THE EFFECTS OF CREATIVE DRAMA IN TURKISH LANGUAGE TEACHING ON THE SELF-ESTEEM LEVELS OF 7th GRADE STUDENTS

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Abstract
The purpose of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of the creative drama in Turkish language teaching in increasing the level of self-esteem in 7th grade students. Fifty 7th grade students in Samsun participated in the current study. The sample consisted of 24 girls and 26 boys. Participants' ages ranged from 12 to 14 years (M=12.70, SD=.51). The students were evaluated using the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. In this study, pre- and post-test with control group design were utilized. The results of the two-way ANOVA for mixed measures showed that the differences between the scores of the experimental group and control group were significant. The creative drama in Turkish language teaching increases the self-esteem level of the 7th grade students significantly.

Key words: *creative drama, self-esteem, Turkish language teaching*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is the basic tool of human communication. In addition to allowing individuals to communicate with other members of the society, it also plays a key role in all of their social activities. The skill of using a language is a pre-requisite both socialization and self development and cognitive development.

Language and thought are intertwined. Language is needed to express a thought, and thought is needed to have something to express (Çelebi 2006). To this end, "the basic aim of teaching a language is to enable students to conceive the different shapes that language takes in different contexts, to express themselves through language, to reach various sources of information, and to enrich their emotions, thoughts and imagination" (MEB 2006).

The primary aim of modern education should be to equip students with the necessary skills to reach information rather than to transfer this information directly to them. This can only be possible through triggering higher level mental processing skills. In other words, it requires comprehensive learning as opposed to rote memorization, problem-solving in new situations, and scientific thinking (Kaptan and Korkmaz 2001; Korkmaz and Kaptan 2002). Education and instruction which aim to prepare individuals for life make use of many different instructional methods and techniques. Traditional educational methods where teachers are active transmitters of knowledge and students are passive recipients of it are now being replaced by contemporary active approaches to education where students are expected to be active, and are offered different alternatives for reaching information (Gömleksiz 1993; Albayrak 2006). One such method is creative drama.

Creative drama usually described as "educational drama, games and interaction pedagogy, theater pedagogy, informal drama, developmental drama, process drama, and school play" (Adıgüzel 1993; Adıgüzel 2002; San 1990; Genç 2003; Tuluk 2004). Creative drama was defined by San (2002) as attributing meaning to and living through an experience, event, idea, abstract concept or behavior by individuals in a group through re-organizing previous cognitive patterns and in "gamelike" processes during which observations, experiences, emotions and events are reconsidered by using theater and drama techniques such as improvisation or role-play.

Creative drama in education is "a learning and teaching method which enables participants to use their creativity to the full in order to understand relationships and problems, evaluate, interpret, question and display appropriate attitudes and behaviors in both work environments and private life, when alone or in the company of others" (Bayram Topdal 2004). Drama has been appreciated as a modern "instructional method" in ensuring effective, permanent, interesting and efficient learning so that learners will actualize themselves with cognitive, motor and affective integrity, and express themselves by using accurate and proper language (Akar 2000).

Using drama as a method in education allows modern individuals to reorganize their social relationships, get to know themselves better, be productive and get recognized (Genç 2003). In addition drama turns learning process into an enjoyable activity, and thus, increases children's involvement and motivation to learn. It boosts students' creativity, creative thinking and expression. With drama, children think, feel and act together with their peers in the group, therefore teaching them socialization and cooperation. Furthermore, it teaches children how to establish empathy with others. Through drama, children get to know themselves better, express themselves more easily, and make better decisions. It also allows a healthy and controlled release of emotions, minimizes anxiety and fear of making mistakes, and helps children cope positively with conflicts. Creative drama helps to develop creativity and inventiveness and curiosity. While helping the development of self-confidence, it also improves emotions of adaptability and trust in others. It helps the development of self-esteem, too (Üstündağ 1997; Bayram *et al*. 1999; Annarella 2000; Adıgüzel 2002; Aral *et al*. 2002; Schnapp & Olson 2003; Cömertpay 2006; Çevik 2006; Ömeroğlu 2003; Tuluk 2004; Özdemir and Akkuş-Çıkla 2005; Kara and Çam 2007).

Considering these benefits, creative drama may play an important role in the shaping of an individual's self-concept. Born out of one's self-related thoughts, emotions, perceptions and evaluations, self-concept is also shaped by people's experiences with others and their general life experience. Creative drama helps the enhancement interpersonal relationships and self-expression through role play by creating an opportunity for group experiences (Bayrakçı 2007; Çalışkan-Çoban 2007). At the heart of self-concept lies self-worth and esteem (Palabıyıkoğlu 2000). Self-esteem refers to knowing oneself, recognizing strengths and weaknesses, and making realistic evaluations. The difference between how people perceive themselves and the self they aspire to be determines their level of self-esteem. What is important in this process is how people view this difference and how it affects their emotional realm. Previous research has associated with high self-esteem with extroversion, effective communication with others, the will to establish social relationships, and emotional maturity (Lawrence 1988; Haugen and Lund 2002).

People's self evaluations reflect the influence of environment. On one hand, self-esteem levels are affected by the attitudes and behaviors of care-givers during early childhood, and on the other, by teachers at school, who have the power to affect students' self-esteem levels. It is possible for teachers to improve students' self-esteem through their instructional techniques and student-teacher relationships. Teachers who establish a warm rapport with their students improve their self-esteem and thus encourage more effective learning (Pişkin 2003). As mentioned by Korkut (2004), it is important to incorporate guidance and psychological counseling services "not only into guidance classes, but into course syllabi" so as to prepare students for life.

As a modern instructional method, creative drama is believed to contribute to students' self-esteem levels. Students with low self-esteem who refrain from expressing their emotions and thoughts for fear of being excluded or rejected become able to express themselves through creative drama activities and realize that their emotions and thoughts are accepted and even shared by others. This results in improved confidence and courage, and may also lead to the awareness that it is acceptable to have different emotions and thoughts. In contrast to traditional methods, creative drama activities foster warmer and more sincere teacher-student relationships, and enable teachers to show that they make an effort to understand their students and respect them. Combined with the objectives of the Turkish course, all these attitudes are believed to increase students' self-esteem levels. Turkish teaching aims to improve students' thinking skills, and to contribute to the

processes of becoming more competent and socialized, as well as to equip students with linguistic skills for effective communication (Sever 2000). In addition, the objectives of Turkish teaching such as "listening with patience and respect without interrupting the speaker", "reflecting feelings with spoken words", "distinguishing emotional expressions", "using positive body language to signal that they are listening" (MEB 2006) are likely to help increase students' self-esteem levels. This study examines how using creative drama in Turkish language teaching affects primary school students' self-esteem levels. Answers to the following question were sought: Is there a meaningful difference between the self-esteem post-test mean scores of students who were taught Turkish with creative drama and the traditional method? The hypothesis which has been examined in this study is as below: "Creative drama in Turkish language education has a significant effect in increasing the levels of elementary school students'self-esteem."The research has been limited with elementary school seventh grade students and the points which are obtained from self-esteem inventory. Participant students were assumed to have answered the inventory truly.

2. METHOD

2.1. Participants

Fifty 7th grade students in a school located in Samsun participated in this study. Seventh grade students who have been attending Atakent Elementary School in 2008-2009 Educational Year have participated in the research. The sample consisted of 24 girls and 26 boys. There are 25 students in the experimental group and another 25 in the control group. Participants' ages ranged from 12 to 14 years (M=12.70, SD=.51). In the process of designing the sample, experimental and control groups are supposed to have been formed equally considering students'gender,the number of siblings, their parents'professions,total monthly income and their academic standing by the end of the sixth grade.

2.2. Design of the study

In the current study, pre- and post-test with control group design was utilized. The independent variable was creative drama. The dependent variable of the study was self-esteem.

2.3. Procedures

The research instrument was given pre- and post-test. Inventory was applied as pre-test before the implementation on 06.10.2008 and it was applied as post-test on 17.11.2008. Those in the control group participated in the pre- and post-test assessment. The students of the control group were given no expectation of creative drama program and simply completed the assessment. In addition they were taught Turkish courses involving traditional methods. The students in the experimental group took part in weekly 40-minute sessions involving creative drama during 20 courses. Out of the acquirments that Ministery of Education has determined and has been organised according to the annual plan, total 20 hours of Turkish lesson,5 hours of which were done per week in both classes in order to acquire the ones which include the dates when the implementation was applied.The second researcher conducted creative drama.

In the experimental group, creative drama was designed as a series of single class-hour activities. A total of 20 creative drama lesson plans were prepared to be used in each class hour and these classes were conducted in the school's theater hall. Various different creative drama techniques were utilized during drama classes (improvisation, role play, pantomime, discussion, note-taking, etc.). On the other hand, the control group followed the methods and techniques established by the Ministry of National Education (note-taking, discussion, controlled speech, reading aloud, word chorus, summarizing, group writing, etc.) in exactly the same way as outlined in the Teacher's Handbook. During the implementation of lessons, texts and activities in student books were not changed and the pre-specified way to implement the lesson was followed.

2.4. Measures

Coopersmith self-esteem inventory. The inventory was developed to measure the self-esteem level of children and adolescents by Coopersmith (1967). It was adapted to Turkish by Pişkin (1996).

The inventory consists of four subscales- general, social, family, and academic self esteem- with a total of 58 items. While the "general self-esteem" subscale is made up of 26 items, "social self-esteem", "family self-esteem" and "academic self-esteem" subscales are made up of 8 items. There are 8 filler items in the inventory. The Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory scores range from 0-58 with higher scores indicating higher levels of self-esteem. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients was .79 (Pişkin 1996).

Participant demographics. The questionnaire was prepared by the researchers. The participants were asked to provide information regarding several demographic variables such as age, gender, and grade level.

2.5. Data Analysis

The two-way ANOVA for mixed measures test was used to determine whether there were any differences between the measures of the pre- or post-test scores for students on the experimental and control groups. Statistical analyses have been examined by an expert of the related field.

3. RESULTS

The means and Standard deviation for the scale measures are presented Table 1.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Student Self-Esteem Scores

Measures	Experimental Group				Control Group			
	Pre-		Post-		Pre-		Post-	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
General	17.68	3.43	21.84	2.95	18.52	4.26	18.16	4.18
Social	5.88	1.36	7.00	1.04	6.28	1.51	6.44	1.50
Family	5.32	1.67	6.28	1.59	5.60	2.04	5.20	2.29
Academic	5.52	1.66	5.16	1.84	6.44	1.55	5.08	2.28

It has not been observed a significant difference between pre-test points of experimental and control group (General self-esteem t= .767, p>.05; academic self-esteem t= .726, p>.05; social self-esteem t= .981, p>.05; family self-esteem t= .530, p>.05)

Two-way ANOVA for mixed measures test was used to determine whether there were any differences between the measures of the pre- or post-test scores for students on the experimental and control groups (Table 2).

Table 2. The Results of ANOVA of Student Self-Esteem Scores

	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p
GENERAL SELF-ESTEEM	Between Subjects	1261.25	49			
	Group	50.410	1	50.410	1.998	.164
	Error	1210.840	48	25.226		

	Within Subjects	355.5	50			
	Measure (Pretest-Posttest)	90.250	1	90.250	31.492	.000
	Group*Measure	**127.690**	**1**	**127.690**	**44.556**	**.000**
	Error	137.560	48	2.866		
	TOTAL	1616.75	99			
SOCIAL SELF-ESTEEM	Between Subjects	161	49			
	Group	.160	1	.160	.048	.828
	Error	160.840	48	3.351		
	Within Subjects	35	50			
	Measure (Pretest-Posttest)	10.240	1	10.240	25.869	.000
	Group*Measure	**5.760**	**1**	**5.760**	**14.552**	**.000**
	Error	19.000	48	.396		
	TOTAL	196	99			
FAMILY SELF-ESTEEM	Between Subjects	331	49			
	Group	4.000	1	4.000	.587	.447
	Error	327.000	48	6.812		
	Within Subjects	41	50			
	Measure (Pretest-Posttest)	1.960	1	1.960	3.424	.070
	Group*Measure	**11.560**	**1**	**11.560**	**20.192**	**.000**
	Error	27.480	48	.573		
	TOTAL	372	99			
ACADEMIC SELF-ESTEEM	Between Subjects	319.24	49			
	Group	18.480	1	18.490	2.951	.092
	Error	300.760	48	6.266		
	Within Subjects	41.5	50			
	Measure (Pretest-Posttest)	4.410	1	4.410	6.864	.012
	Group*Measure	**6.250**	**1**	**6.250**	**9.728**	**.003**
	Error	30.840	48	.643		
	TOTAL	360.74	99			

In conclusion, the results illustrated the self-esteem levels of students in the control group were significantly lower than those of the students in the experimental group. Therefore, it may be said that creative drama program increases the self-esteem levels of students significantly.

4. DISCUSSION

This study investigated the effects of using creative drama in Turkish language teaching on the self-esteem levels of 7th grade students. To this end, an experimental group was formed to expose students to the creative drama method in the Turkish lesson, and a control group was formed to expose students to the traditional method of teaching Turkish.

The findings of the study showed that teaching Turkish through creative drama meaningfully increased students' general self-esteem, academic self-esteem, social self-esteem and family self-esteem levels in comparison to the group who followed the traditional method. Similar studies in the literature yielded the following results: Hedalh (1980) conducted a creative drama study with primary 5th and 6th graders and concluded that it contributed to the development of students' self concept. Similarly, Erdoğan (2006) found in a study with primary 8th graders that creative drama decreased their depression levels and increased their self-concept levels. In Beales and Zemel (1990), Bailey (1997) and Yassa's (1999) studies, too, creative drama was found to have positive effects on social maturity, self-esteem and self-concept. In Yang (2007)'s study, interview data from the school teacher indicated that the students grew more confidence after the creative drama activity in English learning. All these findings seem to corroborate the results of this study.

The games that lie at the heart of creative drama develop children's communication skills and give them a chance to compare their thoughts to that of others in the peer group. During this process, children explore their own personality and adopt characteristics such as belonging to a group and sharing, which help shape children's self-concept (Özdoğan 2004; Sevinç 2004). Feedback about one's emotions, thoughts and attitudes to be obtained from peers during creative drama activities encourage children to think about their own strengths and weaknesses and boost their self-esteem (Greenberg 2002). Compared to traditional methods of instruction, creative drama allows for a warm and sincere interaction between teachers and students, and accepting and supportive teacher attitudes, which are also thought to increase self-esteem levels.

An important element of the education process, guidance and psychological counseling services aim to make individuals more aware of themselves and their environment, be more productive, efficient and creative, and improve themselves personally, socially, and intellectually. Creative drama has an important role as a process that involves intense human relations and allows for the observation of group dynamics.

According to Partin (1999), instructional objectives should be supported by role plays and activities designed to increase students' self-esteem in the classroom. Raising individuals with high self-esteem has been suggested as an important goal of education (Uşaklı 2006). Inferred from the results of the current study, creative drama as an instructional method is effective in raising not only children's academic self-esteem levels, but also their social and family self-esteem levels. Therefore, both teachers and counselors should recognize the fact that creative drama should be used in the instructional process as well as in drama based group guidance studies. While this study utilized creative drama in Turkish teaching, future studies may use creative drama as a method or technique in other courses and test its effects on students' personal and educational growth.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The creative drama in Turkish language teaching enhances self-esteem levels of 7th grade students significantly. The implications for counselors, educators and researchers can be derived from the findings of this study.

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