Educational Research and Reviews

Full Length Research Paper

Analysis of written expression revision skills of the students in faculty of education

Remzi Can

Ahi Evran University, Turkey.

This study aims to analyze written expression revision skills of students in Turkish Education Department, Education Faculty. This study was done using qualitative research method. The study group of the research consisted of 3rd grade students. The research data were collected by means of document review, a qualitative research technique. The data in the research were analyzed descriptively; content analysis was applied to the data as well. In the obtained findings, it was observed that Turkish teacher candidates did not have adequate knowledge concerning revising part of process-based writing model, and that they did not apply this step of process-based writing efficiently in the writing process. It was seen that the students made changes respectively in word level and surface level, mostly in the revision process. While these changes pertain to punctuation and correct use of particles in the surface level, they gather around sections of adding and placing in the word level.

Key words: Written expression, revision process, process-based writing.

INTRODUCTION

Individuals express themselves in writing and verbally through language. To express oneself in writing involves a more systematic and complex process compared to verbal expression. Individuals should receive a planned and process-based writing education for the development of writing skills which goes hand in hand with thinking skills. Students find it more difficult to write, and since writing lies in every step education, students prove inadequate in education.

It is easier to evaluate the morphological properties of a text in traditional written works rather than its content. It is a known fact that is not allocated enough time for activities of pursuing and evaluating the written expression processes (Coşkun, 2005). Teachers, generally, do not follow written expression with in-process

evaluation activities in order to improve their students' skills of creating text. Instead, they assess students' competency in grammar rules, especially punctuation and spelling, readability of their writing and the way they position their paper at the end of the work (Karatay, 2011).

Teachers play significant roles in students' obtaining required level of writing skill and improving a positive attitude towards writing. In this aspect, it is critical that teachers include process-based writing works in the class. Writing, in process-based writing works, is considered an exploration, renewing and changing of an idea and language. This process covers different stages before and during writing (Erdoğan and Yangın, 2014).

In Planned Writing and Evaluating Model based on the

understanding of process-based writing, individuals can develop the habit of writing while they learn how to express their emotions and ideas in a planned way, and to arrange them in a certain way. No matter the genre, a text has to have integrity. This obligation requires individual to create a writing plan. Implementing Planned Writing and Evaluating Model requires certain stages (Yılmaz and Aklar, 2015).

Conducting written expression works in a gradual way that helps students produce competent writings. Carrying out writing process with these stages will help in revealing students' deficiencies. Furthermore, it helps to provide feedback to students wherever necessary, to arrange their thoughts and correct their mistakes, to watch them during the course of their writing works' and to evaluate and manage this process well (Karatay, 2011).

There are four stages to writing process. These are: pre-writing, draft, revision of content, and sharing (Tompkins, 2000). In pre-writing stage, the subject is established and restricted. One makes a research on the subject and reveals the ideas to be written on. Target readers, the type of text and purpose of writing are determined. In the stage of creating a draft, the ideas that are determined are written in a way to create a meaningful whole. In revision, the writing is evaluated and works such as adding, deleting and correcting of spellings are performed. In the last stage, sharing (publication), the resulting product is shared with others (Uygun and oth., 2014).

Revision is the last subunit of the writing process. It is a process that a writer, with the purpose of correcting or evaluating the text in a systematical way, can resort to consciously re-reading and re-planning the composition created (Ülper and Uzun, 2009). Revision process is an inseparable part of the writing process. Taylor (1981) defines it as a creative exploration process while to Soven (1999), it is re-thinking the widest elements of a text (Sze, ???). Murray (1981) states that revision is not only a process of clarifying the text, but also a process of exploring the meaning of the text. Beason (1993) argues that revision process develops students' writing skill and is a valuable instrument of education; Britton (1993) states that revision makes the text more correct and more developed (Bridwell, 1980).

Revision process is both a complicated and easy process than it is thought to be. Revision is not a process of correction following the instructions in a manual. Authors should go back time after time, to think what writing means. In other words, writing is not an action that writer takes after thinking process is completed; to write is to think (Murray, 1981). A successful revision is not about how many times the author made changes. It is about creating a text that is the closest to the planned text (Faigley and Witte, 1981).

Revision might be the most satisfactory part of composition teaching. Teachers should hold students responsible for their text. Unfortunately, many teachers do not grasp the logic of revision process; hence they do not encourage revision and even do not allow it. When revision is encouraged as a natural process aiming at discovering the meaning of a text rather than used as a punishment, many writers will be motivated (Murray, 1981).

Students perceive revision process only as lexical changes. Experienced writers put more effort in an attempt to convey the meaning to the audience (Sommers, 1980). Good writers often turn back to read what they have written compared to ordinary writers. Teachers' way of structuring writing classes and the type of feedback they give will determine the type of correction in their writing (Stallard, 1974). Experienced writers differ from novice writers as such:

1. The time spent on writing
2. Nature and amount of correction
3. Thinking of what is written and re-reading during writing
4. Concern for clarity of the message.

Revision of inexperienced writers usually does not improve their texts. Such writers tend to revise in sections and neglect situational limitations. Correction, amount and type of change depend on some variables other than writer's skill. These variables are situational variables. Situational variables are: reason of writing, format, language, type, writer's confidence while writing, writer's familiarity with the subject, writer's understanding of the audience, level of formality, and length of writing (Faigley and Witte, 1981).

It is necessary to develop planning skills of inexperienced writers concerning writing. Conducting works in relation to process-based writing activities will be beneficial in terms of students' developing positive attitude towards writing and improving their skills regarding text creation and planning.

The related literature presents studies dealing with the revision processes of the students on the written expression level. To exemplify, Yagelsky (1995) studied the relationship between classroom context and the revisions of the students. Rijlaarsdam et al. (2003) analyzed the revision process as a component of the writing process and as a tool for learning to write. Ferris (1997) studied the influence of teacher commentary on student revision. Our study differs from the studies mentioned above in that the working group is comprised of university students.

METHODOLOGY

Aiming to analyze written expression revision skills of Students of Turkish Education Department, Education Faculty, this study was

designed as a descriptive situation determinant, using a qualitative research method.

The purpose of using descriptive analysis is to provide readers the acquired findings in an organized and interpreted way. With this, acquired data are initially described in a systematic and open way. Thereafter, these descriptions are explained and interpreted; cause-effect relations are scrutinized and a series of results are concluded. Associating and making sense of the resulting themes and making prospective guesses might be included in the dimensions of the comments to be made by researcher as well (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006).

Qualitative research, according to Creswell (2003), is a type of research based on interpretation. The researcher interprets the data acquired; he describes in detail and reveals the environment, participants and data analyses of the research and study results. Qualitative research is subjective, exploratory and open-ended.

The objective of the research

The aim of the research was to analyze written expression of the revision skills of Students in Turkish Education Department, Faculty of Education. Answers were given to the following questions:

1. On which levels do students make changes in revision process?
2. Do changes that student make in revision process make positive or negative effect to written expression?

Participants

Study group of the research consisted of 3rd grade students (n=62) who were studying in Turkish Education Department, Faculty of Education, Ahi Evran University.

Data collection instrument

Research data were collected by means of document review and a qualitative research method. Document review includes analysis of written materials containing information about the fact or facts which were aimed to be researched. Document review allows for analysis of documents, which were produced within a certain amount of time, or documents which were produced by multiple sources on a relevant subject on various intervals, based on a wide period of time (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). Students were given 5 topics in conformance with their level and asked to create a text of their choice. Students were allocated 75 minutes. Afterwards, their writings were collected. These writings were photocopied. Students handed in their writings 1 week later and asked to revise their writings and make the changes they want using a different color pen.

Data analysis

The criteria in Bridwell (1980) study were utilized in an attempt to determine which revision strategies students had used, and these criteria were organized. The criteria concerning the changes that will be possibly made during revision process of written expression are as such:

1. Surface level:

1.1 Correct spelling
1.2 Punctuation

1.3 Upper case-lower case letter
1.4 Predicate inflection
1.5 Abbreviations
1.6 Symbols
1.7 Singular-plural
1.9 Correct use of particles
1.10 Page layout

2. Word level:

2.1 Addition
2.2 Deletion
2.3 Substitution
2.4 Changing the order of a single word

3. Word group level:

3.1 Addition
3.2 Deletion
3.3 Substitution
3.4 Changing the order of word group
3.5 Turning a word into a word group
3.6 Turning a word group into a word

4. Sentence level:

4.1 Addition
4.2 Deletion
4.3 Substitution
4.4 Replacement of sentence
4.5 Turning a word, word group into a sentence
4.6 Turning a sentence into a word or a word group
4.7 Rephrasing sentence

5. Multiple sentences:

5.1 Addition
5.2 Deletion
5.3 Substitution
5.4 Changing the order of two or more sentences
5.5. Changing two or more sentences into one sentence
5.6 To indent
5.7 To not indent

6. Text level:

6.1 Change in the type of text
6.2 Change in audience category of text
6.3 Holistic change in general content
6.4 Re-writing the whole text

The data in the research were analyzed descriptively; content analysis was applied to the data as well. The data are described and interpreted in a systematic and open way in descriptive analysis, and a series of results are concluded after cause-effect relations are scrutinized. Associating and making sense out of the resulting themes and making prospective guesses might be included in the dimensions of the comments to be made by researchers as well (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006).

Two Turkish education experts read the texts created by students and inspected the corrections they made in the revision process, and whether these corrections contributed to the text. Correspondence percentage formula was used in order to determine the reliability in the content analysis. Correspondence percentage was calculated by the use of "Reliability = (Consensus + Dissensus) x 100" formula (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In these

researches, it is required to attain a minimum of 70% reliability level (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). Correspondence level in coding in the study was .92. This value was accepted for coding.

FINDINGS

Research findings are included in this part of the study.

1. The changes that students made in the surface level in their texts:

Punctuation: 17 changes were made; 1 being changing of a correct punctuation mark to the wrong one, the other changes were correct.
Abbreviation: 5 changes were made. All of these changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.
Correct spelling: 15 changes were made and all of these changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.
Correct use of particles: 20 changes were made and 14 of them improved the quality of the text and were correct.
Upper-Lower Case Letters: 5 changes were made and all of these changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.
Predicate Inflection: 4 changes were made and all of these changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.

2. The changes that students made in the word level in their texts:

Word addition: 34 additions; changes were made regarding addition of new words to the text and 7 of these changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.
Word substitution: 24 substitutions, changes were made regarding substituting a word with another one and 17 of these changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.
Word deletion: 12 deletions, changes of word deletion were made and 9 of these changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.
Changing the order of the word: 8; changes were made concerning changing the order of the word and all of these changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.

3. The changes that students made in the word group level in their texts:

Substitution: 12 word groups were deleted from the test and new ones were added in their place. 10 of these changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.
Addition: 6 additions were made in the text in word group

level and all of these changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.
Deletion: 1 deletion was made in the level of word group and this change improved the quality of the text and was correct.
Turning a word into a word group: 3 words in the texts were turned into word groups. These changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.
Turning a word group into a word: 3 word groups in the texts were changed into words. All of these changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.

4. The changes that students made in the sentence level in their texts:

Substitution: 4 substitutions; changes were made concerning substitution in the level of word group and all of these changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.
Sentence addition: 11 new sentences were added into texts. These changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.
Sentence deletion: 3 sentences were deleted from the texts. These changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.
Rephrasing sentence: 4 sentences in the texts were rephrased. 2 of these changes improved the quality of the text and were correct.

DISCUSSION

In the acquired finding, it was observed that Turkish teacher candidates did not have adequate knowledge concerning revising part of process-based writing model, and that they did not apply this step of process-based writing efficiently in the writing process. Researches, on the other hand, prove that Turkish teacher candidates, who apply process-based writing process which includes revision step, are more successful than teachers who apply traditional writing education (Karatay, 2011; Yılmaz and Aklar, 2015).

In the research carried out by Uygun et al. (2014), it was seen that the application of the revision process in the written expression provided students with the structural improvement in their writings. In this stage, the students' adding, deleting and reorganizing of their writings made the writings more qualified. The instructions given directly during the revision process improved the quality of students' writings in the experimental group more than the ones in the control group (Fitzgerald and Markham, 1987).

According to the research, the experienced writers spend 25% of their total writing time in the revision process whereas secondary school students spend less than 1% in the same stage. Students should learn about

the necessary techniques to revise their writings as the revision process plays an important role in the improvement of the writing (Christiansen, 1990).

In the findings, it was noted that the students made changes respectively in word and surface level the most in the revision process. While these changes pertain to punctuation and correct use of suffixes in the surface level, they gather around parts of adding and placing in the word level. In Bridwel (1980) study, it was seen that the changes were mostly in word and surface levels. In Sommers (1980) study, it was found that experienced writers focus the changes they make during revision process, in the sentence level and these changes include addition and deletion. Students seldom made more global changes, such as starting over, rewriting most of a paper, adding or deleting parts of the paper, or adding or deleting ideas (Lehr, 1995).

In this study, it is seen that the changes that students made are generally in the word level and these changes mostly improved the quality of the text. In Stallar (1974) research, good writers changed more words than novice writers. It was seen In this study that students did not make any paragraph change at all. In Stallard (1974) research, it was seen that good writers changed more paragraphs than novice writers.

In this study, students did not make changes in multiple sentences and text level. Based on this finding, it can be stated that the absence of changes in these stages which require the skill of synthesizing indicates that students have difficulty in text synthesizing. Bridge et al. (1997) also think that students have problems in synthesizing writing skills.

Students lack adequate repetition in thinking and information analysis, creating answers and use of knowledge in decision-making which they need in order to create their own essays (Cavkaytar, 2010). Below recommendations are made parallel to the research findings:

1. Instructors should allocate more time on process-based writing in writing classes.
2. Instructors should inform their students more about revision stage in writing classes and have students make applications.
3. Instructors should examine students' works in writing and provide feedbacks.
4. The students have not needed a revision on paragraph and text levels. The revision processes on these levels should be carried out with the students themselves during the lesson hours.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

REFERENCES

Beason L (1993). Feedback and revision in writing across the curriculum classes. Rese. Teach. English 27:395-422.

Bridwell LS (1980) Revising Strategies in Twelfth Grade Students' Transactional Writing. Res. Teach. English 14:197-222.

Cavkaytar S (2010). Utilizing writing process model in development of primary school written expression skills. Int. Soc. Res. J. 3(10):133-139.

Christiansen M (1990). The Importance of revision in writing composition. Education Digest. 56(2):70.

Coşkun E (2005). Correlation, Consistency and Text Elements in Narrative Expressions of Primary School Students. Ankara: Gazi University, Unpublished Doctorate Dissertation.

Creswell JW (2003). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. London: Sage Publications, Inc.

Erdoğan Ö, Yangın B (2014). Effect of process-based writing applications on written expression and the attitude regarding writing J. Faculty Educ. Abant İzzet Baysal University. 14(1):438-459.

Faigley L, Witte S (1981). Analyzing revision. College Composition Communication 32:400-414.

Ferris DR (1997). The Influence of Teacher Commentary on Student Revision. TESOL Q. 31(2):315-339.

Fitzgerald J, Markham LR (1987). Teaching Children about Revision in Writing. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

Karatay H (2011). Process-based writing models: Planned writing and evaluation, Writing Education, M. Özbay (Ed.), Ankara: Pegem A Academy.

Lehr F (1995). Revision in the Writing Process. Reading English and Communication.

Miles MB, Huberman AM (1994) Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook, 2nd ed., SagePublications, Newbury Park, CA.

Murray DM (1981). Making meaning clear: The logic of revision. J. Basic Writing. 03(3):33-40.

Rijlaarsdam G, Couzijn M, Van Den Bergh Huub (2003). The study of revision as a writing process and as a learning-to-write process. Two Prospective Research Agendas, Revision. Cognitive and Instructional Processes. Series: Studies in Writing 13:189-207.

Sommers N (1980). Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers. College Composition and Communication. 31(4):378-388.

Stallard CK (1974). An Analysis of the Writing Behavior of Good Student Writers. Res. Teach. English. 8:206-218.

Sze C (2002). A case study of the revision process of a reluctant ESL student writer. TESL Canada J. 19(2):21-36.

Tompkins GE (2000). Teaching writing – balancing process and product, 3rd edition. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Uygun M, Aktürkoğlu B, Dedeoğlu H (2014). Effect of teaching of self-regulation strategy development on self-regulation skill and attitude aiming at written expression and writing. Int. J. Soc. Sci. 28(2):131-156.

Ülper H, Uzun L (2009). Effect of writing education programs prepared according to cognitive process model on success of students. Primary Educ. Online J. 8(3):651-665.

Yagelsky RP (1995). The Role of Classroom Context in the Revision Strategies of Student Writers. Res. Teach. English 29(2):216-238.

Yıldırım A, Şimşek H (2006). Qualitative research methods in social sciences (5th Edition). Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.

Yılmaz M, Aklar S (2015). Effect of Planned Writing and Evaluation Model on Essay Writing Skills of 5th Grade Students Studying in Primary School, Bartın University Journal of Faculty of Education, XIV. International Participation Classroom Teaching Symposium (21-23 May 2015) Special Edition pp. 223-234.