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The Views of Fourth Grade Primary School Pupils in Türkiye Regarding Their Self-Regulatory Writing Skills

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the opinions of fourth-grade primary school students regarding their self-regulated writing skills. This research process was designed as a case study, one of the qualitative research designs, and the study was conducted with 52 fourth-grade students. A semi-structured interview form consisting of open-ended questions was used as the data collection tool for the study. The "Story Writing Activity Form" developed by the researchers was used to support the obtained data and data analysis was carried out through content analysis. During the preparation phase, students stated that they determined the subject, hero, title, main idea, event, place, and time. However, they did not express any opinions regarding the organization of the content during the planning phase. They expressed that they paid attention to punctuation marks, capitalization, spelling rules, text structure, and story elements during the drafting phase. Regarding techniques for developing ideas, they uttered that they made comparisons, gave examples, made definitions, and used numerical data. Upon completing their writing, students reported that they corrected their mistakes, had their teachers review them, read what they wrote, checked their work themselves, compared it with their previous writings, had their families review them, and rewrote their texts if they were not satisfied with the quality. They did not express any opinions regarding the publishing phase. The research findings indicate that primary school students' self-regulatory writing skills need to be developed.

Keywords:

Writing, Self-Regulated Skills, Primary School Students

Introduction

Students' problems in the writing process may stem from both teachers and students. Reasons such as teachers not having sufficient information about the program, not following writing instruction protocols, not using various methods and techniques, not presenting quality writing samples, not giving feedback to students, requiring students to follow various rules, criticizing mistakes, and not taking into account students' level of readiness constitute problems in writing education (Oral, 2003; Tağa & Ünlü, 2013). Factors arising from students include their inability to understand what they read and hear well, and having poor information

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processing skills (Güleryüz, 2006; Öz, 2005; Tağa & Ünlü, 2013). Studies conducted in Türkiye reveal that students' writing skills are not at an adequate level (Pürsün, 2023; Sallabaş, 2007; Topbaşoğlu & Duran, 2024; Yaşartürk & Akyol, 2023).

Writing skills are critical for individuals' educational lives. Writing is considered to have critical importance in several areas: for the expansion and transmission of knowledge in terms of acquiring, developing, storing, and transferring information; for idea formation in terms of thinking, evaluating, and directing future research; for creating cognitive balance in terms of supporting learning; for communication in terms of connecting with distant people; and for personal development (Graham, 2006; Müldür, 2017; Reimer, 2001; Ünalan, 2006). For this reason, after individuals gain writing skills, they should continuously develop and actively use the writing skills they have learned in the educational process in order to be successful both in daily life and in the academic field (Ahıskalı, 2020). In this respect, the development of students' writing skills should be emphasized.

Successful writing depends on self-regulation skills, especially those used in the writing process. Self-regulation includes factors such as setting goals, focusing on goals, organizing information, using effective strategies, creating a productive working environment, actively using resources, monitoring performance, seeking support when needed, using time effectively, having self-confidence, understanding the value of learning, and feeling a sense of pride and satisfaction in one's effort (Müldür, 2017). In Türkiye, a limited number of studies have investigated primary school students' use of self-regulation skills in the writing process. (Bitir, 2022; Can, 2016; Zelzele, 2022).

Stages of the Writing Process

"Writing is an effort to produce products using high-level mental processes by interpreting the information learned and obtained from the environment in a unique way" (Güleryüz, 2006, p.28). "It consists of steps such as determining the words, concepts, and thoughts to be used; sorting, combining, classifying, organizing, and controlling information" (Göçer, 2010, p.187). Writing is a difficult and time-consuming skill that occurs as a result of the interaction of many factors. Writers have to perform many different cognitive processes simultaneously during writing (Bayat, 2019; Müldür, 2017; Temizkan & Erbilen, 2020). Therefore, the development of writing skills should progress in a planned manner (Müldür, 2017).

The writing process consists of the stages of preparation, planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing (Englert & Raphael, 1988; Güneş, 2017; Lika, 2017; Uygun, 2012; Yılmaz, 2012).

Preparation Phase: In the preparation phase, preliminary work can be done using methods such as brainstorming, clustering and listing techniques, inspiration from sample texts, the question-answer technique, discussion, and small and large group discussions (Beydemir, 2010; Güneş, 2017; Ülper, 2008). In the preliminary preparation stage, analytical thinking comes into play as sorting and selection processes begin as a result of the prominence of imagination and associative thinking (Beydemir, 2010). The preparation stage in the writing process is divided into two categories: short-term and long-term. Short-term preparation includes engaging and guiding activities that can be implemented just before writing. Long-term preparation, on the other hand, includes activities to improve students' grammar, spelling, punctuation, and other written expression skills (Tekşan, 2001, pp.18-20).

Planning: Starting text production through planning provides guidance on what to write (idea generation), how to write (organization), how to present, and how to determine the purpose (Beydemir, 2010; Ülper, 2008; Yılmaz, 2012). According to Karaalioğlu (2003), a plan ensures that the ideas, events, and emotions one has in mind about a subject are included in a logical order, eliminates unnecessary details about what is to be written, and helps to connect each stage of the writing in a meaningful way. Therefore, the topic is first selected, defined, and linked to a main idea. Then, according to this main idea, information is gathered or information, knowledge, and emotions are focused (Temizkan, 2003). In this respect, the most important stage of the planning process is generating ideas (Flower & Hayes, 1981). In this step, questions such as why this topic has been chosen, what is intended to be explained, and how the available material supports the ideas gain importance. Opportunities for planning exist both before and during writing (Ülper & Uzun, 2009). Aydın (2009) states that the planning stage should be implemented according to the elements of purpose, target audience, main idea, supporting ideas, informativeness, appropriate title, subject integrity, logical and chronological sequence, text type, cause-effect relationships, keywords, methods of developing thought, originality, and writing strategies (note taking, controlled writing, creative writing, and etc.).

Creating a draft: At the beginning of the writing process, determining the topic and purpose of the writing, identifying the target audience, and generating ideas about the topic are accomplished. At this stage, ideas suitable for the writing are selected, and the main idea, the topic sentences of the paragraphs, and the introduction, development, and conclusion sections of the writing are planned. Then a draft text is created. Students review the purpose of the writing, the target audience, and the type of writing, and teachers prevent negative attitudes towards writing by

informing students that they are at the beginning of the writing process and that they may make mistakes (Bayat, 2019). The quality of a piece of writing may not be achieved instantly; therefore, it may take several attempts. During the drafting process, students should be primarily concerned with the content of the writing, not its grammar and formal elements. Children should make an effort to shape their writing, but they should not lose track of their thoughts. In the writing process, the writer should organize their thoughts, information, or events in line with the plan they have prepared in advance (Süğümlü, 2016).

Revising and Editing: This process is an activity in which the writer consciously reads, evaluates, or corrects the text that they regularly produce (Ülper, 2008). Revision is the final stage of the writing process. It is understood that the work done up to this stage focuses primarily on content. At this stage, grammar, spelling, and formal aspects of the writing are also taken into consideration, along with the content. Corrections related to content concern issues such as word choice, unclear expression, paragraph relationships, text integrity, fluency, and style. Formal qualities involve issues such as page layout, spelling, punctuation, and legibility (Süğümlü, 2016). The revision stage includes activities such as taking a break after writing and checking later, exchanging opinions by sharing, identifying mistakes through proofreading, and correcting mistakes are included (Akyol, 2006; Güneş, 2007; Ülper, 2008). Receiving feedback encourages writers to re-evaluate the form and content of their writing and to engage in additional planning activities. This cyclical interaction helps writers to improve and complete their writing (Adalı, 2003; Becker, 2006; Yılmaz, 2012).

Publication: This is the final stage of the writing process. At this stage, the writing process is completed, and the writing product is finalized. The product is presented to the target audience through publishing and sharing (Tabak & Göçer, 2013). The student first reads the text they have written to their classmates and can share it with their teacher. For this purpose, teachers can publish the texts written by students in the class or school newspaper, on the internet, or in a magazine, hang them on the school or class board, send them to children's magazines, or publish them on the internet. In addition, students can be given the opportunity to read them to their families and friends outside of school, send them to pen pals, adapt them into a drama, create a booklet, or participate in various competitions (Akyol, 2010; Cavkaytar, 2010; Coşkun, 2007; Şentürk, 2009; Tompkins, 2000).

Self-Organizing Writing

Using self-regulation skills in any field aims to provide self-efficacy and support to students who have motivational problems through strategy instruction (Santangelo et al., 2008). Good self-regulation training occurs when we are able to assess whether students are able to accomplish the task, whether the environment is suitable for learning, and what kind of changes are necessary for better learning (Sarı & Akınoğlu, 2009). In self-regulated learning, it is observed that (a) the student has a specific goal, (b) the student works to achieve this goal by taking responsibility through their own initiative, (c) they can define the requirements of the task, evaluate their own abilities to meet these requirements, and choose the strategies they can use to complete the task, (d) they try to complete the task using various strategies throughout the process, and (e) they are highly motivated (Uyar, 2015, p.47).

Researchers such as Flower, Hayes, Risemberg, Zimmerman, Graham, and Harris have drawn attention to the importance of self-regulation in the writing process (Müldür, 2017). Students who use self-regulation strategies in the writing process can plan how to direct the learning process, set realistic goals for themselves, organize the study environment, monitor the learning process, and seek help to solve learning problems (Zimmerman, 2000). Teachers should provide training to develop students' writing skills based on self-regulation. In this model, the basic steps that teachers should follow to improve students' writing skills are defined. These steps are: (1) activation and development of prior knowledge, (2) discussion, (3) modelling, (4) learning strategies, (5) support, and (6) independent practice. The teacher can adapt these steps according to the needs of the student, or some of them can be skipped. When the student fails to make sufficient progress in a step, the process can be repeated (Harris et al., 2003). At the stage of activation and development of prior knowledge, the primary goal for the student is to understand, plan, implement, and be willing to attempt the skills required in the writing process (Karatay, 2013; Santangelo et al., 2008). Assessing students' prior knowledge before teaching is important for organizing the knowledge and skills learned about the writing and self-regulation strategies to be applied by teachers, the writing process, and writing genres (Mason et al., 2011). In the discussion phase, the teacher and students determine the steps they will follow in the writing process and plan their goals (Graham & Harris, 2009). Students should be made to understand that what they have learned can help them perform better (Uygun et al., 2014). In the modelling stage, the teacher shows students how to use teaching methods, strategies to be used in the writing process, and other self-regulation strategies (Santangelo et al., 2008). Since teachers want to show students how writers make decisions, think, use strategies, and solve problems in the writing process, they usually communicate their thoughts by thinking aloud during the writing process (Tompkins, 2000). During the strategy learning phase, students apply memorization techniques to master

the strategy they will use (Harris et al., 2003). When students try to remember what they are doing and realize that they need to focus on where they are, a fast and effective strategy implementation occurs. In the support phase, students complete the writing task using the strategies under the guidance of the teacher. Students work with their teachers until they can use the strategy independently and effectively (Uygun et al., 2014). In the independent performance stage, the student creates a text as a result of using the strategy independently (Santangelo et al., 2008). Therefore, teachers should first develop students' self-regulatory writing skills using these stages. Students should produce quality writing products using their self-regulation skills in the stages of preparation, planning, drafting, revising, and publishing with as little help as possible in the independent writing process.

While students' writing skills are emphasized at individual and social levels in the Turkish curriculum and in the literature, there is no guidance on how to acquire or develop self-regulation skills that affect the development of writing skills. This study is considered important for revealing a profile of students' writing skills based on self-regulation for the curriculum and for providing a path for the functionality of the curriculum and the development of self-regulation skills. The process components of writing skills in the primary school Turkish language teaching program consist of managing written expression skills, creating content in writing, applying writing rules, reviewing situations that affect the writing process, and evaluating the writing process. Learning outcomes related to self-regulated writing skills are found in each section. In the section on managing written expression skills, examples of learning outcomes include 'selects a writing strategy appropriate to the purpose, selects a strategy appropriate to the writing environment (paper/online) they have determined, uses appropriate expressions to start, continue, and end online writing, and prepares a writing plan appropriate to the type of text they will write.' In the section on creating content in writing, examples of learning outcomes include 'continuing the missing parts of the text based on prior knowledge, writing text based on prior knowledge, and using metaphors and examples in writing.' In the section on applying writing rules, examples of learning outcomes are; "writes according to the plan prepared in accordance with the characteristics of the type of text to be written, uses words appropriately and in accordance with their meaning in their writing, uses idioms and proverbs appropriately in their writing, and uses punctuation marks (full stop, apostrophe, comma, colon, exclamation mark, quotation mark, question mark, hyphen, dash, parentheses, ellipsis, slash) correctly in their writing". In the section on evaluating the writing process, learning outcomes such as "finds mistakes in their writing, corrects mistakes identified in their writing, and indicates their writing preferences according to genre or area of interest" can be given as examples. Regarding publication section, while writing skills based on self-regulation are not fully covered in the primary school Turkish language teaching program, the term self-regulation is mentioned in the social and emotional learning skills section (MEB, 2024). International studies have investigated the effects of self-regulated learning on students' language and mathematical competencies and writing skills (Berry & Mason, 2012; Chalk et al., 2005; Saddler et al., 2004). In studies conducted in Türkiye, there is a limited number of them examining the effect of the self-regulatory model on primary school students' writing skills, writing self-efficacy perceptions, writing motivation, writing anxiety, and academic achievement (Can, 2016; Müldür, 2017; Uygun, 2012; Zelzele, 2022). This study focuses on examining and understanding primary school fourth-grade students' views on their self-regulated writing skills. In this respect, the research can help teachers and school administrators better understand how to improve students' self-regulation skills and create more effective programs. Therefore, the importance of this study cannot be overstated. It is anticipated that the results of the study will contribute to the literature and guide researchers, teachers, and students in future studies.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the self-regulatory writing skills of primary school students. In line with this purpose, the main problem in the research is as follows:

What are the views of fourth -grade students on self-regulatory writing skills? In this direction, answers to the following research questions were sought:

1. What are the opinions of fourth-grade primary school students;

a) on whether they like writing activities or not?

b) on what kind of environment they prefer to write in?

c) about what they do before they start writing (Preparation and Planning stage)?

d) about what they pay attention to in the writing process (Drafting)?

e) about the problems they experience in the writing process?

f) about what they do when their writing practices are over (Revising, Editing, and Publishing)?

Method

Research Model

The purpose of this study was to examine the views of fourth-grade primary school students on their self-regulatory writing skills, and the research was designed as a case study, one of the qualitative

research designs. According to Creswell (2007), a case study is a qualitative research approach in which the researcher thoroughly examines one or more situations over time using data collection tools (observations, interviews, audio-visual materials, documents, reports) that include multiple sources, and identifies the situations and themes related to the situation. In this study, the process was examined in depth by collecting students' views on what they did at each stage of the writing process and evaluating the texts they wrote. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) state that case studies, unlike experimental studies, seek to explore situations. This study also focuses on primary school students' self-regulatory writing skills. Research on this topic is quite limited. Previous studies have focused on developing primary school students' self-regulatory writing skills. This study, however, provides insight into primary school students' awareness of their self-regulation skills in the writing process.

Data Collection Tool

Semi-structured Interview Form: The data for this study were collected using a semi-structured interview technique. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher prepares the interview questions in advance and can reorganize the questions while providing limited flexibility (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

The semi-structured interview form was prepared by the researchers, considering the problem statement of the research. Common elements are found in the sub-processes of self-regulation skills and the stages of writing skills. Planning, revising, self-evaluation, and environmental structuring can be given as examples (Uygun, 2012; Zimmerman, 1986). This finding shows the intersection point between the process components of self-regulation skills and the stages of the writing process. Students who use self-regulation strategies in the writing process plan how to direct the learning process, set realistic goals for themselves, organize their working environment, monitor the learning process, engage in self-assessment, and seek help to solve learning problems (Santangelo et al, 2008; Sarı & Akınoğlu, 2009; Uyar, 2015; Zimmerman, 1986). Researchers have defined self-regulation strategies in the writing process (Graham & Harris, 1994; Zimmerman & Riesemberg, 1997). Information retrieval (e.g., gathering information related to the writing topic), record-keeping (e.g., note-taking), organisation (e.g., organising notes), self-monitoring (e.g., checking whether writing goals have been achieved), reviewing records (e.g., reviewing notes or text produced so far), self-evaluation (e.g., evaluating the quality of the text or proposed plans), revision (e.g., modifying the writing text or plans), environmental structuring (e.g., finding a quiet place to write), and seeking social assistance (e.g., asking another person to edit the article) can be given as examples. Kilis and Yıldırım (2018) state that self-regulation ability is the ability to manage learning processes through one's own efforts without needing external guidance to acquire skills or learn information. Indeed, researchers indicate that self-regulation skills are applied in the stages of the writing process, such as planning, drafting, reviewing, and revising, in writing activities (Kanlapan & Velasco, 2009; Karadağ-Yılmaz & Erdoğan, 2019). In this regard, the interview questions were designed to investigate what students can do on their own in the stages of the writing process. In the preparation of the interview questions, the literature was reviewed, the learning objectives in the Turkish Language Lesson (Grades 1-4) curriculum were examined, and the form was finalized by examining the scales prepared in the field of self-regulation (Müldür, 2017; Özbay, 2008). The form was presented to three field experts, and after the revisions, the form was finalized. In this context, after pilot interviews were conducted with five students other than the participants, the audio recordings were transcribed. The field experts were asked to examine the transcripts and check whether the questions asked were clear and understandable, whether they covered the topic addressed, and whether they were likely to provide the necessary information; thus, following this evaluation, the validity of the question items was determined. After this process, the interview form was finalized. The final interview questions are as follows:

1. Do you like writing activities?

2. In what kind of environment do you prefer to write?

3. What do you do before you start writing?

4. What kind of approach do you follow while writing? What do you pay attention to?

5. What issues do you have the most problems with while writing?

6. What do you do while you are writing?

Story Topic Selection Form: In the selection of the story topic, attention was paid to topics that could attract the students' interest, reflect their ideas, and make them want to write. Considering these issues, the researchers determined topics such as what an ideal friend should be like, a day at a picnic, your dream school, animal love, camping, and a nature trip. These topics were presented to three experts. The experts were asked to consider which of the topics would be appropriate for the text to be written for fourth-grade students. As a result of the review, three topics that would attract students' interest were determined. In the pilot study using these topics, students were asked to write a story. The topic that the students found most engaging was presented to them for writing a story with a visual reminder. The visual presented contained a reminder about children having a picnic.

Participants of the Study

The study group consisted of 52 primary school students studying in the fourth grade at a primary school in Türkiye. Information about the study group is shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Information on the Study Group

Variable	N	%
Girls	27	51.92
Boys	25	48.08

As seen in Table 1, there are 52 participants in the study group, 27 of whom are girls and 25 of whom are boys.

Data Collection Process

Necessary permissions were obtained before the data collection phase. The researchers themselves conducted the interviews, and the data were recorded with a voice recorder. The interviews lasted an average of four minutes and 20 seconds. The real identities of the participants were not included, and each participant was assigned a number. Through the facilities provided by the semi-structured interview technique in the interviews, in-depth answers to the questions were sought, and the process was completed in this way.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through the content analysis method. Content analysis reveals concepts and themes by subjecting the data obtained to in-depth analysis. In this process, the data are coded, and the codes determined are grouped on the basis of themes, sub-themes, and categories (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Frequency (f) and percentage (%) calculations were made to indicate themes, sub-themes, and categories.

As a result of the interviews, a voice recording of 218 minutes and 72 seconds was obtained. The interviews were transcribed into a Microsoft Office Word document by the researchers. Subsequently, two researchers conducted pre-coding for each question independently of each other. Then, themes and categories were formed with the items marked as common. Here, the items marked or not marked by the researcher and the expert at the same time are accepted as 'consensus'. The themes and sub-themes in which the researcher or the expert expressed different opinions on the same question are considered as 'disagreement'. The reliability of the study was calculated using Miles and Huberman's (Miles & Huberman, 1994) formula [Consensus / (Consensus + Disagreement) x 100]. If the reliability is above 70%, it means that reliability is achieved. As a result of the calculation, the reliability of the research was calculated as 85.30%. The result obtained was considered reliable for the research. In some research questions, themes were identified, while in others, codes were identified. The themes identified in the findings show what students pay attention to during the writing process: punctuation marks, spelling rules, sections of the text, story elements, review, correction, and techniques for developing ideas. The themes identified in the areas where students struggle while writing are: spelling rules, planning, and slow writing.

Findings

The semi-structured interviews conducted to obtain students' views on self-regulatory writing were analyzed via content analysis.

The findings regarding whether the students liked writing activities are given in Table 2.

Table 2.
Findings Regarding Students' Likes and Dislikes of Writing Activities

Feelings About Writing	f	%
I like	31	59.62
Dislike	18	34.62
No opinion	3	5.76
Total	52	100

While 31 of the students stated that they liked writing activities, 18 of them stated that they did not like them, and three of them did not express an opinion. Some of the participants stated 'I like writing activities, when I go home I think about what to write in my diary' (20), 'I like writing more or less' (23), some of them stated 'I do not like writing activities. I only write in lessons (35).

The findings regarding the environment in which students prefer to write are given in Table 3.

Table 3.
Findings Related to the Environment in which the Students Prefer to Write

Their Preferred Environment for Writing	f	%
a quiet, calm environment	36	67.92
an environment where I will not be distracted	8	15.09
a noisy environment	5	9.43
an environment where only myself is present	4	7.54

When the opinions of the students on what kind of environment they prefer to write in were analyzed, a quiet, calm environment (36), an environment where I will not be distracted (8), a noisy environment (5), and an environment where only myself is present (4) emerged. Some of the participants said, 'I write better in an environment where I will not be distracted. When there is a distracting environment, I start writing again' (20), "I write more easily in a calm, peaceful environment" (13), "I can write in a noisy environment"

(5), "I prefer to write in a quiet environment where my friends do not shout" (32).

The findings related to what the students did before they started writing are given in Table 4.

Table 4.
Findings on What the Students Did Before They Started Writing

Pre-Writing Activities	f	%
Determining the Topic	40	22.98
Determining the Hero	38	21.83
Determining the Title	31	17.81
Determining the Main Idea	25	14.36
Determining the Event	17	9.77
Determining the Place	13	7.47
Determining the Time	10	5.74

When the findings obtained are taken into consideration, it is seen that the students had seven key elements related to the findings about what they did before writing in the interviews with the students. The knowledge of the students is related to determining the topic (40), determining the heroes (38), determining the title (31), determining the main idea (25), determining the event (17), determining the place (13), and determining the time (10) before starting to write. Some of the participants said 'For example, when I write a poem, I think about the subject. When I write a story, I think about the hero, I determine the place where the event takes place, how it progresses, where and when it takes place' (51). Another participant noted, "I think about how the text will be and write accordingly. For example, I write by planning the heroes, main idea, subject, event, place, and time" (23).

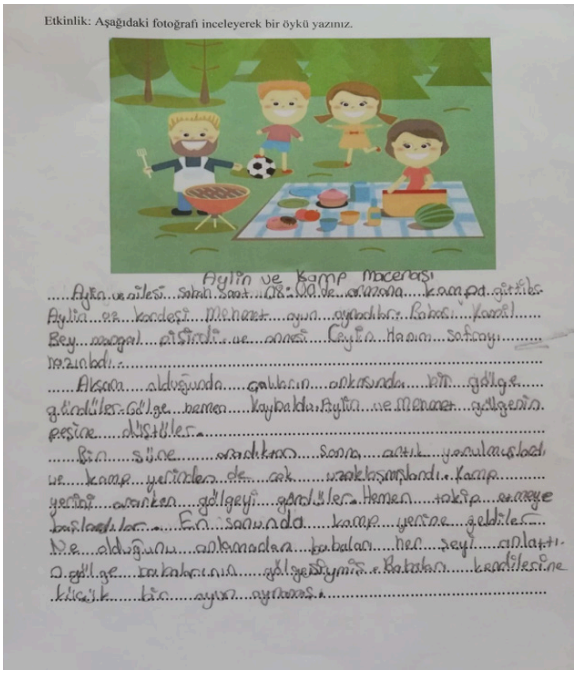
The findings related to what students pay attention to during the writing process are given in Table 5.

Table 5.
Findings on What Students Pay Attention to in the Writing Process

Things They Pay Attention to During the Writing Process	f	%
Punctuation marks	46	28.57
Writing rules		
1. Writing of capital letters	27	16.77
2. Heading	9	5.59
3. Paragraph beginning	4	2.48
4. Writing of words	4	2.48
Parts of the text	26	16.1
Story elements	17	10.5
Review	15	9.31
Correction	15	9.31
Techniques for Developing Thought		
1. Comparison	5	3.10
2. Giving examples	4	2.48
3. Making definitions	2	1.24
4. Using numerical data	2	1.24

The findings related to what students pay attention to during the writing process include: punctuation marks (46), writing rules, capitalization (27), headings (9), beginning of paragraph (4), writing of words (4), parts of the text (26), story elements (17), review (15), correction (15), and techniques for developing ideas including comparison (5), giving examples (4), making definitions (2), and using numerical data (2) are related to the writing process. Some of the participants said 'I pay attention to whether the headings are big or small. I pay attention to punctuation marks and spelling of proper names. I pay attention to the introduction, development, and conclusion. I pay attention to making definition at the beginning' (10). Other participants stated 'I pay attention to the title while writing. I pay attention to the punctuation marks and the spelling of uppercase and lowercase letters. I pay attention to the introduction, development, and conclusion. If it is about a fairy tale, I start the introduction with 'Once upon a time, once upon a time'. Then, when I write the text, I go towards the development of whichever subject it is related to and finish with the conclusion' (26), 'When writing, I pay attention to the meaningfulness of the subject, the inclusion of the characters in an appropriate place in the sentence, and punctuation marks. There are introduction, development, and conclusion parts in the sections of the text. In the introduction part, I identify the places where the characters are in the environment. Then, in the development part, I pay attention to the characters speaking in an appropriate place, and in the conclusion, I pay attention to what kind of determinations the characters make. I mostly make comparisons' (43).

In addition, stories were written to support the interviews. Some of the story examples are given below.



The author of the story written above stated, 'I pay attention to punctuation marks when writing. I pay attention to who, where, and what they are doing. I pay attention to the introduction, development, and conclusion (35). If we analyze the story written by this student, the text titled 'Aylin and Camping Adventure' consists of 85 words. The author of the text titled 'Aylin and Camping Adventure' stated their ideas clearly. The student stated that they paid attention to writing the introduction, development, and conclusion sections using paragraphs and paragraph headings. In the introduction, the author gives brief information about the people. In the development part, an event takes place. In the conclusion part, the event reaches a conclusion. In terms of spelling, it is seen that the author can fully use correct spelling. The words chosen lead to the desired result, and the sentences are formed without errors. The sentences are fluent and long. The author included the elements of the text in the text. The student attaches importance to page layout.

The author of the story written above says, 'I pay attention to the title when I write. I pay attention to the punctuation marks and pay attention to the spelling of uppercase and lowercase letters. I pay attention to the introduction, development, and conclusion. I write the introduction. Then, when I write the text, I go towards the development of whichever subject it is related to, and I finish it with the conclusion' (26). If we analyze the story written by this student, the text titled 'Mert's Beautiful Idea' consists of 197 words. The author of the text titled 'Mert's Beautiful Idea' reveals their ideas clearly. However, there is no paragraph or paragraph heading in the story. In terms of spelling, it is seen that the author cannot fully use correct spelling. Spelling mistakes are encountered in some of the words. The sentences complement each other and are fluent. The message intended to be given in the text is clearly stated. There is enough information about the heroes, but there are no concepts such as setting and time. The page layout is not fully organized.

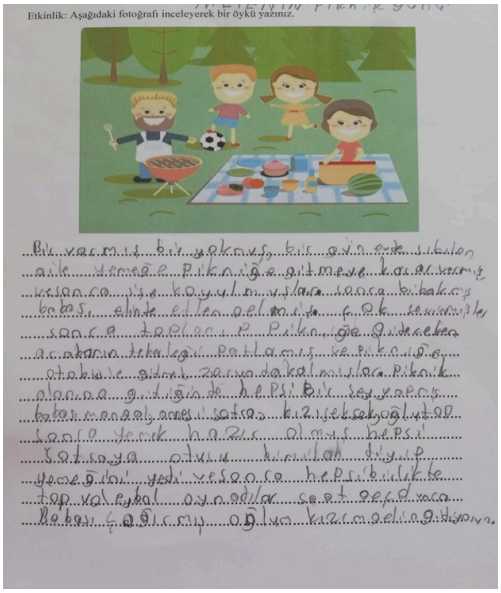
The subjects that students had difficulty with in the writing process are given in Table 6.

Table 6.

Subjects that Students Have Difficulty Writing

Problems	f	%
I do not have problems	6	9.09
I have problems		
Writing rules		
Punctuation	27	40.9
Paragraph beginning	5	7.57
Word writing	2	1.24
Planning		
Heading	8	12.12
Topic	8	12.1
Main idea	5	7.57
Parts of the text	3	4.54
Slow writing	2	1.24

When the findings obtained are taken into consideration, it is seen that the students have four categories of items related to the issues they have difficulty with while writing. The information that the students have about the problems they experience while writing is related to writing rules; punctuation (27), paragraph beginning (5), and word writing (2), planning; heading (8), topic (8), main idea (5), and parts of the text (3), slow writing (2). Some of the participants said, 'I get confused with punctuation marks while writing. For example, I forget to put punctuation marks' (17). Another participant noted, 'I have difficulty with spelling mistakes, not finding a title, setting a topic, and writing according to the topic' (32). A third student explained, 'I don't know how to finish at the end of an exciting sentence, and how to draw conclusions. I struggle with punctuation marks, and sometimes I write a sentence twice when I get confused'.



In this story, the author stated the following opinion: 'I have difficulty with spelling mistakes, not finding a title, setting a topic, and writing according to the topic.' (32). The text titled 'Mete's Picnic Day' consists of 79 words. The author does not reveal their ideas clearly. The event and the main idea that the author wants to explain are not included in the text. The author does not know basic spelling rules. In terms of organization, it is noticeable that the beginning, middle, and end are unclear, and the events are brought together randomly. There are no elements such as paragraphs and paragraph headings. The concepts of heroes, place, and time are unclear. There is no problem situation in the story, and it is not clear what the end of the story is connected to.

Findings about what the students did after the writing practice are given in Table 7.

Table 7.
Findings Related to What Students Do When Writing Practices Are Finished

Writing Practices When They Are Done	f	%
I correct my mistakes.	35	31.25
I have my teacher check it.	27	24.10
I read what I wrote.	16	14.28
I check it myself.	12	10.71
I compare it with my previous writings.	10	8.92
I have my family check it.	7	6.25
If it is not a good text, I rewrite it.	5	4.46

Considering the information obtained, it is seen that the students have seven categories of items related to what they do at the end of writing practices. The information about what the students do at the end of the writing practice is related to the following: I correct my mistakes (35), I have my teacher check it (27), I read what I have written (16), I check it myself (12), I compare it with my previous writings (10), I have my family check it (7), and if it is not a good text, I rewrite it (5). Some of the participants said, 'After writing, I correct and check the wrong words I wrote. If there are any wrong words, I correct them. I submit it to my teacher. I compare it with my previous writings. If it is a good text, I take it and submit it to my teacher. If it is not a good text, I rewrite it again' (26). Another participant noted, 'After the writing is finished, I correct the places where I wrote wrong. If I put the punctuation marks wrong, I correct them' (19). A third student explained, 'When I finish writing, I show it to my teacher and correct it if it is wrong. I compare it with what I wrote before, and if it seems bad to me, I look at the next one, and if it seems better, I have progressed' (39). Additionally, one participant stated, 'I read it and correct it if I am wrong. I correct it again and write it again. When I come across my previous writing, I find out where I am lacking' (43).

The research findings can be summarized as follows: While students stated that they paid attention to the elements of the story during the preparation stage, they did not mention paying attention to elements such as the purpose, generating ideas about the topic, or the type of writing. They stated that they did not use techniques for developing their ideas, writing in a logical order, limiting the topic, removing unnecessary details, or developing their thoughts during the planning stage. During the drafting stage, students mentioned punctuation, spelling mistakes, and techniques for developing their thoughts, but did not use any expressions related to style. When the students completed their writing assignments, they stated that they corrected their mistakes, had their teachers check their work, read what they had written, checked it themselves, compared it with their previous writings, had their families check it, and rewrote it if they had not written a good text. They did not express any opinions about the publishing stage. From this perspective, it can be said that primary school students' self-regulatory writing skills need to be developed.

Discussion

As a result of the research, it can be said that the self-regulated writing skills of primary school students need to be improved. Studies conducted in Türkiye reveal that students' writing skills are not at a sufficient level (Pürsün, 2023; Sallabaş, 2007; Topbaşoğlu & Duran, 2024; Yaşartürk & Akyol, 2023). However, there is a limited number of studies investigating the self-regulatory writing skills of primary school students (Bitir, 2022; Can, 2016). In addition, in studies conducted in Türkiye, it was found that self-regulation-based writing education improved students' text writing skills (Bitir, 2022; Can, 2016; Demirtaş Tolaman, 2017; Erdoğan, 2012; Müldür, 2017; Öğülmüş, 2018; Uygun, 2012). In international studies, it was revealed that self-regulatory writing has a positive effect on students' ability to write more qualified and longer texts (Berry & Mason, 2012; Chalk et al., 2005). The composition of poorer writers is less self-regulated than that of their better writing peers, and their writing skills are not as well developed. Even more importantly, the performance of struggling writers can be improved by boosting their level of self-regulation when writing or improving their writing skills (Graham & Harris, 2000). In the study conducted by Bitir (2022), while expressing their thoughts about self-regulation, students used positive expressions such as self-management, being responsible, being regular and disciplined, self-confidence, believing in success, self-recognition, goal setting, goal achievement, and cooperation. In this case, it can be said that self-regulatory writing has a positive effect on students' self-management of the writing process. Writing an effective product requires successful decision-making, problem-solving, and considerable reflection upon

one's own writing capacity. The actions our students take at the point of feeling uncertain or stuck in the midst of their writing process may be characteristics that distinguish high and low self-efficacy writers (Mitchell et al., 2019).

In the findings related to motivation, it was determined that some of the students liked writing activities while others did not. Researchers state that motivational processes as well as cognitive processes are effective in the act of writing (Müldür, 2017). In previous research, students found the writing education process based on self-regulation fun, interesting, relaxing, and noted that it made like writing, and facilitated writing (Demirtaş Tolaman, 2017; Müldür, 2017; Öğülmüş, 2018; Uygun, 2012). Ruben and Moll (2013) determined that liking writing, wanting to be a successful writer, having a commitment to writing, perseverance, having a perception of writing self-efficacy, creativity, originality, and being able to choose the text type and writing topic are the main factors that provide motivation. In the findings related to environmental arrangement, it was stated that students preferred a quiet environment, an environment where they would not be distracted, a noisy environment, and an environment where they could be by themselves. In Müldür's (2017) study, students stated that they paid attention to writing in a quiet environment and made resource arrangements.

Self-regulated writing strategies encompass actions related to the organization, production, and transformation of text, such as planning, drafting, and revising, as indicated by researchers who focus primarily on the cognitive aspects of writing skills (Albertson & Billingsley, 2001). The pre-writing stage consists of preparation and planning stages. Students stated that they determined the subject, hero, title, main idea, event, place, and time. In this context, preparation consists of processes such as determining the purpose of writing, determining the topic, generating ideas about the topic, brainstorming, bringing the topic into a certain framework, determining the target audience, and determining the type of writing (Karatay, 2013; Müldür, 2017). The students stated that they determined the topic and included story elements, but they did not express opinions about using strategies such as generating ideas about the topic, brainstorming, determining the purpose of writing, and determining the target audience. It was determined that students' self-regulatory writing skills were insufficient at the preparation stage.

The planning stage involves generating ideas, writing in a logical order, limiting the subject, removing unnecessary details, and connecting each stage of the writing in a meaningful way (Temizkan, 2003). Aydın (2009) stated that the planning stage should be realized according to the steps of purpose, target audience, main idea, auxiliary idea, informativeness, appropriate title, subject integrity, logical-historical sequence, text type, cause-effect relationship, keywords, methods of developing thought, originality, and writing strategies (note taking, controlled writing, creative writing, and so on). The students did not express any opinions about the mentioned issues. It was determined that students' self-regulatory skills were insufficient at the planning stage. Students should be given self-regulatory writing training. Indeed, it was determined by Uygun (2012) that writing studies conducted according to the teaching of self-regulation strategy development improved students' thinking skills and imagination at the planning stage. The acceptance of pre-writing preparation activities in the field has enabled the discovery and planning stages to be accepted as logical and necessary parts of the writing process (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 367).

After the planning stage, the drafting stage begins. According to Aşıkcan and Pilten (2016), the drafting stage describes the process of writing after the pre-writing stage in a language appropriate to the content of the subject to be written in a way to create a draft without going back. In the writing draft, the main and sub-headings of the subject, story elements, style, introduction, development, and conclusion of the text are included (Akyol, 2008; Yağcı, 2009). During the writing process in the research, students stated that they paid attention to punctuation marks, capital letters, spelling rules, parts of the text, and story elements. In terms of thought development techniques, they stated that they made comparisons, gave examples, made definitions, and utilized numerical data. The drafting stage is the stage in which students put their thoughts on paper without focusing on any punctuation or spelling mistakes (Akyol, 2010). According to this principle, most of the students pay attention to writing mistakes and punctuation marks. This is due to the fact that they consider the drafting stage as the final form of what they write and attempt to correct it. Students did not express any opinions about style.

Yağcı (2009: 301) mentions the importance of using a lively, non-monotonous, sincere, and effective style and expresses the importance of including descriptions and dialogues in stories. When we look at the stories written, most students wrote a monotonous, non-fluent story by writing short sentences. Mostly, what was wanted to be told was written directly without giving space to descriptions. They adopted the principle of reaching the goal in a short time. The written language is written in a colloquial way, which is quite far from standard written language, and the sentences are constructed accordingly. Another point is that the main and sub-headings of the subject in the writing draft, the introduction, development, and

conclusion parts of the text, the problem situation, and problem-solving attempts are included (Gezmiş Ceylan, 2014). The initiating event starts the problem. Some attempts to solve the problem and thus, problem-solving attempts are made. At the end of the story, a positive or negative, consistent, and convincing conclusion is reached, and a lesson is learned from this story (Akyol, 2008). The students, on the other hand, did not mention situations such as a problem situation and attempts to solve the problem.

The revising and editing stage is the stage where students evaluate the text and exchange opinions by sharing (Aşıkcan & Pilten, 2016; Güneş, 2007; Ülper, 2008). It includes arrangements such as grammar, page layout, and legibility, as well as content editing related to word choices, expression disorders, relationships between paragraphs, text integrity, fluency, and style (Süğümlü, 2016). Interventions that help students write may target writing behaviors such as seeking help, starting assignments early, revising habits, and responding to feedback; all of these actions are generally classified as self-regulatory (Mitchell et al., 2019). At the end of the writing practices, the students stated that they corrected their mistakes, had their teachers check their texts, read what they wrote, checked it themselves, compared it with their previous writings, had their families check it, and rewrote it if it was not a good text. The revision stage in text writing is important to improve the quality of the text. For this reason, writers can do this using editing and questioning skills in the text process. When the texts written by the students were analyzed, many errors were detected in terms of both content and form. This situation shows that students' revising and editing skills are insufficient. As argued by De Silva and Graham (2015), learners' awareness in planning, monitoring, and evaluation enhances writing outcomes.

The publishing stage is the last stage of the writing process. Teachers can publish the texts written by students in the class or school newspaper, on the internet, or in a magazine, hang them on the school or class board, and send them to children's magazines (Akyol, 2010; Cavkaytar, 2010; Coşkun, 2007; Şentürk, 2009; Tompkins, 2000). However, students did not express any opinions about the publishing stage.

This study is one of the few studies that examine primary school students' views on their self-regulatory writing skills. Self-regulatory writing skills are important because they affect students' writing success (Müldür, 2017). Self-regulation improves the individual's ability to manage themselves in the writing process. It provides students with the opportunity to work freely and makes them more enthusiastic about writing. In this study, when the students' views on self-regulated writing were analyzed, it was determined that fourth-grade students' self-regulated writing skills were inadequate. When examining the learning objectives related to writing skills in the primary school Turkish education program, which is seen as an important factor in the acquisition of writing skills, it was determined that there are learning objectives related to self-regulatory writing skills, but the detailed structure was not revealed. Writing strategies/types/methods/techniques include note-taking, summarizing, critical, creative, free, selecting from a pool of words or concepts, keywords, guided, controlled, completing the text, writing by guessing, etc., but there is no mention of self-editing. The learning objectives related to the preparation phase such as brainstorming, discussion, generating ideas, eliminating unnecessary thoughts (Beydemir, 2010; Tekşan, 2001; Ülper, 2008), designing, determining the purpose, determining the main idea, generating and associating thoughts related to the planning phase (Beydemir, 2010; Flower & Hayes 1981; Karaalioğlu, 2003; Temizkan, 2003; Ülper, 2008; Yılmaz, 2012), organizing thoughts related to the drafting phase (Akyol, 2010; Bayat, 2019), and editing and revising phases such as word preferences, expression disorders, relationships between paragraphs, text integrity, fluency, style, grammar, page layout, and readability (Süğümlü, 2016) can be added to the Turkish language curriculum. In addition, learning objectives can be added about publishing the texts written by students in the class, school newspaper, internet, and magazine (Akyol, 2010; Cavkaytar, 2010; Coşkun, 2007; Şentürk, 2009; Tompkins, 2000).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research is important in terms of emphasizing the importance of self-regulation skills in the writing process. Students with weak self-regulatory writing skills tend to make many mistakes in their writing. Training in this area will reduce the number of mistakes in students' writing and improve the quality of it. Indeed, research conducted by Müldür and Yalçın (2019) determined that writing education based on self-regulation has a positive effect on secondary school students' text writing skills. Therefore, we argue that it is important to use writing skills in conjunction with self-regulatory writing skills. In this regard, the following recommendations can be made:

- The research can help identify common problems and difficulties in the writing skills of fourth-grade primary school students and offer ideas on how educational programs can be improved to address these problems.
- Primary school Turkish textbooks include activities aimed at developing writing skills, such as answering questions, completing a story or a fairy tale, and writing stories. Therefore, teachers rely on these activities to develop their students' writing skills. Teachers should design the writing process as activities to be carried out

before, during, and after writing. Before writing, they can work on activities such as brainstorming about the topic, preparing a story plan, identifying story elements, and creating a problem situation for the story. During writing, students can work on a draft by giving them story guidelines. They can design activity sheets to help students understand the introduction, development, and conclusion sections. Students can be given checklists to help them edit and revise their writing. After writing their stories, students can seek support from their friends, families, and teachers.

- To make the writing process more enjoyable, students can be introduced to programs such as Photo Story and Storyboard and asked to prepare digital stories.
- The relationship between self-regulated writing skills and writing attitude, writing tendency, and writing success can be examined. Self-regulated writing skills can be planned as a mediating variable in the relationship between many educational and psychological variables.
- The effect of self-regulated writing training on students' writing success can be examined.
- The differences between successful and unsuccessful writers can be revealed by researching which self-regulated writing skills they use.

Limitations

The use of the interview technique in this study provided in-depth insights into students' perspectives on self-regulated writing skills, offering unique understanding. Furthermore, the fact that students' views were supported by the stories they wrote provided an advantage in terms of reflecting their experiences in detail. Another advantage of the research is that the data obtained were unbiased, as they consisted of sincere answers given by volunteers. Among the disadvantages of this research were the participation of only fourth-grade students and the limited number of questions asked. Furthermore, the data collection tools of the research could have been enriched by using a self-regulated writing scale.

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