# The Effects of Creative Drama on Developing Primary School Pupils' Writing Skills *

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## Abstract

It is the purpose of the current study to investigate the effects of creative drama on developing the writing skills of students. Mixed method was used in the current study. The study consisted of a quasi-experimental method with pre-test and post-test in the control and the experimental group. 36 pupils at a private primary school in Amasya, Turkey participated in the study. The quantitative data were collected through the Written Expression Evaluation Scale (WEES) and the qualitative data were collected by what students wrote. The students in both groups were exposed to different kinds of instruction. The quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics as well as Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) and the ANCOVA analysis. The qualitative data were analyzed through descriptive analysis. The current study indicates that the method of creative drama has enabled students to develop their writing skills and it is suggested that creative drama be used in class.

## Introduction

Creative drama helps children improve language and communicative skills, have positive self-esteem, become socially aware, and enhance empathy and creativity (Adıgüzel, 2015; Holden, 1982). In addition, by enhancing children's higher order thinking capacities (Dodson, 2000) and helping them create a natural language learning environment (Freeman, Sullivan and Fulton, 2003), creative drama contributes to their socialization (Öztürk, 2001), their improvement in linguistic skills (Aldavero, 2008; Wagner, 1988), their enhancement in self-esteem, self-confidence and spontaneity (Altınova & Adıgüzel, 2012; Conard & Asher, 2000), improvement in vocabulary (Demircioğlu, 2010), observation, physical expression, communication and written expression skills (Adıgüzel, 2015; Phillips, 2000; Barnes, 1998). Hence, it is suggested that creative drama be used as a technique and children's linguistic, cognitive, personal, social and affective skills be hereby improved.

Several studies have shown that creative drama develops pupils' academic achievement (Almaz, İşeri, & Ünal, 2014; Akdeniz & Özçelik, 2012; Atish, 2015; Batdı & Batdı, 2015; Gencel, 2009; Joseph, 2014; Kaf, 1999; Oğur & Kılıç, 2005; Sarıçoban, 2004; Selmanoğlu, 2009; Taşkın Can, 2013; Timothy & Apata, 2014). Upon especially reviewing the literature for writing skill development, activities based on creative drama technique were found to have a positive effect on writing attitude

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(Susar Kırmızı, 2009). Creative drama was also found to positively affect pupils' writing concerns (Sevim & Özdemir Erem, 2013). It was found that, when used as a technique, creative drama helped compose works of literary quality and that pupils eagerly participated in written expression practices (Ataman, 2006). However, it has been observed that creative drama activities fostered by children's books have improved writing skills of students (Erkan and Aykaç, 2014).

The research problem is the relationship between creative drama and writing skills. Based on this problem, the reason why the current research was done was firstly to find if there were any cultural differences between studies (Annarella, 1999; Booth & Neelands, 1998; Cremin, Goouch, & Blakemore, 2006; Cormack, 2003; Macy, 2004; Hsia, Huang, & Hwang, 2012; Dalby & Burton, 2012; McNaughton, 1997; Wheeler, 2014) on improving pupils' writing skills through creative drama used in several cultures and the current study. Accordingly, as a result of reviewing studies on the improvement of writing skill through creative drama, it was ruled out whether there was a cultural relation among these studies. Secondly, the current study aimed to reveal the effects of techniques such as role-playing, improvisation, dramatization, private ownership, role writing and creative writing on writing skill. Lastly, it aimed to reveal the relationship between pupils' improvements in writing skills in terms of their age and gender, and creative drama. In all these aspects, the current study may present crucial contributions to examining the effect of creative drama on the improvement in writing skill through cultural relation, techniques and pupils' demographic attributes. Below is discussed the creative drama and writing skills first, and then the purpose of the study is provided.

### Writing Skill

Writing means expressing emotions, thoughts, facts, desires and dreams in a written way (Aktaş & Gündüz, 2007; Akyol, 2007; Coşkun, 2013; Güneş, 2007; Kavcar, Oğuzkan, & Hasırcı, 2016; Özdemir & Binyazar, 1979; Sever, 2011; Yangın, 2002). Writing consists of a series of intellectual skills such as selecting and narrowing the theme, attributing it to a purpose, determining what to convey, associating thoughts with a plan, and turning the plan into writing (Özdemir, 2002). In this respect, writing skill helps discern punctuation, spelling, grammar, relations within the paragraph, diction and arranging the text (Kellogg, Bascom, & Raulerson, 2007). Moreover, as a physical, metacognitive, linguistic, motivational and social activity, effective writing is a complex process which requires the coordination of several cognitive skills such as planning, drafting, evaluating, revising and editing; which can be learned through practices and structured feedback, and which enables higher order thinking (Benjamin, 2005; Haven, 2015; Nelson, 2007; Scardamalia, Bereiter, & Goelman, 1982; Van Galen, 1991). Broadly speaking, writing has three important aspects, namely planning, transition and reviewing. Planning means relevantly arranging the required information; transition is the process of implementing the plan and relevantly created thoughts in the text, and reviewing is the process of evaluating the purpose (Flower & Hayes, 1980).

Expressing emotions, thoughts and dreams clearly and specifically in writing requires various cognitive skills. Pupils determine the aim of writing; learn how to sequence, to narrow, to arrange, and how to implement rules (Göçer, 2014). Hence, thinking capacity, language and knowledge act together (Kellogg, 2001). Furthermore, what the individual feels about self-worth and that an individual makes self-regulation point out the importance of affective factors within the writing process (Hull & Rose, 1989). In other words, since self-efficacy beliefs appearing in writing process enhance academic achievement (Bandura, 1986) and academic motivation (Duru & İşeri, 2015; Zimmerman & Schunk, 1989), pupils' confidence in writing capability may improve their writing skills (Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1995). Besides, writing skill may affect pupils' situational self-esteem both positively and negatively. The notion "writing makes me feel inadequate or adequate" may affect a student's self-efficacy and change his self-perception (Pajares & Johnson, 1994).

Now that writing is not an activity in which we put what comes to our mind in order, it may be said to be a skill based on a technique through which we can organize our emotions and thoughts. By using this skill, a relevant meaning should be created by pushing the limits of language (İpşiroğlu, 2006). In other words, capabilities like being able to think elaborately and creatively for a specific situation; being able to express what is thought clearly, effectively and in an organized manner, and being able to make the writing attractive through a pleasant and effective expression style are supposed to be helped gain (Lawwill, 1999). For instance, pupils should write about what they see and experience to gain habit of and skill for writing, and environments allowing them to express their emotions, thoughts and desires in written form in order to improve their skills and habits (Sever, Kaya, & Aslan, 2011). Thus, they improve their language skills, vocabulary, grammar rules, and expression capacity of their power of intellect (Demirel, 2002; Kavcar, 1983; Özbay, 2007).

### Writing through Creative Drama

Creative drama is the acting process of an aim or a thought through certain techniques such as role-play, improvisation etc. based on life experiences of members of a group. These acting processes are based on spontaneity, here-and-now principle and pretending in the company of an experienced leader/instructor, and creative drama directly benefits from general characteristics of acting (Adıgüzel, 2015). Accordingly, creative drama is the interpretation and acting of an experience, a scene, a thought, and sometimes an abstract concept or a behavior in act-like processes in which observations, experiences and emotions are revised, and through re-arranging past cognitive patterns by using drama techniques like role-play and improvisation (San, 1990). As a part of drama process, pupils may make self-regulation towards their written expression skills by using their creativity, awareness and imagination through all these attributes that creative drama encompasses (Annarella, 1999).

The fact that creative drama is a group activity; that it is depended on the experiences of the participants; that it pays importance to the process, and that it is based on acting, spontaneity and pretending (Adıgüzel, 2015) may contribute to development of punctuation marks, spelling, grammar, relations within the paragraph and diction, and to internalization and more efficient usage of attitudes which are supposed to arrange the text. Especially creative drama may help pupils make self-regulation by its communication and interaction aspects to develop behaviors varying in dimension in writing skill. In other words, creative drama which enhances pupils' imagination, linguistic and communicative skills, self-knowledge, and freethinking and their collaboration skills (Johnson, 1998; O'Neill, 1995; O'Neill) may generally raise awareness of pupils' written expression skills. This kind of awareness may help pupils have self-awareness while they express their emotions, thoughts and knowledge in written form. Hence, while improving pupils' written expression skills through creative drama, preparation, implementation and evaluation processes for this skill should also be performed.

Creative drama is regarded as an important means for language development (Johnson, 1998; O'Neill, 1995) because, in this process, pupils may make arrangement and evaluation appropriately to the purpose of writing by expressing their emotions and thoughts in different ways (Ernst-Slavit & Wenger, 1998). Especially in creative drama, pupils role-play in compliance with the given theme, topic or model; improvise, and are able to comprehend what exists and should exist by assessing these elements (Önalan and Akfırat, 2006). Moreover, since creative drama is a spontaneous learning and teaching technique (Meyers, 2004) and since it is performed through a certain sense, thought and situation, it prevents pupils' powers of expression from being based on any scripts or memorization (Adıgüzel, 2015) because pupils' mere creativity and imagination skills are active throughout this process (Heatcote, 1983; O'Neill, 1995).

Written expression activities may turn into a creative environment through creative drama process (Fearn & Farnan, 1998). Hence, those who participate in creative drama are supposed to be prepared for group work, to feel comfortable and safe, and to prepare themselves to explore new and different things and these are somewhat a prerequisite (San, 1990). This situation may eliminate pupils' cognitive, motivational and affective problems of not being able to reflect their emotions and thoughts adequately on the topic to be written about (Annarella, 1999). Since pupils develop a concept, situation

or skill by using improvisation, role-play, acting techniques drawing on their past experiences (Gallagher, 1997); pupils' writing capability, self-knowledge (Adıgüzel, 2015) and self-confidence (Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1995) are raised. In this respect, creative drama may be an effective method in pupils' creative writing (Zipes, 2004).

The necessary elements in writing process such as antagonist, protagonist, theme, conflict, suspense, fiction and focal point (Egri, 2009) may be enhanced within drama process because theme, conflict, suspense, focal point and characters which consist of the components of creative drama are similar to the necessary elements in writing process. For example, just like a theme is needed to start writing; in creative writing, a theme is also needed. Similarly, just like conflicts, suspense points and focal points are required in writing process; creative drama process also requires these elements. At this point, writing process efficiently develops through several techniques such as improvisation, role-play, acting and creative writing which are found in creative drama. In that regard, all these techniques which creative drama has may a lot help pupils improve writing skill which is an important activity area among linguistic skills.

### The Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the current study was to examine the effect of creative drama on the pupils' improvements in writing skills. This may help pupils both improve their writing skills and develop awareness of written expression skills through creative drama. Thus, pupils may gain knowledge and skill by what they should pay attention in pre-, during-, and post-writing processes; by how they should organize what they know and the text, and by what sort of planning, drafting, evaluating, revising and editing they should follow. Therefore, the following research question is asked;

- Is creative drama statistically significant in developing the external structure of writing skills of students?

- Is creative drama statistically significant in developing the internal structure of writing skills of students?

- Is creative drama statistically significant in developing language and expression aspects of the writing skills of students?

## Method

Mixed method was used in the current study in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data. Mixed method is defined as a researcher's integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, approaches and concepts in a study or consecutive studies. Moreover, mixed method is based on the notion that deficiencies of each data group will be compensated with the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods which include prejudice and deficiencies (Creswell, 2009). Hence, in the current study, research design about quantitative data, sample, instruments and data analysis were detailed first. Secondly, qualitative data were elaborated.

### Research Design

The current research is of a quasi-experimental design in which the effectiveness of the written expression skills instruction program based on creative drama activities for the 4th grade pupils was examined. The pre-test – post-test quasi-experimental research design with control group was utilized in the current study. The quasi-experimental design with pre-test post-test control group is one of the most effective designs used to ensure the internal reliability. Moreover, it is also known as an effective design, frequently used both in Educational Sciences and Turkish Teaching, allowing the results to be interpreted in the context of cause and effect, and providing a high level of statistical power for the researcher in testing the effect of the experimental procedure on the dependent variable (Büyüköztürk, 2011; Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2012; Creswell, 2009; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Table 1 shows the pattern of the design.

**Table 1.** Research Design

| Groups | Pre-Test | Procedure | Post-Test |
|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group | Personal Information Form and Writing a Composition | Written Expression Skills Instruction based on Creative Drama Activities | Personal Information Form and Writing a Composition |
| Control Group | Personal Information Form and Writing a Composition | Classical Written Expression Skills Instruction | Personal Information Form and Writing a Composition |

As seen in Table 1, the pupils in the control and the experimental group were asked to write a composition and to fill the "Personal Information Form" before the program. While the pupils in the experimental group were instructed in "Written Expression Skills based on Creative Drama, the control group was instructed in classical written expression skills. Although there were no differences between the pre-test scores of both groups, the post-test scores of creative expression skills were expected to increase in both groups. However, if the increase in post-test scores of the individuals in the experimental group would statistically be more than of those in the control group, it would be seen that Written Expression Skills Instruction Program Based on Creative Drama Activities was to be more efficient in improving those skills than the Classical Written Expression Program.

### *Participants*

The current study was conducted between two classes, randomly chosen among the 4th grades studying at a private primary school in a province in the Black Sea Region, which is affiliated to Ministry of Education. The participants were 36 pupils (18 in the control, 18 in the experimental). The numbers of the males and females were equated as 10 females (%56) and 8 males in both groups. The ages of the pupils in both groups ranged from 10 to 13; the age mean of the pupils in the control group was 11.83 (FD: .79) and it was 11.89 (F.D: .76) in the experimental group.

### *Instructional Materials and Equipment*
### Instruction

The control and the experimental group were given two different instructions. With the help of education that the researcher had in Turkish Teaching and in creative writing, he has the proficiency to provide necessary instruction because the researcher majored in Turkish Education and completed his Contemporary Drama Association as the leader. Firstly, the pupils in the experimental group were instructed in written expression skills through creative drama for18 hours in 6 weeks. The processes in the workshops formed by the instruction given to the pupils through creative drama were determined as "Preparation/Warm-up, Role-play and Evaluation." These processes were developed by Adıgüzel (2006) for planning and restructuring creative drama, basing on the principle of progressivity and reconstructionism. The instruction in the first week was for the pupils' introduction to each other and for the elimination of their communication problems. In the second week, pupils were given an instruction reinforced by act-like processes pertinent to communication and interaction activities to ensure that they can play the roles easier. In the third week, pupils practiced creative writing in-role in order to get an opinion for their writing skills and they were given the opportunity to evaluate their own writings again in-role. In the fourth and the fifth weeks pupils practiced in creative writing, completing, improvising, dramatization and acting, which included the preparation, action and evaluation steps of creative drama for the pupils to show their writing skills appropriately to internal and external structure, and language and expression skills (Sever, 2011). The principal purpose at this point was helping the pupils perform writing effectively in-role. In the last week, the pupils were given an instruction enriched by activities to make evaluation for their own writing. An instruction sample

for the experimental group was given in Appendix 2. The pupils in the control group were instructed in writing skills through traditional ways without any methods or strategies. They were asked to write their mere emotions and thoughts in the composition form. The pupils in the control group were instructed in classical writing skill by the class teacher without any methods or strategies. This instruction was given to the pupils in that they would compose any kinds of short writing. In the second week, the topic "nature" was discussed with them and they were asked to write a composition on it. They were illustrated a caricature discerning love of animal and life by Fidan (2009) and asked to compose a tale reflecting their emotions and thoughts on this subject in the third week. In the fourth week, the pupils watched the short film named "Alarm" by Woo and Hyun (2010) and they were asked to write a short story about the theme in the short film. In the fifth week, "The Caterpillar" by Akal and Yener (2010) was read out loud and silently in the classroom and the pupils were asked to write a letter to a friend of theirs about the theme in this poem. In the final week, the pupils were asked to write a short report about what they felt throughout this process.

**Written Expression Evaluation Scale (WEES):** The WEES, developed by Sever (2011), was utilized to evaluate the pupils' written expression skills. The scale was reported to be a reliable and a valid scale in developing written expression materials for students (Sever, 2011). The scale aims to evaluate pupils' written expression skills in terms of external and internal structure, and language and expression. The external structure sub-dimension includes the rules to be obeyed while writing. For example, it aims to determine how well the pupils follow the layout of the writing, whether they begin the lines on a level as one under the other, whether they leave 2 cm space between the title and the writing and whether they spell letters accurately, correctly and legibly. The internal structure sub-dimension evaluates pupils on how well they can explain the theme by dividing the writing into paragraphs, if they can exclude irrelevant opinions, and if they can express emotions and thoughts in a fluent and engrossing way. Lastly, the language and expression sub-dimension aims to evaluate pupils on spelling the words correctly, using the words and sentences suitably, and following the punctuation and spelling rules from a specific written expression material. The external structure sub-dimension of the scale consists of 14; the internal structure sub-dimension of 10, and the language and expression sub-dimension of 14 items. Pupils' written expression materials are evaluated by "Turkish Teaching" or "Turkish Language and Literature" professionals in the direction of the items of the scale and they score each item as from 0 – 2, 0 – 3, 0 – 4, and 0 – 5, depending on the item score interval. The scores range from 0 – 30 on the external structure sub-dimension, 0 – 35 on the internal structure sub-dimension, and 0 – 35 on the language and expression sub-dimension. The higher the scores are, the more the pupils' skills on the related sub-dimension improve.

**Reviews for Evaluating the Process of Writing:** The pupils in the experimental group were asked to write about how the writing process based on creative drama went in the final week. The reason why they were asked to form such writing was to reveal the pupils' emotions and thoughts for the evaluation of the process of writing based on creative drama in improving writing skill. The pupils in the control group, though, were asked to write a short report about what they felt during the 6-week writing process in the final week. This kind of evaluation was made through qualitative data in order to compare the pupils' emotions and thoughts in both groups during the two processes.

*Data Analysis*
**Quantitative Data Analysis**
The written expression evaluation scale was performed with pre-test and post-test on the pupils in the control and the experimental group. What was expected from the pupils was that they should have displayed their written expression skills. Pupils were instructed in creative drama for 6 weeks (18 classes). Each participant in both groups was evaluated by two researchers giving them different code

numbers in pre-test and post-test before evaluating their compositions. The reliability of the evaluators was calculated by using the two-way mixed absolute agreement. As a result of these calculations, the two-way mixed absolute agreements (the reliability of the evaluators) for the pre-test scores were found .95 for the external structure, .94 for the internal structure, and .96 for the language and expression. They were found .98 for the external structure, .87 for the internal structure and .96 for the language and expression for the post-test. Statistical analyses were performed by averaging the participants' scores which they got from each evaluator. The participants were randomly assigned in both groups basing on the pupils' hierarchical scores.

It is required to arrange the data set first and then prepare the statistics for analysis in the research process (Pallant, 2016). In line with this purpose, extreme and missing values were firstly analyzed. Furthermore, means, standard deviation, frequency and percentages obtained by quantitative data collection instruments were calculated through descriptive statistics in revealing general qualities of the control and the experimental group and these values were analyzed within research problems. Secondly, paired samples t-test was performed to determine if there was a significant difference between the pre-test scores of the control and the experimental group. Thirdly, MANCOVA was preferred regarding the numbers of variables because MANCOVA analyzes multiple variables, one or more covariates and multiple dependent variables (Cooley and Lohnes, 1971). In that regard, MANCOVA was performed to reveal if the post-test scores of the groups differed by the covariates (gender, age, pre-test external structure, pre-test internal structure, pre-test language and expression). Also, the reason why MANCOVA was used was to control the variables age and gender which could have an effect on the research results. Homogeneity of regressions, multivariate normality, equality of variances and covariances, and multivariate linear regression were analyzed to test if the assumptions of multivariate analysis of variance were compensated. Lastly, ANCOVA was performed to determine the effect of creative drama on improving writing skills. .05 error margin was considered as upper limit. The quantitative data collected were analyzed via SPSS 23.

### Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected from the reviews by the pupils for the process of writing through creative drama were analyzed through descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis could both be arranged by the themes that research questions presented and be made regarding the questions used in the interviews and observations. Descriptive analysis mostly includes citations in order to strikingly reflect the views and the statements of the observed or interviewed individuals (Patton, 2002). In this respect, reviews obtained from the pupils in both groups were analyzed through descriptive statistics and there were citations from the reviews by the pupils for the questions asked by the researcher. The questions asked by the researcher to both groups were determined as themes.

#### *Internal and External Validity of the Study*

In qualitative researches, there are several variables which may have an effect on the internal validity (selection bias, maturation, mortality and history, data collection instruments, pre-test effects, exclusion of extreme values, interaction effect, expectation effect) and on the external validity (sampling effect, reactivity effect and pre-test experimental variable effect) (Büyüköztürk, 2011). The subjects of the current study were conducted in a randomly-chosen class among 4th grades in order to increase the effect of these variables. The pupils' ages range from 10 to 13 and are close to each other. Pre-tests and post-tests were performed by the researcher on the pupils in their own classes. All of the pupils were enabled to respond all of the items of the scale. While the pupils in the experimental group were instructed by the researcher in written expression skills based on creative drama activities, the pupils in the control group were instructed in classical expression skills by the class teacher in the process of collecting data. The reason why two kinds of instruction by two different teachers were provided was that the writing instruction based on creative drama might have affected the class teacher and that there had been a doubt in that the current instruction might not have been given. Although performing the pre-test was a threat to internal validity, the post-tests were performed 6 weeks after the pre-tests.

# Results

### Qualitative Results

This section includes data preparation for analysis, results of descriptive statistics, t-test, Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) and the results obtained from the analysis of the assumptions for ANCOVA.

### Data Preparation for Analysis

In researches, it is necessary to keep the effects of missing values and extreme values under control in order to gather correct results from the data analysis (Pallant, 2016) because missing and extreme values may negatively affect error variance and they statistically diminish the power of the analysis (Osborne and Amy, 2004). The effects of missing and extreme values were analyzed in the current study in order to get valid results from the data collected. Instead of deletion, which is one of the ways to compensate missing values, mean score was assigned to each item. Assigning means is a frequently used method instead of deleting missing values and implemented by assigning the mean of the variable having a missing value instead of the missing value (Little and Rubin, 2002). Secondly, one-way and tow-way extreme values were detected. In detecting the one-way extreme values, standard z scores were extracted from overall scores and all of the scores were observed to remain in the interval of +3 and -3 because all of the scores in the one-way extreme values dispersion are supposed remain in the ±3 standard deviation distance from the mean (Mertler and Vannatta, 2004). Mahalonobis distance on the level of $p < .001$ was controlled and no extreme values were found. Secondly, some assumptions must be compensated in order to perform t-test, MANCOVA and ANCOVA. Below are the results from the analysis of assumptions needed for t-test and MANCOVA.

*Normality and Linearity:* Before performing univariate and multivariate analyses, skewness and kurtosis values for each variable for normality and histogram graphics for linearity were examined. Table 2 displays descriptive statistics of the variables.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics for the Variables

| Data Collection Instruction | | N | Min. | Max. | Mean | S.D. | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | Pre-Test | 18 | 19 | 29 | 23.33 | 2.58 | 0.615 | 0.333 |
| | Post-Test | 18 | 45 | 52 | 47.94 | 2.28 | 0.276 | -0.975 |
| Experimental | Pre-Test | 18 | 15 | 27 | 21.44 | 3.18 | -0.753 | 0.396 |
| | Post-Test | 18 | 76 | 88 | 81.77 | 3.68 | 0.119 | -0.998 |

As seen in Table 2, skewness and kurtosis values for normality are in the interval of +1 and -1. In situations in which kurtosis and skewness values are in the interval of +2 and -2, distribution is accepted as normal (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013).

*Homogeneity:* Levene's test for univariate homogeneity and Box's M for multivariate homogeneity was performed in testing homogeneity of variables in the current study.

**Table 3.** Levene's Test Results

| Variables | | F | df1 | df2 | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | Pre-Test | 0.294 | 1 | 16 | 0.595 |
| | Post-Test | 0.633 | 1 | 16 | 0.438 |
| Experimental | Pre-Test | 0.277 | 1 | 16 | 0.606 |
| | Post-Test | 4.455 | 1 | 16 | 0.061 |

As seen in Table 3, which displays univariant homogeneity for pre-test and post-test, all variables were observed to match the assumptions of homogeneity ($p > .005$). For multivariant homogeneity, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices was viewed.

**Table 4.** Box's M Test Results

| Box's M | F | df1 | df2 | p |
|---------|-----|-----|---------|-------|
| 4.088 | 0.616 | 6 | 8375.54 | 0.718 |

As seen in Table 4, Box's M test result is significant (p = 0.718). Since Box's M test result is higher than p > .001, $H_0$ hypothesis was accepted and variance-covariance matrices were found to be homogenous. Because assumptions were provided and there was no significant effect to violate assumptions, t-test MANCOVA and ANCOVA were performed.

**Table 5.** Mean and Standard Deviations for Pre-test Scores

| Variable | Experimental | | Control | |
|----------|------|------|------|------|
| | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Pre-Test | | | | |
| External Structure | 10.33 | 3.22 | 11.33 | 4.19 |
| Internal Structure | 23.03 | 2.30 | 23.89 | 2.32 |
| Language and Expression | 15.25 | 3.17 | 16.86 | 3.10 |

Independent-samples t-test was performed to determine if there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the participants in both groups. As a result of the analyses, there was no significant difference among the scores of external structure ($t$ (34) =.80, $p$ >. 05, Cohen's $d$= -.27), internal structure ($t$ (34) = 1.12, $p$ >. 05, Cohen's $d$= -.37), and language and expression ($t$ (34) = 1.54, $p$ >. 05, Cohen's $d$= -.51)

Table 6 shows MANCOVA, performed to reveal if the post-test scores of the groups differed by covariates (age, gender, pre-test external structure, pre-test internal structure, pre-test language and expression) after controlling the assumptions of multivariate analysis of variance.

**Table 6.** MANCOVA Results

| Variance Source | Wilks' Lambda | Hypothesis df | Error df | p | Effect Size |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|----------|------|-------------|
| Intercept | 0.504 | 3.000 | 27.000 | .000 | 0.496 |
| Pre-Test External Structure | 0.797 | 3.000 | 27.000 | .100 | 0.203 |
| Pre-Test Internal Structure | 0.947 | 3.000 | 27.000 | .685 | 0.053 |
| Pre-Test Language and Expression | 0.970 | 3.000 | 27.000 | .843 | 0.030 |
| Age | 0.968 | 3.000 | 27.000 | .828 | 0.032 |
| Gender | 0.736 | 3.000 | 27.000 | .078 | 0.264 |
| Group | 0.059 | 3.000 | 27.000 | .000 | 0.741 |

As seen in Table 6, regarding the significance values of variables, the significance values of Pre-test external Structure, Pre-test internal Structure, Pre-test language and expression, age and gender were found to be lower than .05. These results showed that the covariates did not have a significant effect on the dependent variables. This also showed that % 74 of the change in the dependent variables was due to implementation.

**Table 7.** ANCOVA Results of Post-Test Scores by Groups

| Variance Source | Dependent Variable | Sum of Squares | sd | Mean | F | p | Partial Eta-Squared |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ext. Str. Pre-test | Int. Str. Post-Test | 8.444 | 1 | 8.444 | 2.020 | .165 | .061 |
| | Ex. Str. Post-Test | 4.027 | 1 | 4.027 | 1.675 | .205 | .051 |
| | Lang. and Exp. Post-Test | 3.047 | 1 | 3.047 | 0.515 | .479 | .016 |
| Int. Str. Pre-test | Int. Str. Post-Test | 2.543 | 1 | 2.543 | 0.608 | .441 | .019 |
| | Ex. Str. Post-Test | 2.511 | 1 | 2.511 | 1.045 | .315 | .033 |
| | Lang. and Exp. Post-Test | 5.599 | 1 | 5.599 | 0.945 | .338 | .030 |
| Lang. and Exp. Pre-test | Int. Str. Post-Test | 0.600 | 1 | 0.600 | 0.143 | .707 | .005 |
| | Ex. Str. Post-Test | 0.215 | 1 | 0.215 | 0.089 | .767 | .003 |
| | Lang. and Exp. Post-Test | 0.024 | 1 | 0.024 | 0.004 | .949 | .000 |
| Group | Int. Str. Post-Test | 1204.749 | 1 | 1204.749 | 288.172 | .000 | .703 |
| | Ex. Str. Post-Test | 504.734 | 1 | 504.734 | 210.024 | .000 | .715 |
| | Lang. and Exp. Post-Test | 1680.167 | 1 | 1680.167 | 283.668 | .000 | .745 |
| Error | Int. Str. Post-Test | 129.600 | 31 | 4.181 | | | |
| | Ex. Str. Post-Test | 74.500 | 31 | 2.403 | | | |
| | Lang. and Exp. Post-Test | 183.613 | 31 | 5.923 | | | |

As seen in Table 7, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was performed to compare creative drama for the pupils' writing expression skills with the effectiveness of the given instruction. The dependent variables were determined as internal structure, external structure, language and expression post-test scores, which were obtained from writing skill evaluation scale, which was performed after the instruction was given. The independent variables are pre-test scores of the control and the experimental group. The pre-test scores (internal structure, external structure, language and expression) obtained from writing skill evaluation scale, which was performed before the instruction was implemented, were used as covariants. As a consequence, there was no significant difference between post-test scores of the groups, $p= 0.00 < 0.05$, $F (1, 31) = 238.668$, $p = .00$). As effect size values approximately showed (% 70, internal structure, % 72, external structure, % 75 language and expression) a firm relation among the scores from the scale was observed. In other words, using creative drama as a method for the three sub-dimensions helped improve writing skills, namely internal structure, external structure and language and expression, of the pupils in the experimental group. This condition proposed that creative drama improved writing skills of the pupils in the experimental group, compared to the control group which was given classical writing skill instruction.

### Quantitative Results

In this section, the results from the pupils' reviews of writing process were presented.

### Results for the Pupils in the Experimental Group

The data from the reviews by the pupils were analyzed and it was seen that they were happy to attend the writing process through creative drama; that they became more creative when they performed in in-role writing; that they better developed the characters and actions that they created in the writing process by making pretensions; that they arranged what they wanted to tell in order of importance; that they were conscious while transferring their emotions and thoughts into writing; that they had the opportunity to assess what they wrote; that they enjoyed writing together with the group in exchange of ideas and that they changed the way they used words thanks to completion practices based on improvisation. Moreover, they stated that they developed a relevant expression style and that they clearly and intelligibly wrote in that this expression could be acted effectively. Clearly speaking, it

was observed that the pupils in the experimental group developed awareness of internal structure, external structure, and language and expression attributes of the writing process through creative writing. Below are the quotations obtained from the pupils' reviews.

> *S2: Enjoying writing what I came to realize in drama class and feeling free to write anything I desire…*
>
> *S5: I attend drama classes and I extremely enjoy it. Now we will hold hands and play games with my friend. … I become the character of what I write and I find myself in the actions. I cannot even realize how the time passes.*
>
> *S11: I was excited. I had no idea about what would happen but I settled down as we started playing games. I can now write what the teacher asks me to write more eagerly. I particularly enjoy writing together with my friends.*
>
> *S13: I did not use to care about punctuation while writing. Now I am more careful about it. Plus, it is so enjoying to play with the words given by the teacher first, and then to write.*

### Results for the Pupils in the Control Group

The data from the reviews by the pupils were analyzed and it was observed that they enjoyed writing when there was a stimulus in the classroom; that they did not know how to start writing; that they got bored of writing; that they immediately wanted to finish writing; that they continuously erased what they wrote; they were not able to define what they wanted to express and that they lacked writing suitably to literary types. Throughout this process, the pupils made no evaluations for the three dimensions, namely internal structure, external structure, and language and expression, since they did not use any methods or strategies for writing skill. The pupils stated that they were satisfied with the given stimuli and made evaluations of their reluctance and deficiencies in the writing process. Below are the quotations obtained from the pupils' reviews.

> *S3: The caricature and the short film we watched were very good. I wish we could watch it all the time. It was awesome to write a story about the short film. I wish we could watch it again.*
>
> *S4: … I am so bored while writing. How can I write? I do not understand why the teacher wants us to write this.*
>
> *S6: I kept erasing while I was writing. I was looking at what my friend wrote… when the teacher realized that I was not writing, I told that nothing came to my mind.*
>
> *S12: Writing letters is so boring… How will I start writing a letter… How will I conclude what I will write?*

## Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

The results of the current study showed that the post-test scores of the pupils in the experimental group were significantly higher than those of the pupils in the control group after the instruction whereas the pre-test scores of the pupils in both groups gathered from written expression evaluation scale were found non-significant. This fact proves that creative drama as a method improves pupils' writing skills because the creative drama instruction given to the pupils in the experimental group helped pupils in this group improve their writing skills more, although both groups were given two different types of instruction. However, although the pupils in the control group made writing practices through various stimuli and since they did not have an instruction on the evaluation of external and internal structure, and language and expression aspect of writing through creative drama, there were no significant changes in writing skills of the pupils in this group. This proposes the effectiveness of creative drama for writing skill rather than classical writing practices. Moreover, this effect revealed the fact that creative drama was an effective method in improving students' writing skills instead of the variable teacher. Thus, creative drama was found to be an effective method in improving pupils' writing skills. Using creative drama as a method help pupils develop self-awareness, self-reliance, self-regulation, self-correction and self-assessment, and become cognitively, motivationally

and affectively ready (Adıgüzel, 2015; Ernst-Slavit & Wenger, 1998; Gallagher, 1997; San, 1990; Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1995).

The results of the current study were not culturally different from the studies (Booth & Neelands, 1998; Cormack, 2003; Macy, 2004; Hsia, Huang, & Hwang, 2012; Dalby & Burton, 2012; McNaughton, 1997; Tarlington, 1985; Wheeler, 2014) in many different cultures on improving students' writing skills through creative drama. Elaborately illustrating, in a study (Cormack, 2003) in Canada, in which writing skill was improved through creative drama with 54 6th and 7th grade pupils aging from 10 – 15; in a study (Macy, 2004) again in Canada, in which students of primary school got the chance to become aware of the words, actions, images and phones in the text, in a study (McNaughton, 1997) in Glasgow, in which the creative drama group, composed of students, was far better at writing in-role than the discussion group, in a study (Dalby & Burton, 2012) in England, in which pupils' attitudes and motivations towards writing through "the writing in role strategy" positively enhanced, in a study (Hsia, Huang, & Hwang, 2012) in Taiwan, in which writing skill was improved through the technology-based cooperation which was developed by creative writing practices with 158 pupils, and in a study (Booth & Neelands, 1998) in which the stylistic and contextual structure of writing was developed through in-role writing, creative drama and actions, the positive effect of creative drama on writing skill showed no changes although the countries, their cultures, and pupils' age and grade levels varied. Furthermore, the result is the same for the studies on improving writing skills through creative drama in Turkey (Bayraktar & Okvuran, 2012; Erdoğan, 2013; Kara, 2010; Susar Kırmızı, 2009; Karateke, 2006; Temizkan, 2011; Türkel, 2013; Ünsal, 2005). All these results show that creative drama is a variable which helps improve writing skill independent of any countries, cultures and student level.

In the current study, pupils' experiencing writing practices in act-like processes by utilizing techniques such as improvising, role-play, acting, completing and creative writing basing on their own life experiences by means of the creative drama method, which was implemented in the experimental group, helped them improve their skills in external structure (stylistic), internal structure (contextual) and language and expression. In other words, the pupils in the experimental group, who experienced creative drama, developed awareness of their linguistic and cognitive patterns and rearranged them. These results are also supported by the quantitative results from the pupils' reviews. Especially by the pupils' statements in the quotations from the reviews, the pupils accentuated that writing was a process, that it needed concentrating, that it should be enjoyable and that completion, in-role writing, creative writing, dramatization and in-group writing were necessary. This can be supported by the fact that the pupils in the experimental group were instructed in writing skills during the preparation/warm-up, role-play and evaluation processes of creative drama and this helped them develop positive affective perceptions of the internal and external structure and the language and expression attributes of writing. This clearly shows that writing practices should be performed with activities prepared by various techniques in an entertaining environment supported by act-like processes, instead of performing writing practices through classical activities (writing compositions, writing emotions and thoughts etc.). From this point of view, the results (Booth & Neelands, 1998; Cormack, 2003; Macy, 2004; Dalby & Burton, 2012; Bayraktar & Okvuran, 2012; Erdoğan, 2013; Hsia, Huang, & Hwang, 2012; Susar Kırmızı, 2009; Temizkan, 2011) of the current study are supported by the researches revealing the positive effects of creative drama on writing skill. Moreover, the pupils effectively reflected their emotions and thoughts, their awareness, and their imagination on the text they composed with the aid of the elements authenticity, awareness, readiness and imagination, which were aroused by creative drama (Adıgüzel, 2015; Annarella, 1999; Johnson, 1998; O'Neill, 1995; San, 1990). Hence, pupils' experiences, skills and perceptions appearing throughout the process of improving writing skills through creative drama change their self-concept about their own skills (Adıgüzel, 2015; Öztürk, 2001). In addition, giving the pupils the chance to actively participate, to have fun, to pretend, of spontaneity and to act in act-like

processes for writing skill, from the contextual aspect, enabled them to express their own emotions and thoughts in writing effectively and not to be mistaken; to exclude irrelevant thoughts; to order what is intended to be expressed according to the degree of desire and importance, from the stylistic aspect, to use the paper more neatly; to explain the text by dividing it into paragraphs, to spell the words properly and writing them equally-spaced, to spell letters accurately, correctly and legibly, and from the linguistic and expressional aspect, to make clearer and more understandable sentences; to use punctuation marks correctly; to avoid repeating words and ideas; to use the words in sentences suitably, and to make grammatically correct sentences.

The pupils in the control group, however, showed no situational changes in writing skill practices performed without creative drama or any kinds of methods. This condition shows itself in the expressions in the pupils' reviews because the pupils in this group did not provide information about what they could do for the writing process just because they did not develop enough awareness of the variables of the writing process. This shows that they did not know what they were required to do in the writing process. The pupils also stated in their reviews that they could not concentrate on writing by emphasizing their affective reluctance and deficiencies in writing skill. In other words, the pupils' not making plans for situations and moments given individually or by group in writing through creative drama, not being in processes supported by the activity for the draft of what they would write, not being supported with the activities for evaluating and editing writing negatively affected their attitudes towards writing. The reason why it was so, firstly, was that the pupils did not take part in processes of developing awareness of elements such as antagonist, protagonist, theme, conflict, suspense, fiction, action and focal point in improving writing skills through creative drama. Thus, the pupils in the control group were not able to restructure the text since they did not get the chance to discern these elements. This condition hindered them from analyzing, evaluating, interpreting the facts/situations, summarizing and inferring, and most importantly from making self-regulation and self-assessment. Secondly, because the pupils in the control group did not practice on in-role writing, which was supposed to develop the text in stylistic and linguistic and expressional aspects, no changes in their writing skill were encountered. Especially in the control group, performances like developing the diction, punctuation, spelling, structuring correct grammatical sentences and creating paragraph-based relationships were seen not to have appeared.

The current study proposed that creative drama be used in the class to improve pupils' writing skills. Using creative drama in helping writing skill improve efficiently enabled pupils to better restructure processes like internal, external structure, and language and expression, as it was in the previous studies (Ataman, 2006; Erkan & Aykaç, 2014; Sevim & Özdemir Erem, 2013; Susar Kırmızı, 2009) Accordingly, creative drama may turn the child into a self-confident, successful and a person who takes responsibility for improving his own skills with its act-like and higher order thinking processes such as participation, improvisation, role-play, acting, spontaneity, awareness, pretending, sensitivity, evaluation, correction and monitoring (Adıgüzel & Timuçin, 2010; Aldavero, 2008; Annarella, 1999; Atish, 2015; Batdı & Batdı, 2015; Conard & Asher, 2000; Ernst-Slavit & Wenger, 1998; Freeman, Sullivan, & Fulton, 2003; Gallagher, 1997; Kaf, 1999; Önalan Akfırat, 2006; Öztürk, 2001; Wagner, 1988). Pupils effectively expressing their emotions and thoughts in writing with the aid of these processes have higher academic achievement (Atish, 2015; Erkan & Aykaç, 2014; Joseph, 2014; Kaf, 1999; Susar Kırmızı, 2009; Timothy & Apata, 2014).

The first limitation of the current study is that it is uncertain how long the improvement in pupils' writing skills through creative drama will last. Therefore, additional experimental follow-up studies are recommended. Secondly, the current study was conducted only on the 4th grade pupils. Hence, researches on different levels of grades should be done in order to determine the effectiveness of the method on writing skill. Lastly, only the "Written Expression Evaluation Scale" was utilized in the control and the experimental group. Further researches may be done utilizing different evaluation scales for writing skill.

In conclusion, the current study showed that creative drama helped improve the pupils' writing skills. Through creative drama, the pupils operated their higher order processes such as completing, associating, matching, evaluating and self-regulating by being aware of the content, style, language and expression attributes rather than writing their emotions and thoughts in a suggestive way, and this positively contributed to their improvement in their writing skills. All these situational processes created by creative drama helped the pupils pass from the passive position to the active participating position in terms of content, style and language.

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**Appendix 1.** Writing Skill Evaluation Form Scale

| Dimensions | Score |
|---|---|
| **External Structure (Stylistic)** | |
| **1.** Writing a straight line on an unlined paper, aligning the lines. | 2 |
| **2.** Writing by a black-lead pencil or a black/dark blue ballpoint | 2 |
| **3.** Leaving appropriate margins on the left and right sides, and on the bottom and the top of the paper (usually 3.5 or 4 cm on the left side, 1.5 cm on the right side, 6 cm on the top and 3 cm at the bottom.) | 2 |
| **4.** Writing name, last name, the name of the school, grade and, if any, division on the left top side of the paper. | 2 |
| **5.** Writing the date on the right top of the paper | 2 |
| **6.** Writing the topic on the top, and right in the middle part of the paper. | 2 |
| **7.** Leaving 2 cm space between the title and the writing | 2 |
| **8.** Beginning the paragraphs 1.5 cm (7 letters) deeper than other lines | 2 |
| **9.** Beginning the lines on a level as one under the other | 2 |
| **10.** Leaving equal spaces between lines | 2 |
| **11.** Leaving a little more space between paragraphs compared to the space amount between lines | |
| **12.** Spelling letters accurately, correctly and legibly | 2 |
| **13.** Spelling words correctly and writing them equally-spaced | 2 |
| **14.** Giving the related person a clear, unspotted, and a flawless-image paper when the writing is done | 4 |
| **Internal Structure (Contextual)** | |
| **1.** Ordering what is intended to be expressed according to the degree of desire and importance (Expressing facts and thoughts by necessary and logical ordering) | 5 |
| **2.** Passing from one idea to another in a natural and logical stream (providing uniformity and integrity in writing) | 5 |
| **3.** Explaining the theme by dividing the writing into paragraphs | 3 |
| **4.** Excluding irrelevant opinions | 3 |
| **5.** Expressing emotions and thoughts in a fluent and engrossing way | 3 |
| **6.** Not making misinformation | 3 |
| **7.** Not having a contradiction in terms | 3 |
| **8.** Giving short, attractive and relevant (appropriate) titles | 3 |
| **9.** Creating a whole in which emotions, thoughts and plans are relevantly and correctly explained | 4 |
| **Language and Expression** | |
| **1.** Making an attractive and a striking lead-in to the writing | 2 |
| **2.** Making clear and understandable (short, concise, plain) sentences | 4 |
| **3.** Avoiding repeating words and ideas (not using unnecessary, irrelevant word(s)) | 4 |
| **4.** Using the words in sentences suitably | 2 |
| **5.** Choosing proper words to match the intended meaning | 2 |
| **6.** Not using old-fashioned, archaic words | 2 |
| **7.** Spelling the words correctly | 2 |
| **8.** Establishing a reasonable and a natural connection among words, sentences and paragraphs | 2 |
| **9.** Making grammatically correct sentences | 3 |
| **10.** Establishing a linguistic and intellectual connection between the sentences forming the paragraph | 2 |
| **11.** Writing appropriately to orthographic rules | 3 |
| **12.** Using punctuation marks correctly | 3 |
| **13.** Creating a linguistic and expressive integrity | 2 |
| **14.** Writing by a relevant expression style | 2 |

**Appendix 2.** An Instruction Sample Prepared through Creative Drama

**Participants**: 4th grade/18 pupils
**Time**: 120 min.
**Subject**: Democracy
**Methods and Techniques**: Creative drama, completing improvisation, private ownership, revitalization, role playing, dramatization, creative writing.
**Materials**: The poem "Liberty" by Paul Eluard, A4 papers, lead pencil, crayons.
**Objectives**: **1.** Learners will be able to help create the story by listening and trial
　　　　　　　**2.** Learners will be able to act the story they create
　　　　　　　**3.** Learners will be able to pass to story writing by taking advantage of their acting

**A. Preparation-Warm up**

**Activity 1**: The group in a circle is asked to walk on tiptoes, to walk on heels, to walk on inner – outer side of the feet and to trip. The leader again asks to trip with the second instruction. Then the leader claps hands for once and asks to run backward. When the leader claps hands twice, he/she asks everyone to turn around twice, run forward and stop slowly. At the end of the activity, he/she asks participants to express what they feel.

**Activity 2**: The participants stand in a circle. The leader says "we will play the game *Nightingale in the Cage.*" He/she starts telling about the game. The leader first chooses two volunteers. He/she takes one of them in the circle and the other one out of the circle. He/she tells the one outside to catch the one inside, and the one inside not to be caught. He/she states that the purpose of being in a circular position is not being caught. Then, the play begins and goes on until all participants actively take part in the game.

**Activity 3**: The leader tells about the *Fishing Net* game. Then he/she determines certain points in the place and asks the participants to go and stand on those points. A volunteer becomes the "it". The aim of "it" is to catch the others. Each person caught by it holds hands and tries to catch the other. The game goes on until all participants are caught.

**Activity 4**: The leader asks the participants to tell the words which the word democracy evokes in mind. All participants are asked to write the words on the board. Then, the leader asks two volunteers to come to the middle of the circle. The leader says "You are in a debate now, one of you protects the rights of the minority and the other rejects it" and asks them to improvise it. Then the leader asks the participants to write an essay reflecting the concept given by basing on the words on the board.

**Mid-evaluation**: The leader asks the participants to evaluate the texts they have written and then explains about the concepts democracy and liberty. He/she talks to the participants about the concept democracy.

**B. Role-Play**

**Activity 5**: The leader splits the participants into 4 groups. He/she gives the first stanza of the poem "Liberty" by Paul Eluard and then asks the first group to write a poem; the second group to write a story; the third group to write a tale and the last group to write a song. The texts written by the participants are read out in the Democracy Festival and each text is visualized in the situation.

**Activity 6**: The leader hangs the pictures illustrating democratic rights and responsibilities and asks the participants to view them. Then, the leader splits the participants into four groups. The groups are asked to write a story on roles and situations (education, private life, health, work, safety right etc.) that they observe in the pictures. The participants put the stories on the common working place. When writing is done, the groups exchange stories. Then, each story is role-played by each group. Later, the actings are evaluated by the participants and the actings are repeated by the participants divided into different groups in order to ensure that each acting can be viewed from different point of view.

**Activity 7**: The leader asks the circular group to sit down on the pillows and divides them into groups 1, 2, 3. Then the leader, presents dramatic situations to each group as, to the 1st group: "Now you think that you were not given enough opportunities to speak although this democracy festival aimed to give you freedom of statement and you are supposed to inform the officials about this," to the 2nd group:

"You realize that women took enough responsibility but men did not and you think that you urgently need a meeting about this situation," and the 3rd group: "You think that there were no sessions about children's rights in this festival and you need to prepare a panel discussion about this." Then, he/she first asks all groups to write a story of these dramatic situations and role-play appropriately to these dramatic situations.

**C. Evaluation**

**Activity 8:** The leader asks participants to sit in circular position and splits them into 4 groups. Then, he/she asks the question: "if you were in charge of this festival, what type of a poster would you like being prepared?" and then asks them to prepare a banner on a cardboard and create a headline using this banner. Banners and headlines created by the groups are read out loud.

**Activity 9**: The leader asks each participant to whisper the word democracy in the person's ears next to them.

**Activity 10**: The leader asks each participant to write a sentence about democracy and pass it to the person next to them, and the composed paragraph to be read out by one of the participants.