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The Use of Historical Novel in Social Studies Course and Its Effect on Creative Writing Skills of Students*

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Abstract

In this study, the effect of the use of historical novels with different forms of fiction on the creative writing skills of the students in social studies course was studied. The study group consists of 80 students from 4 different classes in the 7th grade of a state school in Sivas province. The study group consists of 3 experimental and 1 control group, each of which consists of 20 people. The research was carried out in the pretest-posttest control group experiment design. In addition, while examining the creative writing activities of the students, document analysis and creative writing rubrics developed by Öztürk (2007) were used. After determining the homogeneity of variance and the normality of data distribution, one-way variance analysis, anova analysis in repeated measurements and Tukey test analysis were performed on the data obtained from the creative writing studies of the students. In addition, the arithmetic mean of creative writing studies was also used. In each experimental group, in addition to the curriculum, historical novels with different fiction forms (classical, modern and postmodern) were used. In the control group, the course was continued in line with the curriculum. As a result of the research, postmodern and modern fiction-style historical novels have been observed to be very effective on the creative writing skills of the students. Classical historical novels based on chronology, on the other hand, have been determined to have little effect on the creative writing skills of the students.

Keywords: Social sciences, Writing skill, Fiction, Historical novels.

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Introduction

The novel is a concept that drives us away from the real world into an imaginary world, matching leisure, entertainment, imagination and getting rest. In novels, there are miraculous encounters and unrealistic stories, along with more beautiful women or men than we can never meet in the real world. However, the novel has a special feature, such as allowing people to reach the truth and examine it in depth (Bourneur and Quellet, 1989: 1-9).

Although children like fairytales in the early ages of their childhood, they will want to face novels in the first years of their youth (13-15 years) due to the fact that novels have detailed information on each subject and present a large number of heroes to the reader (Yalçın and Aytaş, 2014: 162-163). Because there is no other literary genre like the novel that has the purpose of define the life. The most important feature of the novel, which is the newest among literary genres, is that it is based on fiction. This feature gives the author a very wide range of narration. This is why the novel is a rare product that continues its development in literary genres and has a self-renewing character (Ungan, Şimşek and Arıcı, 2014: 244).

Historical novel is a "type of novel that works closely with reality in order to convey any period or event in history with artistic concern" (Göğebakan, 2004: 15). Teachers often use historical novels in their classes to give children a habit of reading and to realize the aims of the course (Demir and Akengin, 2014: 2-3). In this respect, historical novels are a complementary element of the course (Öztürk, 2011: 278-279). Historical novels, in regards to their subject, evoke the love of the country and devotion to the nation in children and develop a national consciousness. They provide a clearer and closer recognition of events and personalities of great importance in history (Oğuzkan, 2013:105). Although partially exaggerated, it provides information about social, cultural, political and economic conditions of the period in which the events occurred (Öztürk et al., 2014: 130). Besides teaching history, the historical novel has functions such as reviving history and entertaining students (Göğebakan, 2004). They also carry human and moral values and play a functional role in value transfer. Due to the advantages of their volume, it can contain many genres such as poems, lullabies, ballads and songs and have an extraordinary vocabulary. By bringing forgotten words to light, it acts as a bridge between the past and the future (Ungan, Şimşek and Arıcı, 2014: 246).

The first aspect of historical novel to be considered is that it is written with artistic purposes, not with the perspective of a historian. In such works, events are not expected to be conveyed to the reader as they are. The author embellishes his work with artistic fiction (Şimşek, 2009: 395).

It is very important that social sciences, which has the primary purpose of educating good and responsible citizens in primary and secondary schools, take advantage of historical novels as it is the subject of knowledge and events related to human history. Especially in childhood, a relationship with literary products will enable children to be more creative, more hopeful, willing and productive in the future. In this respect, historical novels contribute to the primary aims of national education in general and social studies in particular (Tekgöz, 2005:3).

According to Şimşek, none of the historical literary products, which are the works of art in which history is studied, are directly the works of history, but the way in which they deal with historical facts and events together with their artistic presence, can offer very convenient materials for teaching social studies in terms of their closeness to reality (Şimşek, 2009: 395).

In addition to all these advantages, creativity is perhaps the most important skill that historical novels can provide to students. Creativity is the ability to create original or inventor ideas, to find new relationships and reveries (Gartenhaus 1997: 18). Historical novels develop the imaginary world of the child and lead the student to different worlds. It allows creativity, to think differently from others and to establish

connections between existing objects or thoughts that have not been established before. The child reading the historical novel, puts himself in the place of the people in the novel, depicts the story in the book with his imagination, confronts the existing problems, produces different solutions and thus improves his creativity. In this way, it provides great convenience to our educational system in raising curious, daydreaming and creative individuals who are in need of today's world, who turn threats into opportunities, who are hardworking and trying to find solutions to problems. Of course, there is no doubt that there is a certain amount of creativity, provided that each text produced is different. However, it is a fact that fiction texts, such as novels and stories, require more creativity (Temizkan, 2014: 4). According to Yalçın Çelik, "the creativity of an author who has adopted a postmodern approach is very different from the creativity of an author who has written a traditional, realistic style". This generally means that novels in general, historical novels in particular, have different levels of creativity according to their fictional forms. Yalçın Çelik (2005) stated that when historical novels are assessed in terms of narrative and fiction, we will meet these three main topics:

- Realistic historical novels based on chronology
- Historical novels written with modernist fiction
- Historical novels written with postmodern fiction

However, as a result of our research, no research on the effects of historical novels on creativity was found. In the 21st century, as in the past, the importance of our research will be better understood when we consider that creativity is the only resource that human beings can resort to survive and find solutions to the problems that everyday life brings.

The Aim of This Study

With this research, it will be examined whether the use of historical novels in the teaching of history topics in social studies courses affects the creative writing skills of the students. In the study, three historical novels with different fiction forms were used. In this direction, answers to the following questions will be sought:

- To what extent does the use of classical historical novels based on chronology affect the creative writing skills of students in social studies?
- To what extent does the use of modern historical novels affect the creative writing skills of students in social studies?
- To what extent does the use of postmodern historical novels affect the creative writing skills of students in social studies?

Methods and Materials

Methods

The research was carried out in the pretest-posttest control group experimental design. This method is based on the existence of multiple groups that are created based on a neutral assignment. In the experimental and control groups, measurements are made before and after the experiment (Karasar, 2012:88). In experimental design, it is examined whether an independent approach variable (historical novel use) affects a dependent outcome variable (creative writing skills) (Plano Clark, & Creswell, 2015).

Also, while the creative writing exercises of the experimental and control groups were scored, the document review method was also employed. Document review is the process of examining written or visual documents related to the subject of research (İslamoğlu and Alnıaçık, 2014).

Materials

Creative Writing Worksheet

It was developed by researchers and shaped in line with the views of three field experts. First, the chronological information about the conquest of Istanbul is summarized in the creative writing worksheet. Following chronological information:

A request for "Dear Students; a program on the Conquest of Istanbul will be held on a local radio tomorrow. Please write a text to be presented in the program" was made and it was aimed that students prepare a writing study using imagination and creativity.

Creative Writing Rubric

It was developed by Öztürk (2007) and was used to score the creative writing studies of the students. The rubric allows the researchers to score students works in eight dimensions, including "originality of ideas", "fluency of ideas", "flexibility of thought", "richness of words", "structure of sentences", "organization", "style of writing" and finally "compliance with grammar rules". All of these dimensions in rubrics can be scored between the grades one and five. Reliability and validity studies of rubrics were completed for research and three field experts were consulted for its validity. For its reliability, the formula (reliability=Consensus/(Consensus + disagreement)) developed by Miles and Huberman (1994:64) was employed. The reliability of rubrics is determined by the overlap/similarity between the scores. The reliability level of the score was observed 0.93 according to the calculations made taking the compatibility and similarities in the scores of the researchers, consultants and field experts into account.

Historical Novels Used

- In the study, 7/D class students selected and read Ahmet İzci's classical historical novel based on the chronology named of Istanbul Conquest.
- 7/E class students selected and read Yusuf Dursun's novel which has modern fiction and named of Sultandım Fatih Oldum.
- 7/F class students, on the other hand, selected and read Orhan Pamuk's novel Beyaz Kale. This work of Orhan Pamuk has postmodern fiction.

Working Groups

The working group of the research consists of 80 students in a public school in Sivas province in Turkey. The research was carried out in the 2016-2017 academic year with 7^{th} grade students. A total of eighty students from four different classes were included in the study group. In the study, 7/C class constituted the control group and 7/D - 7/E - 7/F classes constituted the experimental groups. Random sampling method was employed when selecting study groups.

With 7/C class, the course has been taught normally within the scope of curricula. In addition to the curriculum, classical historical novel based on chronology was used with 7/D class, historical novel with modern fiction was used with 7/E class, historical novel with postmodern fiction was used with 7/F class. All groups completed novel reading process in twelve course hours. In all experimental groups, historical

novels with different fiction forms were used. The study group consists of 80 students, 45 females and 35 males.

Data Collection

Research data from both the pretest and the posttest were collected using the creative writing worksheet developed by the researchers. Additionally, the collected data were digitized by the creative writing rubric developed by Öztürk (2007).

Analysis of Data

The data, which were scored with rubric for the analysis of the data, were processed in SPSS 15 package program. In the research, one-way variance analysis was used at first to determine whether the data obtained from the pretest and the posttest showed a significant difference. After the experiment, Anova analysis in repeated measurements was employed to determine whether the difference observed before the experiment was significant. Tukey test was conducted to determine which groups had significant differences. The homogeneity of variance and the normal distribution of data were taken into consideration during the determination of the tests to be used in the study.

Table 1. Levene Test showing the homogeneity of variance and Shapiro-Wilk Test results showing the normality of the data distribution

Shapiro-Wilk		Statistics	N	Р
Class	С	,916	20	,083
	D	 ,934	20	,182
	E	 ,954	20	,427
	F	 ,951	20	,378
Levene Test		Sd 1	Sd 2	Р
,731		3	76	,537

In addition to all the tests, the mean and standard deviation values of the groups obtained in the pretest and posttest were reviewed.

Findings

The findings obtained as a result of the assessment of creative writing studies of students in eight dimensions are as follows:

Table 2. Analyses of pretest and posttest creative writing skills scores of test and control groups (One-Way Anova, Anova for Repeated Measurements and Tukey Test)

Assessment Dimension	Anova Analysis	Tukey Groups)	Test	(Differentiating

		One Way Anova (Pretest)	One Way Anova (Posttest)	Anova for Repeated Measures (Group*Measuremen t)	Main Group (I)	Comparison Group (J)	Difference (I-J)
Originality	of	,062	,000	,000	С	D	-,75000(*)
Ideas						E	-1,80000(*)
						F	-2,50000(*)
Fluency	of	,443	,000	,000	С	D	-,50000
Thoughts						E	-1,45000(*)
						F	-2,30000(*)
Flexibility	of	,163	,000	,000	С	D	-,50000
Thoughts						E	-1,55000(*)
						F	-2,30000(*)
Richness	of	,101	,000	,000	С	D	-,80000(*)
Vocabulary						E	-1,40000(*)
						F	-2,40000(*
Sentence		,213	,000	,000	С	D	-,65000
Structure						E	-1,35000(*
						F	-2,15000(*)
Organizatior	1	,136	,000	,000	С	D	-,50000
						E	-1,55000(*
						F	-2,30000(*)
Writing Style	9	,098	,000	,000	С	D	-,55000
						E	-1,35000(*)
						F	-2,35000(*)
Grammar		,674	,000	,000	С	D	-,75000(*)
Compliance						E	-1,45000(*
						F	-2,40000(*

Table Language: significant difference is considered as (p<.05*). (*) Indicates that there is a significant difference between the main group and the comparison group. If the I-J value starts with a minus (-), the main group is more unsuccessful than the comparison group.

As a result of one-way variance analysis of the pretest scores of the experimental and control groups, it can be seen that there is no significant difference between the scores of the groups in any dimension of creative writing skills (p>.05). When the posttest test scores of the groups are taken into consideration, it is observed that there is a significant difference in all dimensions (p<.05).

After the experimental process, Anova analysis in repeated measurements was performed to determine whether this difference was significant in the experiment and control groups compared to the previous measurement. The results for analysis are given in the third column of the Anova Analysis section in Table 2. As a result of the analysis, it was obtained that the presence of the experimental and control groups in all dimensions of the study had a significant effect on the difference between the pretest and the posttest.

According to the Tukey test, which is employed to determine which groups favor a significant difference between the scores of the groups:

It was obtained that the group reading postmodern historical novels (F) obtained a higher creative writing skill score at all dimensions than the other groups and was significantly differentiated from the other groups. The pretest and posttest mean scores of the groups were given in Table 3. When the scores of the groups are taken into consideration, it can be seen that the highest mean score belongs to the postmodern historical novel reading group. When the findings of the comparison of the groups given in Table 2 and which differ according to the Tukey test results are examined, it can be clearly seen that this group is the most successful group (I-J).

It was observed that the group who read the historical novel with modern fiction (E) achieved a lower creative writing score than the group who read the postmodern historical novel, however, it was found that they received a higher creative writing score than the group who studied classical historical novel based on chronology and the group who studied in line with the curriculum. It is understood from the mean scores given in Table 3 that the second most successful group in terms of creative writing is the group reading historical novels with modern fiction. The results of the Tukey test given in Table 2 of the differentiating groups are consistent with the results obtained from the mean scores given in Table 3.

It is seen in Table 3 that the mean scores of the group reading novels based on chronology (D) are generally lower than the groups reading novels with postmodern and modern fiction. However, the fact that this group has a high mean score compared to the control group that studies the course based on the curriculum is another important finding obtained from the same table. The results of the Tukey test of the differentiating groups in Table 2 coincide with the findings obtained from the mean scores of the creative writing skills given in Table 3.

As a result of the experimental process, carried out (C) of the group that studies a curriculum-based course and does not read any historical novels, it was understood that there wasn't any increase in scores in some dimensions in the research and that in some dimensions the score increase was almost negligible. Again, the results of the Tukey test given in Table 2 show that the group with the lowest creative writing skill score is C Class, which is the control group.

Table 3. Mean scores of experimental and control groups for pretest and posttest creative writing skill scores and standard deviation values

Assessment Dimension	Class	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Standard Deviation (Pretest)	Standard Deviation (Posttest)
Originality of	С	20	1,75	1,75	,71635	,78640
Ideas	D	20	1,45	2,50	,68633	,88852
	E	20	1,35	3,55	,58714	,82558
	F	20	1,85	4,25	,67082	,55012
Fluency of	С	20	1,85	1,95	,93330	,99868
Thoughts	D	20	1,75	2,45	,78640	,75915
	Е	20	1,50	3,40	,60698	,82078
	F	20	1,85	4,25	,74516	,71635
Flexibility	С	20	1,65	1,65	,98809	,98809
of Thoughts	D	20	1,25	2,15	,55012	,74516
	E	20	1,20	3,20	,69585	,83351
	F	20	1,55	3,95	,68633	,68633
Richness	С	20	1,35	1,35	,74516	,74516
of Vocabulary	D	20	1,20	2,15	,41039	,67082
	Е	20	1,05	2,75	,22361	1,01955
	F	20	1,45	3,75	,60481	,63867
Sentence Structure	С	20	1,90	1,95	,96791	,88704
	D	20	1,95	2,60	,75915	,75394
	Е	20	1,50	3,30	,76089	,92338
	F	20	1,60	4,10	,68056	,64072
Organization	С	20	1,85	1,95	,98809	,88704
	D	20	2,05	2,45	,75915	,75915
	Е	20	1,45	3,50	,68633	,82717
	F	20	1,80	4,25	,76777	,91047
Writing Style	С	20	1,35	1,60	,74516	,82078

	D	20	1,35	2,15	,58714	,58714
	Е	20	1,10	2,95	,44721	1,19097
	F	20	1,65	3,95	,87509	,60481
Grammar	С	20	1,75	1,80	,71635	,76777
Compliance	D	20	1,60	2,55	,50262	,82558
	E	20	1,50	3,25	,76089	,78640
	F	20	1,55	4,20	,68633	,69585

When the average values of the creative writing scores given in Table 3 are examined; In general, the mean score of the groups in the pretest is very close to each other. In particular, it is clear that the E class has lower creative writing scores than all other groups. Other classes have been found to be superior to each other from time to time. But all these differences are certainly not big enough to make a significant difference.

When we look at the posttest averages of the groups given in Table 3; It is seen that especially the F class has a higher average writing score than the other classes. In the posttest test, the F class has the highest average in eight dimensions of creative writing. In addition, it was observed that the creative writing skills of the F class developed more than the other groups. Thus, in the pre-test, the F class, which is usually the most unsuccessful group and has a lower score than the other groups, has made a significant difference to the other classes in the posttest test. In the posttest, the F class achieved a categorization of four points in five dimensions of creative writing. In the other three dimensions, it has an average of four. This is a pretty good average value.

When looking at the data given in Table 3 and belonging to class E: The average of the creative writing score of the E class is the second best score. It is seen that the E class has a very high average in C and D classes in eight dimensions of creative writing. The E class creative writing average is lower than the F score, but the average of the E and F classes is quite close to each other.

When the creative writing skill scores of the D class given in Table 3 are evaluated: It is seen that D class has a creative writing point average which is close to the averages of other classes in the pre-test. This is true for all dimensions of creative writing in the pre-test. However, when the posttest test data is examined, it can be seen that the D class increased the creative writing score slightly. The class D has a particularly good increase compared to the C class. However, this increase is a relatively low increase compared to the E and F points.

When the creative writing skill scores of the C class are examined: In the pre-test, it is observed that the creative writing average of C class is sometimes higher than the other groups. However, it is seen that the C class has a very low creative writing score in the posttest. It is also noteworthy that in some aspects of creative writing pre-test and post-test scores are the same. For example; Flexibility of thoughts, richness of words. C class is the group with the lowest creative writing score in the posttest. This is the same in eight dimensions of creative writing.

If a general assessment of the groups' creative writing score averages is made: Groups will be listed in F-E-D-C form from the highest creative writing score to the lowest creative writing score.

Results and Discussions

As a result of the research, it was concluded that historical novels with different fiction forms contribute to creative writing skills at different levels. It has been determined that postmodern historical novels contribute to the creative writing skills of the students at a high level in all aspects of creative writing. Postmodern novels are not based not scientific facts, but, based on the interpretation of the past, in other words, postmodern novels give value to fiction. As the phrase goes, you can rewrite the novel with your interpretations (Yalçın Çelik, 2005: 18,82-83). Also, reality is a content for this novel genre (Çıkla, 2002: 115). A history author sometimes completes with his own imagination the gaps that historical documents cannot complete (Göğebakan, 2004: 49-51). From these views, we can conclude that postmodern novel includes fiction, that it is a product of imagination and creative thinking, and that it supports creativity. Besides, these thoughts coincide exactly with the results of the research.

Another result obtained from the research is that modern historical novels have a significant effect on creative writing skills of students. In modern novel, the historical subject is put forward, but the end is left open and the reader is expected to assimilate, analyze the subject and use creative thinking (Yalçın Çelik, 2005). In the modern novel, inner reality, the inner world of the individual and the stream of consciousness is important. The subject of the novel is abstract reality, not concrete world reality. Modern novel is a type of novel that attaches importance to symbol, fantasy, and mysticism and handles the truth with an artistic language (Somuncuoğlu Özot, 2014: 973). Temizkan (2010) stated about postmodern and modern works created on the basis of fiction that bear qualification by saying "The writing used for the world of fiction is transformed into works such as novels and stories and teaches creativity, thinking differently from others, making different connections, and redefines life". In other words, modern historical novels contributes to creativity with the fiction and dream world that it's contains. These are expressions that match the results of our research.

Another result obtained as a result of the research is that classical historical novels based on chronology developed creative writing skills even if they were small. The chronological historical novels, which mainly contain mere knowledge, are stated by a variety of scientists that they do not develop the creativity of the students, but they developed the memory knowledge. In addition, researchers state that written materials that include fiction and imagination can contribute more to creativity (Argunşah, 2016; Hemingway, 2015; Saxby, 1997; Sever, 2015). As a result of the research, it was concluded that historical novels based on chronology contribute to the memory knowledge rather than the creativity of the students.

It was determined that the curriculum provided scarcely any contribution to the dimensions of creative writing skills, "fluency of thoughts", "sentence structure", "organization", "writing style" and "grammar compliance"; and did not provide any contribution to the dimensions "richness of vocabulary", "flexibility of ideas" and "originality of ideas". In other words, it has been concluded that the curriculum has almost no effect on the creative writing skills of the students.

Suggestion

Thanks to their characteristics, postmodern historical novels provide students with a range of skills such as the ability to use their infinite interpretation power, to dream, to think versatile, and to develop perspectives. It allows students to confront many problems they may come across in their daily life in advance, and almost provides a virtual experience. These works, which include fiction in their fiction, should be used as supplementary materials in and out of the course to reinforce creativity skills which many disciplines intend to develop. Similarly, historical novels with modern fiction can also be benefited for like aims.

Creativity, creative thinking and creative writing is a skill that is nourished from imagination. The use of these works, which set the imagination in motion, will provide a stronger integration of literature-social studies. In this way, students will not be filled with chronological knowledge which has a similar content and rhetorical style of the course book, and will not be disinclined to social sciences, history and literature with historical novels that lack fiction and imagination.

Creativity is a fundamental life skill, and it not only provides a variety of conveniences to students in their learning life but also it provides a lot of conveniences to individuals at every moment in everyday life. It is not a coincidence that creative individuals, who can think differently from others, produce effective solutions to spontaneous problems in shorter times, thus be one step ahead of other individuals and are individuals who have status in the society. In order to educate the individual profile required by the age, the curriculum should be updated to further support the creative skills of the students. For sure, teaching students a fundamental set of knowledge and formation of a knowledge memory is a must-have for education. For this purpose, curriculum programs, textbooks, works based on chronological knowledge and various materials can be used. However, giving students the ability to use knowledge memory effectively, interpret, blend with imagination, think creatively and thus benefit from their own resources will allow them to stand on their own feet.

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