

Evaluation of Student Exam Papers with Respect to Textualization Problems

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Abstract

The main objective of teaching language is to raise autonomous literate individuals that have acquired basic language skills, that their communication skills have advanced and that they can express their feelings and thoughts accurately and effectively. The success and accomplishments of students in the field of Turkish language is directly proportional to their academic success. The issues that exist on the answer texts that students provide in exam questions as a way to demonstrate their academic learning, pose problems for both students and instructors. The aim of this study is to demonstrate the textualization problems and issues that students suffer from, by using samples from student exam papers. The assessment of the textualization problems that exist on student exam papers has been restricted to two approaches: namely “planning of the content based on the awareness level on the content”, which is one of the textual functions, and “establishing subject continuity by clarifying the statement subjects”, which is one of the elements of text production process. The issues observed with respect to these perspectives have been rendered and interpreted with examples. The exam papers used in this research belong to 3rd year students of the Faculty of Education, Department of Turkish Language Education. As a result of the analysis it has been observed that students face significant problems at focusing to the subject of the question and presenting the content in a hierarchically structured and coherent way, especially if the questions they are answering have more than one constituent. Based on these findings, it is concluded that students, including elementary and secondary education students, need to be educated on the subject of developing answer texts for exam questions, within the scope of text development education, as a part of Writing Skills courses.

Keywords: *text linguistic, text production, , subject position, comment position, exam question.*

1. Introduction

The failure of our education system to increase the intellect and apprehension effectiveness of the students parallel to their increasing age and education life, results in students having problems when they are trying to capture and interpret information that is not superficial, somewhat indirect or interrelated, even in higher education levels. Students, who have been through such an education system, usually in the later stages of their education have problems in comprehending texts with higher levels of semantics, and similarly they experience difficulties in transferring efficiently and explicitly the concepts they have learned. In this regard, they experience difficulties in comprehending exam questions and therefore they can even answer wrongly the questions that they do know the answer of. However, being successful in this area has the characteristic of not only affecting their degree of success in the mother tongue teaching courses but also in the whole of their academic life.

The main problem of the Turkish language education is that it fails to teach at an adequate level vocabulary, imagination and sensitivity as well as the knowledge and skills required for textualization and writing, and based on all that, correct and effective expression. The language skill, which consists of all the aforementioned skills, and the thinking skill effect and influence each other cyclically. Literal (systematic) thinking skill plays an important role in understanding and explaining the subject correctly. Individuals with these skills can produce thoughts within the subjective point of view, limit the thoughts and organize them according to their aims, apply writing and spelling rules correctly and develop texts that are appropriate with respect to the rules and aims of language. Not being able to express fully, in an organized way and efficiently what they have understood influences adversely students' success in other

courses too. The information in the exam sheets is transformed to a printout, thus making it difficult for the educators to pinpoint the information item that they are looking for. The students, even including those who do not have any problems with the Turkish grammar, show that they have issues in expressing their thoughts in a systematic way, in organizing knowledge and developing a coherent text. The overall academic success is directly influenced by all these. The problems of not understanding and not being able to express within the academic domains, forces the students to memorize, thus contributing to a memorization based education system which is distant from allowing the students to gain systematic and analytic thinking skills (Kuzu, 2008).

Another subject that contributes to an education system based on rote-learning are the quality of the questions that are used in the learning and assessment process. Learning is more efficient when it is directed to finding answers to the questions in mind. Whereas in the learning of scientific thinking, the importance of asking questions is significant (Bradburn, Sudman and Wansink, 2004). According to Day and Park (2005), in cases where an understanding based on interactive mediums is aimed questions are important and in order for the students to seize this interaction, appropriate question types need to be used within the classroom setting. Similarly Applegate (2007) states that having the teachers to acquire the required knowledge and skills for asking high level questions is more important than having the teachers to be able to develop good understanding tests.

The reactions of the students studying in the Turkish Language Education Department of a foundation university when learning their problematic answers in their exam papers and their grades has been directly observed by the author of this paper and they constitute the starting point of this research. Some of these students have stated that although they believe that they have written adequate answers they have received low grades, but these students have been convinced when the graded exam papers were shown to them by providing explanations about the root of the problems in their answers. After getting to the bottom of the problem, it was realized that the exam questions are not clearly understood. When the problem of not understanding clearly the exam questions was analyzed, one of the causes was identified as lack of attention due to the exam anxiety. Actually this reason is named by the students as the “exam excitement”. However, the second and actual cause is due to not clearly comprehending the concepts that require knowledge and comment in the sentences. This has given rise to the thought that an education related to the position functionality of the words and word groups in sentences may contribute in resolving the problem of answering wrongly the exam questions.

In other words, this study has been conducted based on the assumption that “Students, within the textlinguistics frame, if they are informed about the *subject position* and *interpretation position* at the sentence level, understanding correctly the question in the exam and thus increasing their academic success would be possible”, with respect to the theoretical argument of the research.

Students mostly complain that they do not know why they have received low scores even though they have studied sufficiently for the exam and even though they do know the answers of the questions in the exam. On the other hand instructors and educators, and not only these in the Turkish education domain but also instructors from all other fields, complain that it is very difficult for them to reach to the knowledge and comments of the students in the answers that they give because the language and the expressions the students are using is problematic. Their complaints in this subject has made it a requirement to approach the research question within the perspective of textualization achievement skills of the students. Therefore, in this paper, the texts that the students have developed as answers to the exam questions have been investigated within the perspective of two textualization activities, namely that of subject continuity and content arrangement and editing. The fact that these characteristic are identifiable on the student exam papers has been the reason for them to be selected.

A literature survey on researches that address the problems in text based tasks and text development are given in this section. Uzun (2007) introduces text based tasks and discusses the problems that students

face in written expression process. In the study by Ülper (2008), the writing education program prepared based on the Cognitive Process Model has been investigated with respect to its effect on the student success, and results of its operability have been attained. In some researches (Huber & Uzun, 2001; Aksan & Çakır, 1997) the problems of higher education students in achieving subject continuity in academic texts has been investigated. In several studies (Wikbord, 1990; Coşkun, 2005; Keçik 1990) with similar characteristics conducted with students from different education levels, ranging from primary education to higher education, it has been stated that students have problems in conducting writing tasks in small-scale and large-scale structures, which are writing tasks done to ensure integrity and consistency. As it is evident, the majority of these studies focus on text development and they investigate student essays with respect to text tasks that are relevant to small-scale structure, namely subject continuity, codependency, and consistency. These studies state that students experience problems mostly in these areas.

However in this study, contrary to previous studies, the text tasks that students conduct during the writing process have been investigated in a very specific type, that is the exam question answer texts. The topic of the research has been addressed by prioritizing the text tasks of subject focusing and content planning. The importance of this research lies on the fact that the discussions and the education rearranging that can be done based on the observations of this study is possible to positively effecting student success in exams, thus contributing indirectly to instructors' exam evaluation and assessment processes.

Firstly, the constituents that have been used as metrics in our study from the overall six constituents that influence the textualization process (Hayes & Flowers, 1980), are briefly introduced. Then the texts that students have provided as answers to the exam questions are assessed. Within this assessment, compliance to the metrics that would define the improvements in writing and the inadequacies in writing have been accepted as the main focus of the study.

Constituents of the Writing Activity

Writing, is a text producing activity matching a specific communicational aim. As it embodies many cognitive and social variables, it is considered to be a complex process. As a complex process, according to Hayes and Flower (1980) it consists of 6 constituents. These are:

1. The writing task environment, including everything outside of the writer which contributes to shape the writing
2. The awareness and long-term memory of writer, including all of the writer's knowledge about the topic, audience, writing tasks and plans, and external knowledge
3. Planning and organization of the content
4. The writing and text development process
5. Assessment, reviewing and revising
6. Self-editing

As it can be seen, the written expression process is not only a text production process but also a complex multi-component one where the components are in interaction. Text production requires the writer to manage efficiently the linguistic competence that points the writer's awareness towards the language arrangement, and the communicative competence that points the expectations with respect to the functional characteristics. This is related to the multi-layered characteristic of texts (Uzun, 2007). The layered structure of the text and the complexity of the process are the main reasons why students experience difficulties. Byrne (1988) states that these challenges are due to the psychological, grammatical and cognitive difficulties that are experienced during the writing process.

Text types have been developed in order to meet different declarative needs of the society and their structural characteristics and functionalities are determined based on different socio-cultural factors (Şenöz-Ayata, 2005). In describing a text, the textual situation, that is the communicative context and the type of text are taken into account. The decision about the type of the text defines the attitude and the

expectation of how the text will be approached. Therefore the reader is situated in a specific communication position (Beaugrande & Dressler 1981; Göktürk 1980; Dildüzgün 2010). While defining the aims the reader or the writer should take into account the expectations and the differences, and should arrange the reading-comprehension and writing process based on these.

The scientific discourse, not only embodies culture specific items but also carries common norms in the global level and shows a conventional communication characteristic. These norms are in a strong relationship with the expectations of the text receiver from the text. Similarly the academic communication requires a different discourse based on its specific type (Widdowson, 1979). The scientific text is separated from the other texts as functional and transactional. A scientific text that has fulfilled the characteristics of its type, allows its writer to combine his/her knowledge with his/her prior knowledge and to present them in a systematic and well-balanced way. It realizes its communication function by presenting knowledge within the objective frame of science (Uzun, 2001).

When the exam question answers are evaluated based on the aforementioned text type definitions, it is evident that they cannot be directly placed in a predefined category. However, based on the above information, as these texts present information in a scientific and objective way, the discourse group is an academic one and there are expectations for an objective language and a linear topic flow, it can be argued that the exam question answer texts, which are the subjects of investigation in this research, are most similar to scientific texts within all text types. Therefore, this assignment and definition is important with respect to the issues, in other words the expectations from the text that will be taken into account by students when developing their texts but also by instructors while they are evaluating and assessing them.

The expectation from the students during exams is mostly the presentation of knowledge acquired previously either in a theoretical way or after being interpreted. This expectation not only requires prior knowledge within the environmental context of the writing task, but also metatextual knowledge, that is prior knowledge about the type of text. The environmental context in this case is the education environment, therefore the language is required to be formal, the content scientific and the topic flow linear. It is necessary that the student should select the appropriate knowledge item among many knowledge items related to the topic and present it in a way that would show that the student has internalized it. This is because the exam time and the answer areas are limited. This requires summarization, and summarization requires that when answers are given to exam questions a selection among the known knowledge items about the topic in the question text should be made.

As writing down everything that is remembered about the topic is out of question, it can be argued that a similar process to the one conducted during summarization, consisting of selecting/deleting, generalization and reconstruction, is realized during the question answering process. The resources that are summarized in the context of exam question answers, are based on the knowledge items that are acquired through listening in the classroom, topics that are noted down and readings that are done from different sources.

The development of written texts is an important part of the academic life. The majority of writing exercises with an academic grounding requires that the students would read the source texts and would merge the knowledge in these texts while they are developing their own written texts. However, developing a well-structured text and especially developing a written text that depends on source texts is especially difficult for students (Spivey & King, 1989). That is due to the fact that writing based on a source text requires the interpretation, remembrance and reconstruction of the source text. Such a writing process, instead of a repetition of the information in the source text is a cognitive process where important knowledge items are selected and organized with respect to the type of the text that will be developed, and are transformed in a way that will preserve the content. This process includes operations such as selection, organization and synthesis (Çıkrıkçı, 2004). In the development of this structure three macrorules are required to be followed and put into action (Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). These are:

1. Deletion: Given a sequence of propositions, delete each proposition that is not an interpretation condition (e.g., a presupposition) for another proposition in the sequence.
2. Generalization: Given a sequence of propositions, substitute the sequence by a proposition that is entailed by each of the propositions of the sequence.
3. Construction: Given a sequence of propositions, replace it by a proposition that is entailed by the joint set of propositions of the sequence.

Planning of the Content

Standalone writing requires the building of the content by the individual after making the necessary arrangements with respect to the type of the text and converting the information and knowledge items. In this case, the content awareness and planning are the main variables in writing performance. Content planning is the identification and specification of topics and aims together with subtopics and aims, and their presentation in hierarchical structure (Hayes & Flower 1980).

Information about the content, consists of prior acquired knowledge items such as background information and worldwide knowledge. Deficiency in this area is the major element of the content problem in student texts. Another important element of this problem is the lack of knowledge of students about the writing tasks related to each text type (Uzun-Subaşı, 2007).

Textual Tasks Regarding the Development of Text Content

The issues that are put into operation during the organization of the text content are as follows:

- Writing the argument or thesis of the text (putting forward the viewpoint of the writer, transferring an assertion and composing the argument that will have a single idea to be deliberated)
- Clearly presenting the subject of the paragraph (making explicit the subject of each paragraph in the development section / developing subject sentences)
- Writing the heading/title of the text (finding the word or sentence that reflects the subject of the text and constitutes its environment)
- Writing the introduction section of the text (writing a reader centered introductive text that presents the topic of the text, draws its borders, and includes the argument)
- Developing the topic of the text (developing the subject by making demonstrations based on background and worldwide knowledge and providing authentic information)
- Writing the conclusion section of the text (writing a section that includes justified conclusions, summarizes the text and makes references to the assertion of the text)

Avoiding irrelevant and unnecessary information in the text (avoiding unnecessary text that does not enrich the text or does not provide a demonstration or referral, that is resulting to unnecessary repetitions) (Ülper, 2008).

Focusing on the Subject and Continuation

The subject can have three positions in the text, namely text subject, sub-subject and sentence subject.

“Ayşe interpretation position came to house”
Subject position (known, prior knowledge) interpretation position (unknown, new knowledge)

In the above sentence the subject is Ayşe. However, what is important is the information about Ayşe. Therefore, the interpretation position is the location that needs to be focused on. The question should be asked with respect to the information that attention is being paid to, that is the new knowledge.

In a well-organized text the sentence subjects are associated with the text subject, and these that are left out from the text subject are positioned as sub-subjects. Therefore, the text has a coherence and integrity with respect to its subject. All these subject relations clarify and make explicit the text content schema.

In the exam papers it is observed that students, either because of inadequate knowledge or lack of attention, do not differentiate between subject and comment positions, or in most cases they finalize their answer by just explaining the concept that is in the subject position. For example, in the exam of the 3rd year Writing Education course offered in the Turkish Language Education Department at the Faculty of Education there was the following exam question: “According to the “Is writing learnable?” essay, how does the author explain what is the need of a person to write and what does writing add on a person?”. The majority of the students have answered this question by just limiting their answers to the subject of “is writing learnable”.

2. Methodology

Aim of the Research

The success of students at exams is not only dependent on the level of knowledge and interpretations that they are asked to transfer via the exam questions, but also the way and the style by which they are transferring them. The main aim of this research is to investigate and assess textualization problems in student exam papers with respect to the textual tasks of focusing on the subject and planning the content, and following this investigation, based on the findings of the study, to call the attention of the audience to the subject with the aim of training the students in this subject.

In accordance with this purpose, the research question of this study can be stated as “What aspects do the answer texts in the student exam papers display, with respect to the textualization problems?” Moreover, a learning model (sample exercise) based on the results of this research has been proposed.

In the current research, which is a qualitative one based on field research with descriptive study characteristics, the document analysis and investigation method is utilized. This method is based on the analysis of written materials that contain information about a case or cases that are targeted (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005).

This research has been conducted by using the written exam papers of students studying at the Turkish Language Education Department in the Faculty of Education of a foundation university. The data of the study have been attained from the exams of the 2011-2012 academic year Methodology I course, which is offered to the 3rd year students of the aforementioned department. A total of 33 exam papers have been examined and for each correct and wrong answer groups 3 typical sample exam papers have been interpreted. Special care has been given so that the selected sample exam papers that are included at this section of the study are samples that shade light to the characteristic and dimension of the problem but also to the content of the education that is proposed in this research to address that problem.

In the selection of this course an important factor has been the fact that the course is instructed by the author, and that it is a course that includes theoretical knowledge together with knowledge that depends on interpretation and exercises. In accordance with the qualitative nature of the research and its aim, in the selection process of the exam papers that have constituted the samples to be examined, the “systematic sampling” approach has been utilized where the sample is selected based on some criteria. The investigation domain of the answer texts in the exam papers has been limited with the textualization problems that students experience.

The essay writing questions were excluded from the study domain of this research. In the selection of the textual tasks that are the basis of the analysis metrics, in other words choosing writing centered tasks when defining the limitations of the study, the characteristic of tracking through the exam papers was the

defining factor. Another selection factor has been the fact that the problem related to these tasks has been identified as one of the most common problems encountered when grading exam papers.

3. Analysis and Findings

In the analysis process, the exam papers that were graded in order to provide feedback to the students have been reevaluated and reexamined in accordance to the aim of this research. At this point, the aims have been to draw a general frame with respect to the problem at hand and to develop right and wrong samples that would constitute examples to the research question of this research. The grades previously given to the relevant questions have been significant in easily determining the right and wrong samples. When selecting the exam questions that would be the basis of the analysis, importance has been given to select higher level associative questions that require performing comprehension, analysis or evaluation, instead of selecting questions that require the transfer of theoretical knowledge.

It has been stated that this research attempts to find an answer on what is the outlook that the student exam papers display from the viewpoint of two textual tasks by Hayes and Flowers (1980), namely “subject focusing” and “awareness in terms of writing and content organization, and organizing the content”. Within this context, assessments and evaluations of the right and wrong sample answers that are selected from the student exam papers on the subject of textualization of the answer content, are given below.

Exam question:

Which factors affect the selection of the methods that you would use in the activities you plan?

Interpretation position

Subject position

In this question the subject is the “method selection for an activity”. In the question item a new knowledge or a new comment is expected about this given concept. And this comment is related to the “factors that affect the selection”. In other words, when the answer text is being prepared, the factors that affect will be moved to the subject position. As the factors are in the focus of the answer text, it is expected that the explanations and justifications will be related to the “factors that affect the selection of methods”. Below, example answers to this question from the student exam papers are provided.

Example 1.

1) “Language teaching is a long and complicated process. 2) Turkish language education is not a topic that can be taught with direct speech. 3) The students need to learn the course by practicing. 4) In this context the dramatization method can be used in the class. 5) In order to develop the four basic language skills of children, which is one of the aims of the Turkish language education, the question-answer and the discussion methods can be used in the classroom. 6) With the discussion method they can state their own opinions. 7) This would improve their speaking skills. 8) Moreover, by listening the views of the other sides and thus their listening skills would develop. 9) Activities that would develop the interpretation performance and creativity of students can be conducted. 10) For instance, the teacher can bring to the classroom a picture and ask the students to tell what this picture evokes in them both verbally and written. 11) When this activity is conducted the display method can be used. 12) Thus, the students would gain narration performance and skill”.

The “language teaching” word group in the first sentence which is used as an open name, constitutes the subject of the sentence. The subject of the second sentence is “Turkish language education”. Neither the subject of the first sentence nor the fact that it is complex and brings new information to the subject has been continued in the second sentence. Without providing any explanations to the “direct speech” that is introduced abruptly in the second sentence, in the third sentence the “practicing” is referred to as it’s opposite. The fourth, fifth and sixth sentences (in a relation with the third sentence) provide three method examples with respect to “practicing”. There are no explanations provided to the first two methods

(dramatization and question-answer), whereas in the seventh and eighth sentences a discussion about the attainments of the third method, that is the discussion method, are given. However, the discussion method, as a focused and repeated sentence subject, is related directly neither to the subject that writer had to focus on as the answer of the question, nor to the subject that the writer has introduced in the first sentences of the text. The writer by referencing “activities” gives to the reader the impression that a partial introduction to the subject of the question is realized, however, in the sentences to follow he/she does not give any further information or explications about this subject and on the contrary, by introducing a new method name to the sentence, continues the explanations regarding the methods. It is not clear whether the substitution element “Thus” in the twelfth sentence refers to the sentence before or to the paragraph in general. Returning to the subject that the exam question was expecting to be processed by the student, in other words the subject that had to be focused in the answer, the student first had to list the names of the “factors that affect the method selection”, then had to provide the explanations regarding their influence starting from the most important and moving to the least important, by using grammatically and rhetorically correct structures. However, it is observed that there is no subject in the student’s answer text that is focused on and continued until the end of the text and that the subject that the student focuses and elaborates is the methods used in Turkish language teaching. Not only subject continuity is not provided, but also the content in the answer text is not presented in a hierarchically structured way and in a meaningful-logical flow, with topics and sub-topics. Even though this outcome is not a certain one, it implies that the question was not correctly understood by the student.

Example 2.

1) “The main factor that determines the activities is the type of the text 2) If the text is a fictional one, like a story or a novel, the activities are organized in order to teach Turkish language together with attaining reading affinity. 3) Reading and intoning Turkish correctly, having the teacher to read the text out loud in an exemplarily way after silent reading in order to teach stressing and emphasizing, then asking the students to read the text, all these would be helpful. 4) In an informative text all these methods can be utilized, plus the idea in the text can be discussed in the classroom. 5) Therefore, their cognitive learning and the four basic skills that are used in Turkish language teaching will be provided in an applied way. 6) If the text being read is a poem, exceptional activities need to be conducted to help the students to find their own inner harmony and rhythm. 7) If these are done as they are required to be done, a literary joy would be realized with respect to artistic texts. 8) By showing unusual syncretism and symbols and by explaining the kinetic interpretation of the poem text on them, the students can be conveyed to the objective of the poem text.”

In this sample answer, the subject that is being asked to be commented upon is correctly understood by the student. The subject, which is the consideration here, has been presented to the attention of the text, or in other words to the attention of the reader with the use of “type of text” noun structure. In the sentences to follow the “type of text” has been clarified with respect to its subtopics as literary text, informative text and poetry and they have been handled as equal factors with respect to their importance. However, the methods that are appropriate for each type of text have not been given by their names in terminological sense, instead their contribution to Turkish language teaching has been presented with the use of examples. Therefore, it is only possible for the reader to reach the names of these methods that are implicitly given by the writer, namely show and then ask them to do, discussion and analysis, by showing a special attention to that. Moreover, in the eighth sentence it is observed that the writer starts wandering away from the subject and starts discussing poem analysis.

Example 3.

1) “When selecting the method to be chosen in the activities that I will conduct, firstly the subject of the activity is very important. 2) Not every activity can be conducted with all methods. 3) If the subject of the activity is long and complex then a method is chosen appropriately. 4) Moreover, the method that I will chose for the activity that I will conduct will display a variety with respect to the class state and condition 5) If the class is too crowded, conducting the activity with the use of the drama method may

result to disorder and noise. 6) The participation of every student would be difficult. 7) Moreover, the methods in the activities should be selected with respect to the class level. 8) The methods should be chosen accordingly to the class level, and depending on the case the prior knowledge of the class should be exploited. 9) That is to say when the methods are selected the class setting, the students' state and condition, the length of the activity (subject) should be taken into consideration.”

Even though there are some problems with respect to the language used and way of expression, the above answer can be argued to be a successful example with respect to subject continuity and content organization. The subject has been presented to the attention of the reader from the very first sentence. However, the second sentence results to a discontinuity between the first sentence and the third sentence. It would have been more appropriate if the second sentence was the starting sentence of the text, a generalization sentence including the concepts and notions that are the subject of the text. Three distinct factors that are considered by the writer to be significant and decisive with respect to method selection are presented by listing them rhetorically one following the other. For each one of them, the sentence with a decision is followed and justified with an explanation rhetorical structure. The “that is to say” conjunction in the start of the ninth sentence denotes that an explanation will be made or that a conclusion has been reached. However, using a summarizing conjunction that would connect to the conclusion would have been more appropriate with respect to the integrity of the text.

Texts that carry subject integrity are texts that the subject continuity is accomplished with transitions between statements. They include the sub-activities of making explicit nouns and noun phrases with respect to their value of being a subject and prolonging throughout or changing the text a noun phrase that has been presented as a statement subject to the reader's consciousness center. Keeping the same subject in the forefront and prolonging it, keeping the same subject at the background and prolonging it or moving to a new subject by bridging it to the new subject with the use of metatext correlation methods are strategies for ensuring subject continuity. Depending on the text type or the narration style one or more of these methods can be used in conjunction. A student who is experiencing problems in achieving subject continuity, even though he/she has converted his/her existing knowledge to a content, if he/she has failed to organize it correctly he/she will be having problems in making clear that text subject (Uzun, 2007).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The observations regarding the analysis of exam papers with respect to contents and limitations that are in accordance with the aim of this study and some suggestions based on these observations are provided in this section.

One of the weak points of the students', salient in the exam papers that were investigated, is that if there are more than one variables in the question and the question is a relational one, they fail to focus on the correct concept that is being questioned. Students need to be educated and trained in the Turkish language courses, to be able to correctly analyze relatively more obscure and complex questions with the use tasks and practical work, appropriate to their level. This education can be initiated at the question preparation teaching topic if the symmetry between the question and the answer is taken into account. Students who learn how to prepare questions that require creating links between pieces of knowledge, reasoning and synthesizing, when they are faced with such questions, it would be easier for them to understand them.

The most significant weak point of the students that stands out in the exam papers is that they fail to understand correctly the subject item and focus on the subject itself. In the questions where the relationship between more than one constituents is questioned, the majority of the students instead of explaining this relationship tend to form an answer by providing detailed information about one of the constituents. Even though students try to explain this problem by attributing it to exam anxiety and exam time limitations, the mainsprings are attention inadequacy and more importantly not being familiar with

relational questions that can be described as layered questions and not having adequate knowledge on how they should be answering them.

Another important problem in the exam papers is that the answers are written without any prior planning. Many students are not aware that correctly understanding the exam questions and presenting their knowledge in hierarchically structured organization has a significant contribution in their exam success level. As a precaution in order to raise awareness for this problem, exams, not only in Turkish language courses but in every field, should award grades with respect to content organization, thus establishing a motivation regarding the subject.

When the analysis results were communicated with the students, it is observed that they defend themselves by arguing that the exam time is insufficient, that they panic while trying to keep up with the time, that the questions are difficult and mostly that there is an exam anxiety. Having the instructors to allocate enough time to students for each question would render invalid their argument of not having enough time to write their answers in a planned and orderly way.

Dropping points from students who are including in their answers unnecessary and redundant information could be effective in developing an attention and a good habit. Students should be given the personality characteristic of taking responsibility for all their written texts, from their exam papers to their petitions and reports, and therefore they should be held responsible from all in-text planning, the meaning relationships they establish between words, and the grammatical and spelling errors they make in their writing. Educating and training teacher candidates who are going to pass the same educational culture and discipline to students in primary and secondary education level students is of a further significance.

It has been also observed that students, in their exam question answer texts, experience problems regarding the topics of coherency, consistency, establishing conceptual relational networks, and etc., topics that are not in the scope of this study but directly affect the metrics that have been focused in this study. This finding, is in accordance and shows similarities with the findings of other studies that have been provided in the introduction section.

Another problem in the answer texts is the propriety problem with respect to the text type. In other words, the textual tasks that form and shape the text pragmatically, that is in accordance with the communication aims, are sometimes being ignored. According to Kinsch and Dijk (1978), every text is developed with some specific communicational purposes. When the author is determining which communicational purposes the text is going to serve, s/he also uses his/her information about the reader. Some students, acting accordingly to this phenomenon, start to answer the question by omitting to write the subject sentence, assuming that the instructor has knowledge about the answer. They tend to prioritize presenting the correct answer, in other words what is presented gets ahead of how it is presented.

Another problem that comes forward is the presentation of unnecessary and redundant information. This results to two outcomes: the first one is that the student presents a text that even though it is related with the general subject of the question, lacks specificity, particularity, selectivity and summarization, and the second one is that with the fear of returning an empty or a short written answer sheet and with an effort to impress the instructor, the students tends to document all information indirectly related to the subject. In this case, penalizing irrelevant and off-topic parts in the answer text by accepting them as wrong answers, would enable the development of awareness with respect to this problem.

5. Suggestions

Based on the findings of this study, as a future work, an experimental research that addresses all textual activities, including these that were not in the scope of this study, can be conducted following the development of a measurement tool that is based on these textual activities.

As a conclusion of this study, the necessity of developing a text development education and training with respect to exam question answer writing is evident. Following the realization of such an education, an applied experimental study based on pre-test and post-test study groups can be conducted.

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