish Textbook 7th Grade	MEB Publishing
18	Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School Turkish Textbook 7th Grade	Özgün Publishing
19	Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School Turkish 8 Textbook	MEB Publishing

Data collection

Document analysis method was used to collect the research data. Document analysis or document screening as Karasar (2005) expresses, embodies "the processes of finding sources, reading, note-taking and

evaluation for a specific purpose" (Karasar, 2005: 183).

In order to collect data, some Turkish textbooks and workbooks to be analyzed as documents were obtained in print from elementary and middle schools affiliated to the MEB, and some of them were provided online as pdf. First of all, the literary works related to creative writing by

the researchers, and then checklists intended for grade level, theme, writing activity instruction and text type were prepared. According to these prepared checklists, the writing exercises in the textbooks and workbooks were reviewed at least twice by two researchers and one expert Turkish teacher.

Data analysis

Content analysis method was used in the analysis of the data obtained. According to Patton (2018: 453), content analysis generally refers to textual analysis (interview prints, diaries and documents) rather than literary notes based on observation. "Content analysis is a scan for the purpose of designating certain features of a certain text, a book, a document by digitizing" (Karasar, 2005: 184).

All writing exercises were scanned in the textbooks and workbooks of 1- 8th grade level that have been taught during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years. First, the exercises serving the purpose of the research were determined. Then, how many exercises there were in terms of grade levels, themes, instructions given and text types were tabularized in the findings section.

Validity and reliability studies

The research was conducted on the basis of Creswell's strategies (2017: 2021) which are "a detailed description and use of richness for transferability of findings and having a prolonged engagement in the field" and spending sufficient time for the research. Thus, it was attempted to establish internal validation upon collecting and analyzing data at a level to reach saturation, enhance external reliability by explaining the research process and what was accomplished in detail.

FINDINGS

In the research, 291 creative writing exercises were confirmed by examining writing exercises in 1-8th grade

Turkish textbooks. The exercises were analyzed in terms of grade level, theme, instruction and text type.

The distribution of creative writing exercises according to grade level in Turkish primary school textbooks was given in Table 3.

According to Table 3, 291 in total creative writing exercises were found out in 1-8th grade Turkish textbooks. The number of these textbooks are 24 in 1st grade level, 15 in 2nd grade level, 52 in 3rd grade level, 32 in 4th grade level, 20 in 5th grade level, 75 in 6th grade level, 60 in 7th grade level, 13 in 8th grade level.

The distribution of creative writing exercises according to the theme in Turkish primary school textbooks is given in Table 4.

According to Table 4, 40 in National Culture theme, 39 in Science and Technology theme, 36 in Values theme, 32 in Independence War and Atatürk theme, 27 in Nature and Universe theme, 23 in Health and Sport theme, 22 in Children's World theme, 16 in Reading Culture theme, 12 in Individual and Society theme, 11 in Communication theme, 10 in Feelings theme, 8 in Art theme, 7 in Personal Development theme, 5 in Citizenship theme, 3 in Time and Place theme creative writing exercises were found out in 1 - 8th grade Turkish textbooks.

The distribution of creative writing exercises according to the given instructions in Turkish primary school textbooks is given in Table 5.

According to Table 5, there are different instructions in creative writing exercises in the analyzed 1-8th grade Turkish textbooks. 93 writings are based on problem situation/case/topic, 56 completing or continuing the given text, 27 writings are on visuals, 18 writings are on dreams and desires, 17 writings are on words and notions, 10 writings are on idioms/aphorisms/proverbs, 9 writings are on story elements, 5 writings by replacing herself/himself with the protagonist, 3 writings are on the hero in the text/given, 4 writings are on famous hero/character, 3 writings are on a listened ballad/song, 3 writings are on cartoon/cartoon related story elements, 3 storifying of a poem, 2 writings are on banners and brochures, 1 writing is on courtesy statements, 1 writing is on characters/feelings, 1 writing is on a question in the text, 1 writing is on the main idea, 1 writing is on the title, 1 writing is on impressions creative writing exercises.

Table 3. The distribution of creative writing exercises according to grade level in Turkish primary school textbooks.

Grade level	Number of books	Types of books	f
1 st grade	3 books	2 textbooks (by various publishers) / 1 workbook	24
2 nd grade	2 book	1 textbook / 1 workbook	15
3 rd grade	3 book	2 textbooks (by various publishers) / 1 workbook	52
4 th grade	3 book	2 textbooks (by various publishers) / 1 workbook	32
5 th grade	1 book	1 textbook	20
6 th grade	3 books	3 textbooks (by various publishers)	75
7 th grade	3 books	3 textbooks (by various publishers)	60
8 th grade	1 book	1 textbook	13
Total	19 books	15 types	291

Table 5. Continues.

Writing based on the title	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Writing based on impressions	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	24	15	52	32	20	75	60	13	291

The distribution of creative writing exercises according to text type in Turkish primary school textbooks is given in Table 6.

According to Table 6, creative writing exercises were included in 1-8th grade Turkish textbooks. These exercises are listed as 99 in essay/prose/text type, 68 in story writing, 59 in poetry writing, 13 in letter writing, 12 in email writing, 10 in writing dialogue, 7 in narrative

text, 4 in anecdotal writing, 4 in fable writing, 3 in fairy tale writing, 3 in news writing, 3 in paragraph writing, 2 in theatre/drama writing, 1 in tongue twister writing, 1 in legend type, 1 in advertisement writing, 1 essay writing type. In addition, mostly essay/prose/text/informative, story and poetry text type writing were included in creative writing exercises at all grade levels.

Table 6. The distribution of creative writing exercises according to text type in Turkish primary school textbooks.

Text type	1 st Grade	2 nd Grade	3 rd Grade	4 th Grade	5 th Grade	6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade	Total
Essay/prose/text	18	8	15	12	6	18	21	1	99
Story	1	3	12	7	5	26	9	5	68
Poetry	1	4	11	8	5	14	12	4	59
Letter	0	0	5	0	1	3	4	0	13
E-mail	0	0	1	2	1	3	5	0	12
Dialog	2	0	6	0	0	2	0	0	10
Narrative text	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	2	7
Anecdotal	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	4
Fable	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	4
Fairy tale	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	3
News	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
Paragraph	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	3
Theatre/Drama	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Tongue twister	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Legend	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Advertisement	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Essay	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	24	15	52	32	20	75	60	13	291

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The rapidly changing world and lifestyle require individuals to think and question more profoundly, and to have creative thinking skills. One of the significant fields that supports the development of creative thinking ability is writing skills. 291 exercises in total were identified in the research, in which creative writing exercises in Turkish primary school textbooks were examined in terms of grade level, theme, given instruction and text type.

According to the very first question of the study, "How

is the distribution of creative writing exercises according to grade level in Turkish textbooks?", a total of 291 creative writing exercises (24 in 1st grade level, 15 in 2nd grade level, 52 in 3rd grade level, 32 in 4th grade level, 20 in 5th grade level, 75 in 6th grade level, 60 in 7th grade level, 13 in 8th grade level) were found out in 1-8th grade Turkish textbooks. No comparison was made at all grade levels because only limited number of Turkish textbooks (3 textbooks in 1st grade level, 2 textbooks in 2nd grade level, 3 textbooks in 3rd grade level, 3 textbooks in 4th grade level, 1 textbook in 5th grade level, 3 textbooks in

6th grade level, 3 textbooks in 7th grade level, 1 textbook in 8th grade level) were analyzed. When 3 textbooks at the same level were analyzed, the creative writing exercises were expected to increase. However, when the number of exercises in different grade levels are compared, there is no balanced increase between the grade level and the number of exercises. For instance, the creative writing exercises are more in 3rd grade textbooks than 4th grade textbooks and more in 6th grade textbooks than 7th grade textbooks. In this regard, it could therefore be uttered that there is no increase in creative writing exercises in textbooks as the grade level progresses. When only one textbook was analyzed, it is observed that there are more creative writing exercises in 5th grade level than in 8th grade textbooks. The reason for the few numbers of creative writing exercises at the 8th-grade level might be correlated with the increase of text types. Likewise, Temizkan (2011) noted that creative writing exercises encapsulate more fictional texts. When the analyzed 1-8th grade Turkish textbooks in the research were studied in terms of grade-level variables, one may say that there was no systematic and regular distribution. This result is similar to the research results of Aktaş and Bayram (2021). The inequivalent distribution of creative writing exercises in textbooks according to grade levels will affect students' creative writing ability in a negative way. Thereby, McVey (2008) underlines that a person who has little experience in writing will not be confident about writing. According to Karatay (2011), students should be convinced that writing is not an authentic gift but an ability one can improve through practice. As stated by Gündüz and Şimşek (2012), students can get rid of stereotypes and biases thanks to creative writing. They will develop the ability of observation, thinking, questioning, interpretation and criticism and eventually gain self-confidence. On the one hand, children must be encouraged to trust in their intuition and creativity. On the other hand, they should be taught to avoid questioning too much which may lead to loss of creativity (Güneş, 2013). Creative writing will have naturally talented children to discover their ability, thus, it will give children the opportunity to reflect their rich imaginations (Çevik, 2021).

According to the second question of the study, "How is the distribution of creative writing exercises according to the themes in Turkish textbooks?", it can be noted that creative writing exercises in 1-8th grade Turkish textbooks were not evenly distributed into themes. Creative writing exercises were most commonly identified in themes of Science and Technology in 1st grade level, National Culture and Children's World in 2nd grade level, Health and Sport in 3rd grade level, National Culture and Values in 4th grade level; National Culture, Science and Technology, Values, Health and Sport, Individual and Society in 5th grade level, National Culture and Values in 6th grade level, Values in 7th grade level and Values; Independence War and Atatürk, Nature and Universe,

Individual and Society, Time and Place in 8th grade level. The reason why creative writing exercises are mostly in the themes of National Culture (40), Values (36), and Independence War and Atatürk (32) is that these three themes are mandatory. Nevertheless, it is remarkable in the research that a non-compulsory Science and Technology theme with 39 creative writing exercises is in the second place after National Culture (4). Although the Science and Technology theme is not a mandatory one, it is the second most common one since it provides more opportunities to write down about space, dreams, desires and designs related to discoveries and inventions.

Creative writing studies can be effective when applied with a Process/Cognitive Oriented Approach. In order to improve students' writing skills, the exercises should have a balanced distribution in this process. However, increases (especially in the first themes of textbooks) and decreases (especially in the last themes) of the exercises indicate that the process was not paid attention while developing creative writing exercises. According to the research results conducted by Özbay (2000), it was noted that students are weak in writing and there is no study carried out aiming at improving it. To Yalçın (2018), writing education requires a strict inner discipline and it can cause stress over students in the beginning. In order to ease the stress and create writing discipline, the very first exercises must be done with entertaining and fascinating techniques. For Akbayir (2011), writing should be considered as a creative thinking process rather than a mechanical skill. Including creative and associative writing in lessons has a substantial impact on developing student's ability of self-expression (Yalçın, 2001). According to the creative writing studies, teaching is something that requires experience, training and constant thinking (Hesse, 2010). As stated by Uysal and Fincan (2016), creative writing is process-oriented different from product-oriented. Therefore, activities should be distributed equally to the themes to improve writing.

According to the third question of the study, "How is the distribution of creative writing exercises according to the instructions given in Turkish textbooks?", it is noticed that there are different given instructions when creative writing exercises in 1-8th grade Turkish textbooks were examined. These given instructions are writing based on a problem, situation/case/topic, completing or continuing the given text, visuals, dreams and desires, words and notions, idioms/aphorisms/proverbs, story elements, replacing herself/himself with the protagonist, the hero in the text/given, famous hero/character, a listened ballad/song, cartoon/cartoon related story elements, storifying of a poem, banners and brochures, courtesy statements, characters/feelings, a question in the text, the main idea, the title, impressions respectively. Karakaş-Yıldırım (2020) indicates in the research, in which the 8th grade Turkish textbook was examined, that the 39% of the exercises are for upper levels where the student is asked to create something new. In this context,

the given instructions are convenient for creative writing exercises since they are based on students' creativity. To Temizkan (2010), students reveal their feelings and thoughts in an original, fluent and interesting way instead of writing boring, repetitive, monotonous articles. According to Doğan (2020), it is not easy to produce content-rich articles in written expression. The instructions given in the Turkish primary school textbooks vary, but there is no balanced distribution in terms of given instruction types. Writing based on story elements, completing or continuing the given text which is much simpler instructions could be given in primary school textbooks. In terms of getting attention of students and being more entertaining and enjoyable, writing based on a listened ballad/song could be more in primary school. Moreover, when the instructions about creative writing in the textbooks are compared, 'completing or continuing the given text' is the second most given instruction which is similar to the research results of Coşkun and Nariñç (2018) and Aktaş and Bayram (2021).

According to the fourth question of the study, "How is the distribution of creative writing exercises according to the text type in Turkish textbooks?", creative writing exercises, which are 99 in essay/prose/text type, 68 in story writing, 59 in poetry writing, 13 in letter writing, 12 in email writing, 10 in writing dialogue, 7 in narrative text, 4 in anecdotal writing, 4 in fable writing, 3 in fairy tale writing, 3 in news writing, 3 in paragraph writing, 2 in theatre/drama writing, 1 in tongue twister writing, 1 in legend type, 1 in advertisement writing, 1 essay writing type, were included in Turkish textbooks. In addition, it was found out that creative writing exercises were mostly used in writing essay/prose, stories and poems at all grade levels. There is no balanced distribution according to the text type in creative writing exercises. Gülerüz (2006) describes creative writing as an activity refictionalizing information in memory, cases, notions, sounds, visuals and creating new products such as a story, a poem, an essay and a novel by correlating these. It is the activity of generating new products (composition, poem, story, essay, novel) thanks to the existing knowledge and concepts and imagination (Ak, 2011). The applications are quite important for creative writing progress. To Johnstone et al. (2002), the development of writing skill is associated with repetitive practices, application controls, and writing on a subject that the student is an expert in. As the student's writing improves, he/she will become an individual who can meet his/her daily needs, maintain his/her education, communicate effectively with people thanks to his/her advanced perception and expressing abilities and become successful (Arıcı and Ungan, 2013). To Temizkan (2011), the effort to create a fictional world underlies creative writing skill. The most basic elements of the fictional world are plot, characters and setting. It is known that narrative texts are the most suitable ground formation among the literary genres. As stated by Gündüz and Şimşek (2012), Any fictional texts such as poetry, prose

poetry, story, fairy tale, fables, dramatic texts / legends can be used as materials in creative writing exercises. In this respect, when contemplating the distribution of creative writing exercises according to the text type in Turkish textbooks, having story writing in the second place and poetry writing in the third place as well as identifying genres such as narrative texts anecdotal, fairy tales and fables correspond to the statements of Gülerüz (2006) and Temizkan (2011). Since the poetry type differs from other genres in terms of syntax, text parts, rhyme, it is more difficult to write than other genres. Accordingly, it might be more effective to increase writing in the poetry genre in writing exercises in advanced grade levels.

Since writing is the most difficult one of all the language skills, as expressed in the scientific studies, students do not like to write, they get bored of it and reluctant to do so (Babayigit, 2019; Forsell et al., 2020; Göçen, 2019). Some of the reasons for this problem are strict adherence to grammar rules and fear of failure in the writing process; inability to organize feelings and thoughts; poor cognitive and thinking skills (Karatay, 2011). Correspondingly, it is concluded in the scientific studies that creative writing exercises have positive impacts on students' attitudes towards reading and writing and Turkish lessons. Moreover, it is observed that students' writing motivations, creative writing success, value education, academic achievement, advanced reading skill awareness are improved accordingly (Akkaya, 2011; Babayigit, 2019; Göçen, 2019; Susar-Kırmızı, 2009; Sahin and Polatcan, 2019). Hence, it was deduced that exercises related to creative writing should be included more often and it is necessary to be more careful and attentive to create exercises while preparing textbooks based on these scientific studies, in the research, which was conducted for the purpose of examining the distribution of creative writing exercises in Turkish primary school textbooks.

SUGGESTIONS

Some suggestions were made in compliance with the research findings:

- Considering the literary studies in the field, it was concluded that creative writing exercises positively affected students' academic achievement in writing skills, perceptions of writing self-efficacy, written expression skills, success in Turkish lessons, attitudes towards writing and Turkish lessons (Ak, 2011). In this framework, creative writing exercises should be included more and more often in Turkish textbooks.
- As a result of the research, it was noted that creative writing exercises do not show a balanced distribution in terms of grade level. In this context, while preparing Turkish textbooks, creative writing exercises should be distributed regularly and systematically according to

grade levels.

- It was identified that while some text types are less included, some text types in creative writing exercises are frequently repeated for students in Turkish textbooks. In this sense, the equal distribution of text types in creative writing exercises should be paid more attention while preparing Turkish textbooks.

- Relating to creative writing exercises in Turkish textbooks, new researches with different patterns can be designed by consulting teachers and students.

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