The Impact of a Semiotic Analysis Theory-Based Writing Activity on Students' Writing Skills[1]

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Abstract

Problem Statement: In entering the world intellectually and affectively equipped, humans develop in a systemic way that encompasses both thought and art education and in which written, oral, and visual texts are important tools. In particular, visual literacy, which refers to the interpretation of elements other than written text, including images, symbols, shapes, and colors, has come into prominence through new learning approaches that emphasize the importance of using numerous stimuli. All texts convey a meaning and a message, which to comprehend requires textual analysis, the different theories and methods of which vary among various types of texts. As discussed in this article, the semiotic analysis theory provides tools for textual analysis concerning the dimensions of narrative discourse.

Purpose: This study aimed to determine how a writing lecture activity based on semiotic analysis theory affects students' writing skills. To that end, cartoon caricatures were selected as visual texts for analysis.

Method: This experimental research based on pre- and post-tests was conducted with a dependent group of 40 7th-grade students in a school within Turkey's Ministry of Education. Data collection involved having each student develop two texts for caricature analysis: one prior to an experiment based on the traditional approach, and the other after an experiment based on the semiotic method. The differences between scores received for each text by all students were analyzed.

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Findings: Results revealed that textual analysis based on the semiotic theory was more effective for the writing skills of students than the traditional writing method with respect to three areas of evaluation: understanding the subject, accessing the message, and multidimensional interpretation.

Conclusion and Recommendations: The findings suggest that the proposed method of semiotic analysis is an alternative to traditional methods used in Turkish-language courses that can enhance the effectiveness of learning and positively affect students' creative-writing skills.

Keywords: Semiotic analysis theory, cartoon caricatures, writing education, writing skills

Introduction

As an integrated teaching field, language teaching prioritizes activities focused on multiple skill areas in order to enable students to understand the role that language plays in all aspects and dimensions of communication. Within the scope of language teaching, written, oral, and visual texts are essential tools. For one, texts carry certain meanings and messages, which to discover requires textual analysis. Among the different theories and methods applied in analyzing different types of texts, semiotic analysis theory offers several tools for analysis in the dimension of narrative discourse (Kiran & Kiran, 2011).

Recently more prominent in fields of language and communication, visual literary encompasses the analysis and interpretation of messages communicated with nonverbal means such as lines, drawings, and symbols. In general, whether verbal or visual, different stimuli are needed to make any kind of reading effective. In that context, visual reading has shown significant development in Turkey and even been classified as a separate domain in 1st–5th grades (Gunes, 2013). Accordingly, in 5th-grade textbooks based on the program of the Turkish Ministry of Education (MEB, 2005), a writing exercise involving a cartoon caricature was added as a visual reading activity. Even though the activity is appropriate and valid, in being carried out without any methodological basis or theory, it ranks among the noticeable shortcomings of Turkey's language-teaching system.

To improve the activity, this study investigates the contributions of semiotic analysis, a method of linguistics analysis, regarding the development of understanding- and expression-related skills starting at the lowest levels of language education. This study is significant insofar as it has been conducted with the purpose of transferring theoretical knowledge into application and introducing new, diverse, functional activities and tasks to language education. The method investigated was found to make positive, constructive contributions to students' understanding- and expression-related skills and can therefore be included as a new, alternative method in language education programs. Although studies have been carried out to analyze verbal and visual texts according to the semiotics method (Iseri, 2010; Kuzu, 2004;

Turan, 2012), no study has yet to apply the method to in-class activities in primary and secondary education. In support, Bozkurt and Uzun (2015) have stated that most research on the topic has had descriptive aims and that few studies have proposed novel approaches. However, to modernize education, it is necessary that scientific and theoretical knowledge be transferred to applications and activities in educational environments. To that end, this study aims to evaluate how a writing task based on semiotic analysis theory affects students' writing skills.

Formulated according to the aim of the study, the primary research question asks whether a writing activity based on semiotic analysis theory is more effective than an activity with the same content based on more a traditional method.

The sub-research questions are thus:

1) Is the semiotic method more effective than the traditional method in understanding the subject of the text?

2) Is the semiotic method more effective than the traditional method in finding the message of the text?

3) Is the semiotic method more effective than the traditional method in processing the subject in a multidimensional way?

Writing Training

Rapid advances in technology and the spread of popular culture have significantly reduced interest in reading and writing, yet increased interest in visual products to be consumed rapidly. In short, such development has made watching more common than reading (Aksaclioglu & Yilmaz, 2007), and as a result, reading visual materials and benefitting from the practice has gained importance. The attention that television programs, movies, and computer games have received has brought forward media literacy education (Kuzu & Altas, 2011), particularly since using multiple senses in learning processes facilitates quick, captivating, and lasting learning.

With such an important role in language teaching, writing requires more knowledge and skills than it does talent, especially when it comes to creating informative texts. Yet, the language skill with which students have the most difficulty, writing is developed more slowly than other language skills, as well as requires the use of various methods and exercises. In the process, the difficulties that students encounter with writing stem from psychological, cognitive, and even grammatical problems experienced during the writing process (Byrne, 1988). Moreover, students who have not acquired writing skills face numerous practical problems: being misunderstood or not being understood at all, being perceived as inadequate by instructors or communication partners, being unmotivated to write, and not enjoying the writing process. The solution to these problems lies in having students acquire writing habits so that they can enjoy the writing process (Kavcar, Oguzkan, & Sever, 2012).

As an analytical skill, writing develops and nurtures cognitive processes. It is also a productive process that depends both on analysis, for requires assessment and problem solving, and on synthesis, for it also requires novel compositions and formations. Understandably, analysis and synthesis are not the ends of this continuum, however; on the contrary, both are used when developing texts (Sharples, 1998). As Covey (2006) has stated, writing is a mental–neural activity that integrates consciousness with subconsciousness, thereby filtering and clarifying ideas.

Semiotics

Derived from the Ancient Greek *sēmeion*, meaning most broadly "sign" or "mark," semiotics is the science of the structure and functioning of any kind of arrangement of signs and symbols used for communication (Cevizci, 2002; Culler, 2002; Erdogan & Alemdar, 1990). It is a tool for analyzing and interpreting all signs and symbols used in communication, including those in languages, words, images, traffic signs, sounds, music, advertising, architecture, fashion, literature, painting, and cartoons, to name some common examples (Parsa & Parsa, 2004; Rifat, 1996). In short, semiotics encompasses all meaningful structures that shape social and individual discourses.

The sign is a twofold entity that consists of a signifier and a signified. Whereas the signifier embodies the physical dimensions—the shape, sound, and even objecthood—of a sign, the signified is the concept that this sign represents (Barthes, 1993; Parsa & Parsa, 2004). In a sense, the signified is the mental image of a concept, whereas the signifier is the word or phrase used to express that concept (Barthes, 1993). Saussure (1976) has conceived semiotics as a general science broader than linguistics that involves analyzing and teaching the characteristics of signs, their roles in society, and the rules that they obey. According to Kiran (1998), semiotics does not approach meaning as an abstract concept, with vague boundaries, but is interested in aspects of meaning determined, restricted, and altogether formed by natural language in different ways. The product of these formations—signs—consist of words, phrases, punctuation, and entire texts. For a practical example, Kiran (1998: 237) has described how France's education system has incorporated semiotics and used it in teaching French: "A group of text analysis teachers and writers who have been following the lectures and works of A. J. Greimas since 1966 are able to incorporate semiotics into the French education system as a teaching and analytical method, almost without using the metalanguage of the theory, by minimizing the formulas and putting great emphasis on visualization." By using all of the above as a springboard, this study aimed to gauge the effectiveness of incorporating semiotics into language-teaching contexts.

Caricatures and Creative Writing

From the Italian word *caricare*, caricature is an art form of exaggerated drawings of people and items for comical effect. It has been defined as "a humor-based visual message" (Arik, 1998: 42) and as "patterns of exaggerated lines that create smiles" (Topuz, 1997: 9). By provoking thought and having aesthetic features, caricature, on

the one hand, allows thoughts and feelings to come into prominence and be refined, while on the other, initiates the creation of political agendas, displays oppositional stances, and develops awareness of problematic social issue. As such, caricatures rank among incontrovertible teaching materials, especially in the domain of language teaching. To a great extent, caricature moreover uses visual language metaphorically, as in advertisements, and can play a critical role in language teaching (Ozmutlu, 2009; Ozsahin, 2009).

Interpreting caricatures is a thought process, while writing based on caricatures' messages is a process of creative production. Indeed, Benveniste (1995) has posited that language a physical phenomenon that establishes relevance between words and concepts, thereby creating separate signs from the referents of objects and circumstances. He moreover avers that language forms metaphors that are expressions of conceptual richness that can be transferred between designations.

Caricature, and thus humor, provides highly suitable teaching material in respect to providing students and teachers with a comfortable, engaging, and motivating classroom atmosphere. Researchers have shown that humor relates to cognitive skills such as problem solving, creativity, language skills and coping with stress (Bayulgen, 2011). Some educators appreciate humor for its capacity to motivate students, accelerate their understanding, and develop a sense of confidence in them, as well as believe that it initiates a positive learning environment for students and teachers alike. Educators also use humor in their lectures in the belief that it creates a sense of acceptance among students, reduces stress, and helps them to conceive social and universal realities (Minchew & Hopper, 2008).

Accordingly, caricatures clearly relate directly to creativity and can support methods used to develop creative-writing skills (Ors, 2007, Sever, 2007). In response, non-verbal caricatures have been selected in this study to promote visual reading and motivate students to engage a more efficient thought process.

Method

Design

The study followed a single group pre- and post-test design (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005) to investigate whether any meaningful difference emerges in measurements of a randomly selected experiment group, before and after the application of the independent variable. If post-test scores are greater than pre-test scores, then the application of the independent variable will have been proven successful (Buyukozturk, 2015; Karasar, 2011).

A symbolic view of the model is given in Table 1. *G* represents the research group, O_1 the pre-measurement obtained from the group, *X* the experimental operation, and O_2 the final measurement obtained from the group (Buyukozturk, 2015).

Table 1.

Symbolic View of the Model

Group	Pre-test	Operation	Post-test
G	O_1	**X**	O_2

Research Sample

To perform the study in a practical, cost-effective way, participants were recruited from a secondary school under the purview of the Turkish Ministry of Education located in Ankara. Since the school maintains only one 7th-grade class, sampling was impossible, and as a result, the entire population ($N = 40$) was recruited. However, five students who did not participate in the study's instructional period or the post-test were excluded, thereby leaving a participant group of 35 students.

Research Instruments and Procedures

In text linguistics, the term *text production* encompasses the concept of composition writing. According to Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), the initial and basic phases of text production are identifying and maintaining the subject, reaching the primary message, and dimensioning the subject. During instruction in this study, special importance was placed upon those aspects, and compositions used as data collection tools were evaluated and assessed by two field experts based on those criteria. Grading was performed by using an equally spaced scale system, and the field experts graded each composition out of 30 points possible: the subject (10 points possible), the primary message (10 points possible), and dimensioning the subject (10 points possible).

The field experts selected 11 caricatures: 10 for instruction and one for assessment. Nonverbal caricatures were selected in order to improve the visual reading skills of students. The age and grade level of students was considered during caricature selection, and caricatures thought to embody characteristics that could develop awareness of nature and society were selected. The caricature used in instruction was an award-winning piece by renowned Polish illustrator Pawel Kuczynski, who often addresses social and political subjects in his work. The caricature was used with the artist's permission.

The study was conducted in three steps. In the first step, a caricature (Figure 1) as it appears in the Ministry of Education 2015 program was distributed to students, who were asked to write what it reminded them of in a composition. In this step, students were reminded that they needed to address the subject and primary message, as well as to justify their argument of the subject with supporting messages. Pre-test data were obtained from assessment during this phase.
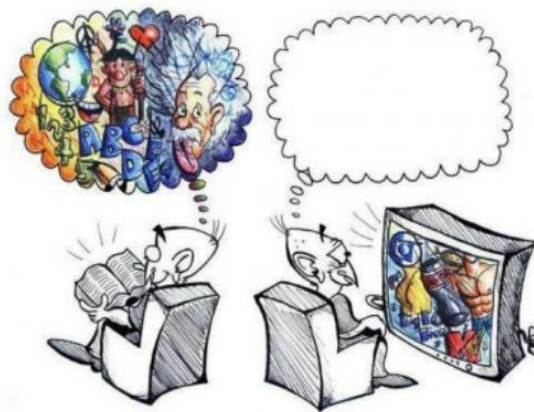

Figure 1. The caricature used in pre- and post-test practice

In the second part of the study (i.e., intervention), the same study group received instruction in semiotic analysis. At the beginning of instruction, the concepts of the signifier and signified were taught to students, by referring to several signifiers that students could visually access in their everyday environment (e.g., in the classroom and in the sky) and by asking them what meanings the signifiers conveyed. By taking into account the educational level of students, the two dimensions of signs were indirectly communicated to students without any theoretical or conceptual information about the method. In what follows, a sample caricature analysis describes the process, for which the caricature in Figure 2 is used. Table 2 presents a sample analysis of some signs in that caricature.

Figure 2. The caricature used for teaching semiotic analysis

Table 2.

Sample Sign Analysis

Signifiers	Signified
Naked baby	- Being a baby: Innocence, unconsciousness, openness to influence, and being a gamester - Being naked: Being male and purity - Baby's action: Struggling to wind up the toy and striving
Helmet	Military service, war, protection from death, and weight
White dove	Peace, medium of communication (i.e., having a wind-up toy indicates the will to use it)
Light	Luminousness, hope, and visibility
Red in the background	Association with blood and fire

In the next step, students were expected to make comments, through which they could be guided to recognize the main idea and message: "We should favor peace instead of war."

Raimes (1983) has stated that the writing process consists of three steps: prewriting, writing, and rewriting. Prewriting activities (e.g., brainstorming, listing, and discussion) can be helpful for drawing outlines, while awareness and content planning are the primary variables of the writing process; content planning involves identifying topics, subtopics, and sub-aims and presenting them in a hierarchical order (Hayes & Flower, 1980). In the next step, the writing process was introduced with the caricature whose message had been grasped. Students were asked to develop the main idea in a planned way, by using supporting details ascertained via signifieds. This exercise was repeated more concisely with nine different caricatures of social contents during a period of 8 lecture hours to ensure that an adequate level of learning was achieved.

In the third phase of the study, the post-test was conducted. By using the caricature selected for the pre-test (Figure 1), each students was asked to write another composition. Both datasets (i.e., measurements from the pre- and post-tests) were assessed separately by two field experts, and pre- and post-test scores were obtained. The experts assessed each essay on a 30-point scale. For example, a student given 9 out of 30 points before instruction achieved 30% success (9/30 = 0.30), whereas a student given 27 out of 30 points after instruction achieved 90% success (27/30 = 0.90). To contribute to the reliability of assessment, the experts were not informed whether assessment represented the pre- or post-test.

The grading key given to the field experts is as follows:

- Topic: 30 points

- Primary message: 30 points

- Enhancing the topic: 40 points (of 100 possible points)

- Enhancing the topic was performed with each of the eight characteristics of Caricature 1 (e.g., Being a source of happiness, Being a tool for fun, and Being enlightening), each worth 5 points (5 × 8 = 40).

Validity and Reliability

To gather evidence regarding the reliability of the grading process, the correlation between the grades of the two field experts was investigated. For that, Pearson product–moment correlation analysis was performed. The single-variable normality assumption of the analysis was examined by using the descriptive statistics of skewness and kurtosis coefficients. Skewness and kurtosis values in the range of [-2,2] ensured the single-variable normality assumption (George & Mallery, 2010), whereas skewness and kurtosis coefficient values in the range of [-2,2] for all variables satisfied the single-variable normality assumption. Correlation coefficients obtained from analysis appear in Table 3.

Table 3.

Correlation Coefficients of Expert Assessors' Reliability

	Assessor	Coeff.
Pre-test	TK	.883**
Post-test	GG	.949**

**Correlation is significant at the .05 level

As Table 3 shows, the inter-reliability of expert assessors for pre- and post-test scores was high. Since the correlation coefficients were significant at the .05 level and the coefficients obtained from the pre- and post-test are highly similar, assessor reliability was confirmed.

To determine the internal consistency of the pre- and post-test scores together with assessor reliability, Cronbach's alphas of the internal consistency coefficients were calculated to be .84 for the pre-test and .89 for the post-test, values obtained by calculating the average of points awarded by two different raters.

Data Analysis

Pre- and post-test scores regarding the topic, message, and enhancement of the topic were obtained by having two field experts evaluate the students' essays. To identify any significant difference between students' pre- and post-test scores, a dependent sample *t*-test was used, namely to compare the means of two related groups in order to detect any statistically significant differences (Buyukozturk, Cokluk, & Koklu, 2012). In that test, the difference of points obtained during the two measurements needed to display normal distribution. Whether the differences of scores obtained from the pre- and post-tests were normally distributed was tested by using skewness and kurtosis values; for the topic, message, enhancement of the topic, and overall score, those values were .136 and .223, .187 and .304, -.165 and .818, and .181 and .562, respectively, which show that the differences were normally distributed.

Results

Dependent *t*-test results gathered to determine whether a significant difference exists between the pre- and post-test scores for understanding the topic appear in Table 4. A significant difference emerged between the scores that students received on the pre- and post-tests ($t = 3.38$, $p < .05$), whereas the mean of students' post-test scores ($\bar{X}_{\text{post-test}} = 6.68$) was significantly greater than that of their pre-test scores ($\bar{X}_{\text{pre-test}} = 5.37$). Those results indicate that the semiotic analysis-based essay-writing activity effectively allowed students to acquire the skill of understanding a text's topic.

Table 4.

Comparison of Pre- and Post-Test Scores for Understanding the Topic of the Text

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	S	SD	t	p
Pre-test	35	5.37	2.95	34	3.38	.002
Post-test	35	6.68	2.79			

Dependent *t*-test results conducted to determine any significant difference between the pre- and post-test scores for identifying the primary message of the text are presented in Table 5. As shown, a significant difference emerged between the scores that students received on the pre- and post-tests ($t = 2.98$, $p < .05$). Since the mean of students' post-test scores ($\bar{X}$post-test = 6.50) was significantly greater than that of their pre-test scores ($\bar{X}$pre-test = 5.26), the semiotic analysis-based essay-writing activity effectively allowed students to acquire the skill of finding the primary message of the text.

Table 5.

Comparison of Pre- and Post-Test Scores for Finding the Message of the Text

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	S	SD	t	p
Pre-test	35	5.26	3.01	34	2.98	.006
Post-test	35	6.50	2.63			

Dependent *t*-test results calculated to determine whether any significant difference occurred between pre- and post-test scores for processing the topic in a multifaceted way and enhancing it appear in Table 6. As that table shows, there was a significant difference between the scores that students received on the pre- and post-test ($t = 3.43$, $p < .05$), and the mean of students' post-test scores ($\bar{X}_{\text{post-test}}$ = 5.33) was significantly greater than that of their pre-test scores ($\bar{X}_{\text{pre-test=4.03}}$). As such, the semiotic analysis-based essay-writing activity effectively allowed students to acquire the skill of enhancing the topic of the text and processing it in a multifaceted way.

Table 6.

Comparison of Pre- and Post-Test Scores for Enhancing the Topic

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	S	SD	t	p
Pre-test	35	4.03	2.04	34	3.43	.002
Post-test	35	5.33	2.53			

The results of analysis show that the proposed essay writing activity based on a caricature analysis using semiotic analysis was useful and enabled students to acquire the skills of understanding the topic of the text, finding the message of the text, and enhancing the topic. A test was also administered to investigate whether the same activity exerts a significant effect on general writing skills, which encompass

three dimensions: topic, message, and enhancement. The results of the dependent *t*-test appear in Table 7.

Table 7.

Comparison of Pre- and Post-Test Overall Scores

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	S	SD	t	p
Pre-test	35	14.66	7.08	34	4.49	.000
Post-test	35	18.51	7.20			

Table 7 indicates a significant difference between the scores that students received on the pre- and post-tests ($t = 4.49$, $p < .05$). The mean of students' post-test scores ($\bar{X}_{post-test}$=18.51) was significantly greater than that of pre-test scores ($\bar{X}_{pre-test}$=14.66), which suggests the semiotic analysis-based essay-writing activity exerted a significant, positive effect on the overall writing skills of students.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This study sought to examine the effect of a semiotic analysis-based writing activity by analyzing the pre- and post-test scores of essays written by 7th-grade students. The graded essays addressed the message of a text that students ascertained by analyzing a caricature using semiotic analysis. As part of a single-group pre- and post-test research method, field experts assessed the essays to find a statistically significant difference in favor of semiotic analysis, as observed in essays written after the method was taught. Based on that finding, the interpretation of caricatures, which are already used to a limited extent as material in writing exercises, using different analytical methods arguably resulted in more effective, successful writing exercises. As the instructors observed, the method investigated contributed to the effective operation of students' cognitive processes, increased their attentiveness to the class until it ended, and motivated them, as validated by the findings of the study. Therefore, if used in Turkish-language courses, as in France (Kiran, 1998), then such methods could provide an appealing alternative to traditional methods and make learning more effective. Clearly, the method investigated and the study have contributed to students' awareness of differences between the notions of *word*, *concept*, and *signifier*.

The students continuously attended the activity with a high level of interest and made numerous accurate comments. At the end of the lectures, they stated that they had enjoyed learning and never felt bored during the activity. Starting with the first caricature used in instructing the new method, students' awareness of signifiers gradually increased their success in providing insights and encouraged them to make new comments. Based on observations made during the study period and on student feedback, semiotic analysis also contributed to the development of a positive, encouraging teaching atmosphere in the classroom.

Findings show that semiotic analysis can effectively develop the writing skills of students, as evident from the students' ability to identify in a multidimensional way the topic, message, and especially the meaning of caricatures in essays written based on interpretations generated during semiotic analysis. Arguably, the chief factors for students' positive reactions to the new activity were that the method was novel and that giving meaning to signs builds positive feelings, such as curiosity and excitement related to the creative process. At the same time, no quantitatively greater difference between the methods emerged because the caricatures were adequately effective tools compared to those used in traditional methods. Another factor might be that the instructor implemented the method for the first time and that, given the curriculum of secondary-school education, it is impossible to repeat the experiment based on the experiences observed. When the findings of the study are evaluated from qualitative perspective, most students clearly understood the topic and message during pre-tests. However, since they could not see the details of the caricature (i.e., signifiers), some students developed the message through very basic conclusions, such as "Reading is good" or "Television is harmful." The most significant difference afforded by the semiotic analysis-based application is that it enabled students to view the topic in a multidimensional way. Students in their post-test essays included many comments regarding each signifier's signified (i.e., their conceptual dimension). That substantial finding points to the positive effect of the analytical method on the learning process.

Caricatures bear a direct relationship with creativity, and using caricatures as tools to develop and enhance students' creative-writing skills is appropriate. As Bayulgen (2011) has shown, caricature analysis allows students to approach the course and activity with a constructive attitude, as well as to develop positive, effective communication with each other, and motivates academically weak students to actively participate in activities. Expectations concerning the effectiveness of the proposed method and observations during the activities and exercises have been met, at least according to the success rates of students in their essays. Based on all of the aforementioned findings, the method of semiotic analysis used in the writing activity based on caricatures can be an alternative to traditional methods used in Turkish-language courses, enhance the effectiveness of learning, and positively affect students' creative-writing skills.

Among educational goals for reading, speaking, listening, writing, visual presentation, and grammar listed in the preparatory section of each theme in textbooks for 6th–8th grades, the goal that students can interpret visual material refers to learning objectives for reading skills only. It is important and it will be beneficial to add learning objectives and activities that include caricature analysis and interpretation in those grades as in the 5th grade.

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Göstergebilimsel Çözümlemeye Dayalı Yazma Etkinliğinin Öğrencilerin Yazma Becerilerine Etkisi

Özet

Problem Durumu: Düşünsel ve duyuşsal açıdan donanımlı olarak dünyaya gelen insanın gelişimi, dil, düşünce ve sanat eğitimini de kapsayan bir dizgesellik içinde gerçekleşir. Anadili öğretimi yazma ediminin de içinde olduğu birden çok becerinin bütünleşik bir yaklaşımla kazandırılmasını içerir. Yazma analitik olma özelliği ile bilişsel süreçleri geliştiricidir. Değerlendirme ve problem çözmeyi gerektirdiği için analize, aynı zamanda yeni bileşimler ve oluşumlar gerektirdiği için de senteze dayalı, üretici bir süreçtir. Yazma eğitimi sürecinde yazılı, sözlü ya da görsel metinler önemli araçlardır. Görsel okuma, yazılı metinlerin dışında kalan resim, sembol, şekil, renk vb. görsel unsurları yorumlama anlamına gelmekte ve çok sayıda uyaran aracılığıyla öğrenmenin önemini vurgulayan yeni öğrenme yaklaşımları ile ön plana çıkmış bulunmaktadır. Sözel ya da görsel, her metin bir anlam ve ileti içerir. Bu iletiye ulaşmak ise metni çözümlemeyi gerektirir. Farklı türden metinleri çözümleyecek farklı kuramlar ve yöntemler mevcuttur. Bunlardan biri olan

göstergebilimsel çözümleme kuramı, anlatı ve söylem boyutunda metin çözümlemek için araçlar sunar. Dil öğretimi derslerinde, dilbilimsel bir kurama dayalı bu çözümleme yönteminin, sözel ya da görsel çeşitli metinlerin anlamlandırılması amacıyla kullanılmasının, öğretimin bilimselliği ve etkinliği açısından yararlı olacağı öngörülmüştür.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Eğitimin çağdaşlaşması amacıyla alanla ilgili bilimsel ve kuramsal bilginin eğitim ortamlarındaki uygulama ve etkinliklere taşınması gerekmektedir. Bu çalışmada, göstergebilimsel çözümleme kuramına dayalı bir yazma dersi etkinliğinin, öğrencilerin yazma becerilerinde etkili olup olmadığının belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, çözümleme metni olarak görsel bir metin olan karikatür seçilmiştir.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Araştırma, bağımlı grupla yapılan ön test-son test modeli bir deneysel çalışma olarak planlanmıştır. Bu yöntem uyarınca her bir öğrenciden, deney öncesinde geleneksel yöntemle, deney sonrasında ise göstergebilimsel yöntemle çözülen bir karikatürün iletisini geliştiren iki ayrı kompozisyon yazmaları istenmiş ve bu iki metindeki başarı puanları farkına bakılmıştır. Öğrencilerin ön test ve son test puanları arasında anlamlı fark olup olmadığını belirlemek için ilişkili örneklemler t-testi kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın örneklemini bir MEB okulunun 7. sınıfında okuyan 40 öğrenci oluşturmuştur. Öğrenci kompozisyonlarının iki farklı uzman tarafından değerlendirilmesi sonucunda konu, ileti ve konuyu boyutlandırma ön test ve son test puanları elde edilmiştir. Çalışma üç aşamada yürütülmüştür. İlk aşamada, öğrencilere bir sözsüz karikatür verilerek kendilerinde ne çağrıştırdığını (MEB 2015 programında yer aldığı şekilde) bir kompozisyon ile açıklamaları istenmiştir. Bu aşamada konu, ana ileti ve konuyu yardımcı iletiler kullanarak boyutlandırmaları gerektiği konusunda gerekli hatırlatmalar yapılmıştır. Bu ölçüm ile ön test verileri elde edilmiştir. Araştırmanın ikinci aşamasındaki manipülasyon sürecinde aynı çalışma grubuna göstergebilimsel çözümleme eğitimi verilmiştir. Uygulama, toplumsal içerikli toplam dokuz karikatür üzerinden tekrarlanmış ve toplam sekiz ders saati içerisinde konu ile ilgili yeterli öğrenmenin gerçekleşmesi amaçlanmıştır. Çalışmanın üçüncü aşamasında ise son test yer almıştır. Öğrencilerden ön test için seçilen karikatür üzerinden yeniden kompozisyon yazmaları istenmiştir. Her iki veri grubu (ön test ve son test ölçümleri) iki uzman tarafından ölçmeye tabi tutulmuş ve böylece ön test ve son test puanları oluşturulmuştur. Puanlama; konu:30 puan, ana ileti:30 puan, konuyu boyutlandırma:40 puan olmak üzere toplam 100 puan üzerinden yapılmıştır.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Ölçme sonucunda; hem genel başarı hem de konuyu anlama, iletiye ulaşan ve çok boyutlu yorumlamadan oluşan üç inceleme alanı açısından öğrenci kompozisyonları ön test ve son test puanları arasında anlamlı bir fark olduğu görülmüştür.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri: Çalışmanın bulguları, çalışmada uygulanan göstergebilimsel çözümleme yönteminin yazma becerisini geliştirme konusunda etkin olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Karikatürün söz konusu yönteme dayanarak anlamlandırılması suretiyle yazılan kompozisyonlarda öğrencilerin karikatürün

konusuna, iletisine ve özellikle içeriğine ulaştıklarının görülmesi, diğer bir deyişle çalışmanın söz konusu yöntem lehine sonuç vermesi yöntemin etkiliğini göstermektedir. Öğrenciler yeni ve farklı olan bu etkinliğe olumlu tepki vermişlerdir. Yani, araştırmanın olumlu sonuç vermesindeki temel etkenin, yöntemin yeni ve etkili bir yöntem oluşu ve buna paralel olarak göstergeleri anlamlandırabilmenin öğrencilerde yarattığı olumlu duygular olduğu söylenebilir.

Uygulama çalışmalarının, diğer bir deyişle göstergebilimsel çözümleme yönteminin yarattığı en büyük fark, konuyu çok boyutlu görme açısından olmuştur. Son testi oluşturan yazılarında öğrenciler, karikatürde yer alan her bir gösterenin gösterileniyle, yani kavramsal boyutuyla ilgili çok sayıda yoruma yer vermişlerdir. Bu da toplumsal konulardaki farkındalıklarının artmasının yanı sıra derse ve yazma etkinliklerine olan ilgilerinin de artmasına neden olmuştur. Bu durum alandaki bazı çalışmalarla ortaya konulan, karikatür çözümlemenin öğrencilerin derse ve yazma etkinliğine karşı olumlu tutum geliştirdikleri bulgusuyla örtüşmektedir. Ayrıca, çözümlemeler sırasında akademik yönden zayıf öğrencilerin de çalışmaya aktif olarak katılması ve öğrencilerin birbirleriyle etkili iletişim içinde olması çalışma sırasındaki değerli gözlemlerden bir diğeridir.

Yöntemin etkiliği konusundaki öngörümüz ve uygulama sırasındaki gözlemler çalışmanın bulgularıyla doğrulanmıştır. Buna dayalı bir sonuç olarak, karikatür üzerinden yazma çalışmasında kullanılan göstergebilimsel çözümleme yönteminin Fransa'daki dil öğretimi örneğinde olduğu gibi Türkçe derslerinde de kullanılabileceği, yöntemin geleneksel yönteme alternatif oluşturabileceği ve öğrencilerin yaratıcı yazma becerilerini olumlu yönde etkileyeceği söylenebilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: göstergebilimsel çözümleme kuramı, karikatür, yazma eğitimi, yazma becerisi