

Does writing skills help students to overcome their shyness in oral performance?

Yazılı anlatım sözlü anlatımdaki çekimser tutumun üstesinden gelebilir mi?

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Özet

Bu çalışma yazma eyleminin yabancı bir dili sözlü olarak kullanmada ne kadar yardımcı olabileceğini araştırır.

Birçok iç ve dış faktör, insanların yeteneklerini olumsuz yönde etkileyebilir. Hastalıklar, kişilerin buldukları ortam, atmosfer ve çevre, kişisel farklılıklar, psikolojik dengesizlikler, fikirler, sosyal, eğitimsel altyapı, tercihler, kültürel motifler, farklılıklar ve daha bunun gibi birçok neden insanların beceri ve yeteneklerini ortaya koymalarında etkilidirler. Bütün bu etkilere rağmen bireyler yeteneklerini geliştirebilirler mi? Neden yazma becerisi? Yazma eylemi, hem uluslararası bir iletişim kaynağı, hem de yabancı dil öğretiminde gerekli olan ve kullanılan tüm becerileri, okuma, dilbilgisi, kelime dağarcığı, heceleme, imla, fikir bütünlüğü gibi, içinde barındırır. Kısa süreli olan bu çalışmada, yazma dersinin her basamağı gözlemlenmiştir. Sonuçlar göstermektedir ki, yazma becerisi, aynı zamanda anlatma eylemi olarak kullanıldığında, öğrencideki farkındalık ve katılım artmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yazılı anlatım, sözlü anlatım, dil öğreniminde çekimserlik

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Abstract

This study prepared to see whether writing skills can help speaking or not. Many things interrupt people's abilities in a negative way. These things can be named as internal and external factors such as; illnesses, atmosphere, personal differences, and psychological disorders, ideas, social and educational background, preferences, cultural elements, and several others. However, can people develop their abilities? Why writing was chosen? As being a global skill and covering all the other skills as well such as, reading, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and unity of any kind of idea, writing is one of the main means of communication. In this short term research, assessments for pre/while/past teaching steps were considered throughout the period. The results imply that, using writing as a means of louder communication affects students awareness and increase their participation.

Keywords: Writing skills, speaking skills, shyness in language learning

The Research

Aim

Throughout the second language teaching history, the most common problem of teachers, is the speaking skills development of students. Students can get the idea of using a language with its own rules, but when it comes to producing it loudly, there the problem starts, and the language stucks. There seems to have gab between language teaching and make it aloud. At the beginning of the learning process, language is silent, but its structure speaks. Some silent students have extremely good writing skills. This can be seen in the exams. However, the point is that this writing skill and capability should somehow help the speaking. Students are shy in speaking, writing may overcome their shyness and let them to participate more.

Objectives

One of the most important objectives is to involve the students totally to the process both with participation, and self evaluation. The other important one is to encourage them write in a second language writing format. Also, the importance of proper handwriting is one of the main targets. Other point is about realizing. One way is realizing one's own potentials and showing them, another way is identifying a good and a bad writing with related and irrelevant sentences – in fact the ideas. This shows the appropriate reaction towards the context and the subject which helps in speaking as well. Organizing one's ideas is really important at this point. Using fewer erasers was another objective in this study to maintain the fluency in writing. Creating a discussion atmosphere in the classroom in order to get students involve during the lessons was another aim of the research.

Research questions

I wanted to find answers to the following questions:

What is the hidden reason of this silence?

Can it be shyness?

How can we overcome this basic problem?

Can other language skills help them in this process?

Does self-expression in writing help students to express themselves orally?

Can writing skills be an indicator in oral expression?

Are individual expression differences observable in writing classes?

What may keep the students from autonomy?

What are the common attitudes towards the target language?

As mentioned above, many questions come into minds when realizing the participation problems in English speaking classes. So, can inner expression be embodied in self expression loudly? We can overcome student’s shyness during participation and performance, in writing skills by self expression.

Research method

At the beginning of the research, in order to prove their shyness and understanding the situation, students had to answer a survey consisting of five questions.

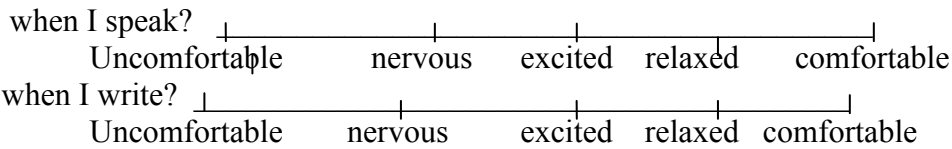
Answer the Following Questions

1. Tick just one answer

I express myself better when I am speaking.

I express myself better when I am writing.

2. Cross one answer. How do I feel...



3. Choose one answer.

I like to participate in a group. Yes No

I like to work on my own. Yes No

4. Choose answers (You can choose more than one answer)

1. During my speaking, these are important.

- a) Fluency c) Vocabulary choice
- b) Grammar d) Pronunciation

2. During my writing, these are important.

- a) Unity c) Vocabulary choice
- b) Grammar d) Spelling

5. Complete the sentences.

In speaking,

I want to

I need to

In writing,

I want to

I need to

Here are some important results. For the first question, out of 19 students, 11 of them can express themselves better in writing. It is a considerable number. In fact, we have two different

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student profiles in here. Some students know their situation and answer the question in a real way; on the other hand, some students just ignored their situation and didn't want to show that they are not good at speaking.

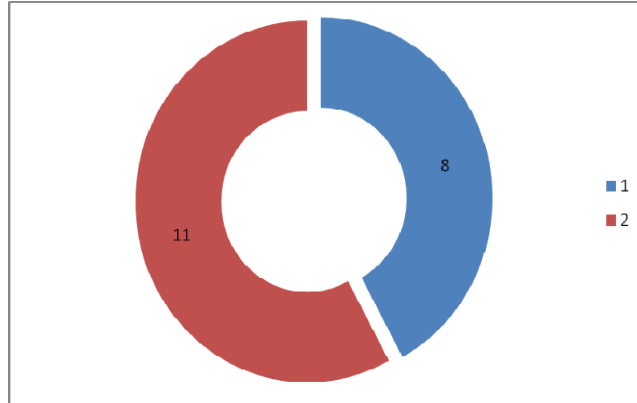


Table- 1: General results

In the following diagram numbers represent moods.

Number 1 - uncomfortable

Number 5 - excited

Number 3 - nervous

Number 11 - relaxed/ comfortable

The mood of the participants during the writing process is mostly comfortable.

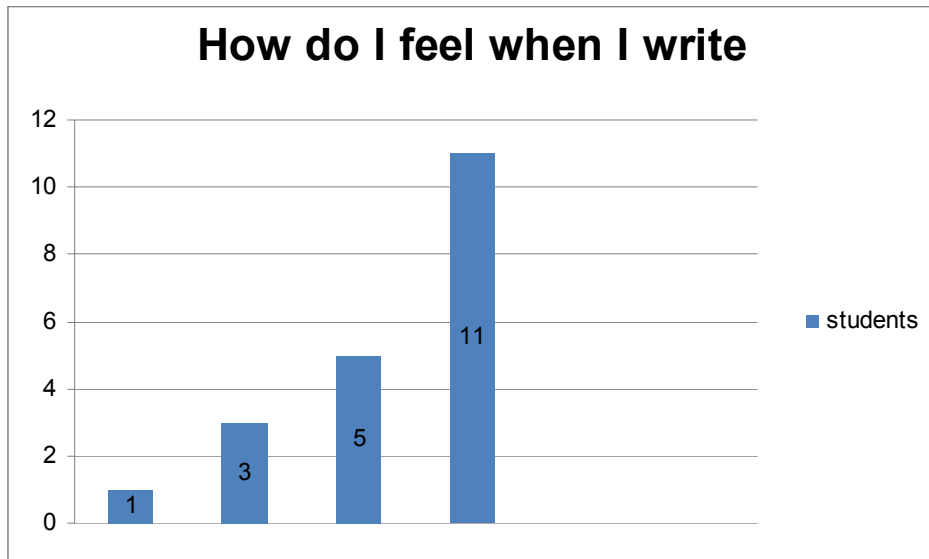


Table- 2: Detailed results

When it comes to speaking, the numbers immediately change. Now the numbers are representing these moods. There was also ‘comfortable’ choice, but none of the students chose that mood in speaking.

Number 1 - uncomfortable

Number 5 - relaxed

Number 3 - nervous

Number 11 - excited

As the results imply, the majority of the class feel better while writing and results are the opposite in speaking.

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Table-3: Detailed results

- *What are questions 3,4 and 5?* For questions number 3 and 4, there is not a clear cut distinction between the two answers. Many students preferred both group and on their own study styles. Also, they found every item important with very few individual differences.

For question number 5, mainly they want to speak better, fast and fluently. They know that they need to relax, study more, do exercise, be careful about pronunciation. In writing, they want to write with a good handwriting, using more vocabulary, prepositions and signal words, and order their paragraph. These answers were important because they show that the students had already known the important points of writing lessons. Again, they know that they should be careful, learn new words, structures and use them in their writing. This result indicates the self realization and desire in progress both in speaking and writing, which is very motivating. They also, saw some parallelism between the two skills. This was also noticeable by looking at their answers as wants and needs.

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- *What did we do through the process?* This study was conducted with adult students with a very little English background, aged between 18-35 whose native language is Turkish. They were studying at a university prep-class with diverse educational background as well. The participants are given 5 skills- Main Course, Reading, Writing, Listening, and Computer skills. They have four writing lessons per week for forty minutes each. The materials were two writing books named as, 'Get Ready to Write', 'Ready to Write'. These books were giving writing strategies about academic writing. Throughout the research, sample paragraphs were studied on in order to talk over a paragraph together, to realize the errors, and find out how to make a paragraph better. All these created a discussion scene within the class. Group work, self-evaluation, pre-writing, brainstorming, clustering, drafting, editing- some editing done by the teacher, some done by classmates, and sometimes by the students on their own were the methods that had been used through the research period.

The first task was about them. They were supposed to introduce themselves to the teacher in a written form. Before starting to write this point was mentioned. 'What do you want your teacher to know about you?'. This was a sign for three reasons. One of them was to get information about the students, the other was to check their writing ability in English, and lastly to understand if they really know themselves and can express it to someone else, that they just met. This was of course the teacher. This study was done in the classroom to make them feel free to write anything they wanted to. The teacher might get some piece of 'secret' information about their life, personal identities in order to understand and catch the basis of the coming problem in participation. Mainly, the results showed the shyness of the students as the reason of not speaking a new language in the class. The research started with self-expression on a paper.

Then, it is continued by 'think aloud' step. A topic was chosen to talk over. Students made to feel free to say any words that come in to their mind related with the subject. Each respond was written on the board. This basic study helped them to realize 'What do I already know about the topic?', and made them move because they started to participate. They were encouraged about their background knowledge and how to use it. Also, group work was an useful study to check whether they like to work individually or being a member of a particular group. In addition, it was a good study to socialize with in a group by making conversations in the target language. They discuss their opinions, share and add more to each other. As you can see, the writing did not started yet, this is just the level, in which they realize, they had things to mention.

In this point, when they realize some of the things about themselves and the new language, the participants were given lots of writing tasks as assessments. Also, they prepared their own self-checklist. All of them put in their personal dossiers.

- *The Topics Used* The subjects of the writing were decided firstly, according to the curriculum of the school programme. Some other topics were used as well, to maintain the unity of the
- project and to motivate the students more by taking them away from the book. These subjects were in the following order.
 1. Write about yourself.
 2. Physical appearance of a friend.
 3. Describe your classroom.
 4. Typical work day (guessing from a cartoon.)

5. Holiday diary
6. Memories (The scariest, unhappiest, happiest)
7. Traffic problems in your hometown.
8. Letter writing.
9. Bibliography
10. Opinion paragraph about restrictions.
11. Postcard writing.
12. Classroom studies on: 'Love', 'Animals', and 'Two Different Sides of Istanbul'.
13. Free writings (Students chose their own topics)

All these works of students were the real datas to examine their progress in writing and expressing. In each step they were able to discuss more about the given topic.

Outcomes

For each conversation, the teacher did not give time limitation, since each person talked about 3, up to 5 minutes, or even more. During these conversations, the teacher analyzed and checked these points. Firstly, the grammar, to see if there are any structural mistakes. Secondly, the vocabulary, to check if students can use the new words since lots of new words was studied during the research period. Lastly, the topic and the context were considered. The parallelism between them was important to prepare the students to the real speaking atmosphere of the daily lives. Understanding and responding are both very important in second language using, in order to prevent misunderstandings. These points were taken into consideration because in the surveys that the students were supposed to answer; grammar, vocabulary and fluency was their common problem that they wanted to develop. By focusing on these points, we can get a positive impression about the class. They could talk over the given subjects or the ones that they chose. There wasn't a total change but at least the students tried to do their best to express themselves, they could realize their own mistakes, and even ask to their teacher. On the other hand; the other students tried to help the speaker, they participate within the conversation and add their own ideas. This was really encouraging for all of them. During this sharing atmosphere they felt free to talk and they even couldn't recognize that they were discussing in another language.

In a way, within their behaviours and body language, it was obvious to see the sense of self-achievement, which was one of the aims in language teaching. In addition, students had a great possession in their hands that is their own portfolios. This portfolio system helped them to see their efforts and development by themselves and by the teacher as well.

Conclusion

To end the research after eight weeks, another survey was given to the students consisting of 15 questions. It has questions about both writing and speaking.

The survey shows the students own answers. What they can do or what can still not do. If it is examined in detail, questions 4 and 10 got 7 points and important because they both about expressing one's own ideas. 7 is a good result out of 16 students. Also questions 5, 8 14 were chosen by many students which are about speaking. In addition, writing skills which were one of the main objectives in the beginning, understood by the several students. In questions, 1, 7, 11, 12, 15 this can be seen. Question number 6 is a good one for self awareness and most of the students, chose this question since they can realize their own mistakes. On the other hand,

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questions 3 and 9 got the lowest point. Very few students can participate in a discussion. Their English level is an indicator in this result.

During the research, some videos were recorded while students were talking about what they wrote.

The research result

In conclusion, the results of this research provide some insights to psychological, physical effects on second language learning. The current study showed to understand even a short term period of intensive writing can help students to gain more access in participating. The students started to ask more about their own writing. Apart from the given tasks, they wrote extra papers and wanted to be checked by the teacher. This indicates the sense of achievement. By writing they found themselves involved in English. However their writing skill obviously developed, the comprehension of the class was good but applying was still less. Expressing tried by the students but when they couldn't find themselves enough to express, they wanted to use the native language immediately. By the teacher's 'in English' command, they tried and replace some words in order to be meaningful. This problem is normal at their level in fact as they are not able to express themselves with enough structure and vocabulary, as they can do in their first language. The aims and objectives were partly achieved about the self-awareness, trying, realizing, understanding, and using the second language. In this limited time of period, it is good to see any kind on development in each of the participants, whether in writing or in speaking.

Suggestions for further researches

Learning to read in a second language is different from learning to read the mother tongue. Studies on different kinds of skills integrated with writing will be helpful. First of all, long term writing studies will help them more. It is possible to choose a book and find some related topics to write and talk over in the further researches. So, reading and writing can be completely interwoven. During this period the reading average can also be seen and get increase.

References

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