Affective Comparison of Messages in Narrative Texts of First- and Fourth-Grade Preservice Turkish Teachers

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to compare the messages in the narrative text written by first- and fourth-grade preservice Turkish teachers in order to assess their positive or negative views. To this end, 13 first- and 13 fourth-grade students of the Turkish Language Teaching Department of Van Yüzüncü Yıl University were asked to complete a narrative text. Data were analyzed using content analysis. Texts were assessed both as a whole and as a unit. Result showed that fourth graders used more positive sentences than first graders. The analysis of sentences as a whole revealed a difference between male and female participants. However, it was not statistically significant. The analysis of sentences as a unit revealed that male participants had significantly more positive views than female participants. The reasons for the significant difference between first and fourth graders are that before starting higher education, students have high expectations, which are, however, not fully met, and various reasons arising from universities or cities. The difference between male and female participants might be due to the fact that the latter have higher expectations and are more perfectionist than the former.

Keywords: Preservice Turkish teachers, affect, narrative text, message.

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Introduction

The Grand Turkish Dictionary of the Turkish Language Association defines the term "affect" as the impression of certain objects, events or people in one's inner world, or as the ability to evaluate objects or events morally and aesthetically or as a unique spiritual movement and mobility. Defined as an observable manifestation of a subjective experience (Bakırcıoğlu, 2012), affect is concerned with how one feels and what kind of effect that feeling has on one. In this respect, to what extent affect has an effect on one is of key importance when it is positively or negatively taken into account (Zubaroglu & Yanardağ, 2017). Positive affectivity refers to positive mood and overall content while negative affectivity refers to negative mood and overall discontent. Discontent often manifests itself as dissatisfaction and complaint. According to Isen, Daubman and Nowicki (1987, p. 1122), research shows that positive affectivity can affect the organization of cognitive materials, and therefore, creativity. Erdoğan (2009) also reports that differences in mood affect problem-solving performance, indicating that groups with negative mood have poorer problem-solving performance than those with positive mood.

According to Doğan and Özdevecioğlu (2009, p. 168), positive affectivity can be defined by energy, joy and happiness while negative affectivity has a different mood structure. People with high negative affectivity feel anger, tension, worry, guilt and sorrow. They also state that low negative affectivity means lack of negative affectivity and that people with negative affectivity are also calm and satisfied.

Affectivity determines which subject is more important than others for a person feeling it. The transition from what is most important to least important is about positive affectivity while the opposite is about negative sentimentality. The intensity of affectivity refers to the significance of value preference (Doğan & Özdevecioğlu, 2009, p. 169). Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988, p. 1064) use the adjectives "attentive, concerned, alert, excited, enthusiastic, inspired, proud, determined, strong and active" to define positive affectivity while they use the adjectives of "distressed, upset, jittery, hostile, afraid, scared, ashamed, guilty, nervous and irritable" to define negative affectivity.

Writing

People have always found a way to express their thoughts. They do it by talking, using symbols and pictures and writing. Since the discovery of writing, people have been able to express and convey their thoughts and feelings more easily.

From the moment the individual is born, he/she begins to live in an environment surrounded by language (Sarıkaya, 2018, p. 9). Writing is one of the ways of communicating with language. According to Özbay (2007, p. 115), writing is the expression of feelings, thoughts, wishes and events in accordance with certain rules. Writing is a behavior that allows self-expression. People use writing

to convey knowledge to others in their daily and professional lives. Not only people who are interested in literature but also those working in other areas need writing. According to Karatay (2013, p. 21), writing, in other words, written expression, is defined as the task of conveying emotions and thoughts to others by using the characters, symbols and signs of a language. In short, as Şengül (2001, p. 24) states, writing is the transfer of knowledge, thoughts, experiences, emotions and dreams in a certain order and harmony with the grammatical rules of a language.

People acquire their native language during infancy and, later on, deliberately shape their language skills through formal education, which is the point where Turkish teaching comes into play. The aim of Turkish teaching is to enable people to develop language skills to be able to express their feelings and thoughts comprehensively in written or oral form (Çamurcu, 2011, p. 505). When given the choice between writing or speaking to convey their thoughts, students mostly prefer to use the latter (Altuntaş, 2017, p. 8) because writing is the last and hardest language skill to acquire.

Writing is as important as reading in every aspect of life and a matter of particular attention in teaching. Courses should include activities to help students develop writing skills. According to the 2005 Turkish Primary Education Curriculum (Grades 1-5), writing about emotions and thoughts in a clear and understandable way requires a variety of mental skills. Through writing skills, students learn how to sort, limit and organize their thoughts and apply grammatical rules. Writing skills are directly associated with other skills (listening, speaking and reading). Students who read, write and scrutinize what they write can develop writing skills.

According to Güneş (2016, p. 157), students should perform activities to develop understanding and mental skills such as writing their thoughts in a logical way, using expressions that lead to different thinking, making comparisons, establishing a cause and effect relationship, and classifying, evaluating and summarizing. They should also practice on different types, methods and techniques of writing such as writing to have fun and to learn, and questioning, persuasive, descriptive and free writing. High motivation is also required for writing. The ability of a student to actively create a text is closely related to his/her willingness to write. Students do not want to be involved in the writing process, which manifests their writing shortcomings, and therefore, adversely affects their motivation. Students with low motivation may fail in this process (Hamaratli, 2015, p. 81). Therefore, Turkish teaching should include not only theoretical but also motivation-raising activities. This is of great importance for students to develop writing skills. One thing to keep in mind is that all activities carried out in Turkish teaching are interrelated as they help students express themselves and convey their feelings and thoughts.

The content of writing, which is the transfer of emotions and thoughts through letters and symbols, is also important. When authors express their emotions and thoughts in writing, they are generally concerned about the messages that their texts convey. Every text conveys a different

message to its readers depending on interpretation and viewpoint. Therefore, the content of a text is as important as its form. Written expressions consisting of words are very important in order to be able to get into the inner world of people and to understand and share what they think and feel (Kaynaş, 2014, p. 25).

Reflections of Affectivity Through Narrative Texts

Stories have been used for thousands of years and varies according to time and culture. Stories are texts that can be detected in the most concrete form and creates common expectations in people in terms of text structure (Sahin, 2012, pp. 34-35). Children across the world are interested in stories and tales the most.

Narrative texts depend on events. When students write their thoughts through narrative texts, they develop events around characters and come up with a conclusion. From another point of view, observation, perception and imagination are the source of narrative texts. In other words, the subject of a narrative text is the product of its author's observations and imagination. Thus, narrative texts help readers reconstruct their daily experiences and enrich their lives (Chenfeld, 1978 cited in Başaran & Akyol, 2009, p. 14).

Narrative texts are the type of text that people use most to express their experiences. Narrative texts are also the type of texts through which people can most easily express their views of life and attitudes towards events because the topics of narrative texts are things that happened or are likely to happen. In other words, narrative texts tell stories from life. People often turn what have happened to them or what they have witnessed into stories. This kind of conveyance also shows the emotional aspect of the person who writes the text. Readers understand authors' emotions and their approach to life and events through their event-based writings.

Objective and Significance

Having a positive perspective on life brings happiness. Therefore, societies with positive energy and perspectives are happy. The aim of this study is to compare the messages in the narrative texts written by first- and fourth-grade preservice Turkish teachers in order to assess their positive or negative views.

Family is where children learn to develop a positive view of life. School years are also a critical period for the development of this positive view. Therefore, students, who are the managers, teachers, shopkeepers, employers, employees and parents of the future, should develop a positive view of life in the early years of school. This is much more important when it comes to teaching because teachers play a key role in shaping people's views and emotions and helping them develop positive attitudes towards life. The more positive the teachers' views of events and situations, the more likely they are to make students good citizens who contribute to society.

Narrative texts depend on events. When people write their thoughts through narrative texts, they often reflect their feelings and insights on life through the heroes that they create. The purpose of this study is to examine people' perspectives through texts. Therefore, narrative texts were used. This study aimed to investigate preservice teachers' attitudes towards events and situations through their texts and determine whether their attitudes differ by grade level and gender.

This study sought answers to the following questions:

✓ What is the distribution of first-grade preservice Turkish teachers' narrative texts according to the categories (positive, negative, equivocal and mixed)?

✓ What is the distribution of fourth-grade preservice Turkish teachers' narrative texts according to the categories (positive, negative, equivocal and mixed)?

✓ Do first- and fourth-grade preservice Turkish teachers' narrative texts differ affectively?

✓ Do male and female preservice Turkish teachers' narrative texts differ affectively?

Method

This was a case study. Case study is performed to elicit information on a mixed situation through a comprehensive explanation and contextual analysis (Davey, 1991). "Case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (Yin, Cited in Yildirim & Simsek, 2011, p. 277). Based on the questions "how" and "why," case study is a research method that allows researchers to examine a phenomenon or event that they cannot control (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011, p. 277). In short, case study is conducted for in-depth analysis of a single case or event. It is a systematic way to collect data, analyze and report results. The resulting product provides information on why the phenomenon in question occurred the way it occurred and what future research should pay attention to. Case studies are, therefore, rather suitable to produce hypotheses (Davey, 1991).

Data were collected using a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative data are based on well-defined rich definitions and detailed descriptions of a process (Miles & Huberman, 2015, p. 1). Qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis are used in qualitative studies in which perceptions and events are analyzed in their natural settings in a realistic and holistic way. One way to obtain data in qualitative studies is to collect documents from people and analyze them. This method is used to elicit information on people's experiences, ideas, critiques, tastes, feelings, attitudes, beliefs and ideologies and is highly effective in scientific studies.

Data were analyzed using affect analysis, which is performed to elicit information on the direction, tendency or attitude of any oral or written material categorized in the early stages of analysis (Tavşancıl & Aslan, 2001, p. 105). Affect analysis is a type of content analysis.

Study Sample and Material

The study sample consisted of 13 first- and 13 fourth-grade students of the Turkish Language Teaching Department of Van Yüzüncü Yıl University. The study material consisted of 26 narrative texts written by all participants.

Data Analysis

Affect analysis, which is a type of content analysis, was used. In affect analysis, bad and low sentences are coded as "negative," sentences with phrases such as increase, winning, development as "positive," those with equivocal or neutral expression expressions as well as negative and positive expressions as "mixed," those with no clear positive or negative meaning as "equivocal" and those containing no judgments as "neutral" (Tarhan, 2010, p. 48).

This study investigated the positive, negative, mixed and equivocal aspects of messages conveyed by narrative texts written by participants. For convenience, precision and quantitative operations, Tavşancıl and Aslan (2001, p. 110) assigned numbers to the categories (Positive = 1, mixed = 3, negative = 5 and equivocal = 7). All sentences were analyzed based on the categories. Their frequency and percentages were calculated and presented in tables. The study also investigated whether participants' views differed by grade level and gender.

In affect analysis, it is important to group data according to affectivity and to explain and write the rules of encryption in a logical and clear manner (Tavşancıl & Aslan, 2001, p. 110). This process provides a standardization for both analysts and raters.

Below is an example of how participants' narrative texts were affectively analyzed.

Groups of affect analysis	Sentences as a whole	Sentences as a unit
The pigeon asked where he was going.		7
"I'm very unhappy in this forest. I want to go to a remote city, but I don't want to go alone" said the Owl.	3	3
The pigeon thought about it for a while and then agreed, and they headed for the remote city together.		1
They crossed mountains and streams and went a long way.		1
When they stopped to rest, the owl saw a sparrow among the trees and then the sparrow disappeared.	7	7

Yes, the sparrow was following them.		7
Because the sparrow was bored of where she was living and wanted to see other places, but, she did not dare to do it alone.		3
The sparrow knew that the owl was as unhappy as she was and was going to talk to the owl and offer him to go somewhere else together, but the sparrow saw the pigeon talking to the pigeon and so decided not to talk to him.	5	3
Then the sparrow started following them, and now she got caught.		5
The owl thought that she was wrong and wanted to have a chat with the pigeon, but the pigeon was very upset and angry at the owl because she had regretted having left home.		5
	5	1
They began to argue, and the pigeon left the owl there and returned.		5
The owl was left alone. The sparrow felt sorry for the owl, but then she was happy because she thought they could travel together and be friends.		7
While the owl was thinking about what to do alone, the sparrow appeared right next to him and asked him "Would you come with me?"	3	7
The owl was surprised and said to the sparrow "You would abandon me like the pigeon," and declined the owl's offer.		5
The sparrow was very upset and went on her own way.		5
The owl thought that he broke the sparrow's heart but did not want the same thing to happen to him and so decided to move on.	3	5
The owl could not stop thinking about the sparrow.		7
The owl could not get the sparrow out of his head and started looking for the sparrow.		7
The owl began to look for the sparrow everywhere and ran into her after a long time.	3	1
The owl told the sparrow that he was sorry and that he did not mean to hurt her and apologized to her.		1
Then they set off for the remote city where they could be happy together.	1	1

According to the Table, if all sentences in the column "Sentences as a unit" are coded by a category (for example, if all of them are encoded as 1), then they are answered in column "Sentences as a whole" according to the same category. If sentences in the column "Sentences as a Unit" are encoded by mixed categories (such as 1, 5), then these three sentences are assigned the number 3 in the column "Sentences as a whole" to indicate that they are "mixed" sentences.

Validity and Reliability

Experts were consulted at every stage of the study. Actual information was reached to establish validity, and the phenomenon in question was analyzed as it was without any intervention. Affect analysis is a type of content analysis, and therefore, reliability for content analysis also applies to affect analysis. For this, the following formula is proposed by Miles and Huberman (cited in 1994 by Tavşancıl and Aslan, 2001):

Reliability = (number of agreements) / (number of agreements + number of disagreements)

For reliability, the inter-rater agreement should be 70% or higher.

In this study, three researchers evaluated the data and analyzed almost all of the 26 narrative texts together. Based on their feedback, reliability was tested and established for all the narrative texts.

Findings

The first research question was "what is the distribution of first-grade preservice Turkish teachers' narrative texts according to the categories (positive, negative, equivocal and mixed)?" To answer this question, first graders' narrative texts were grouped according to the categories of positive, negative, equivocal and mixed, and the statistical data are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency (f) and percentage (%) distribution of first graders' narrative texts (based on unit and whole sentences)

Sentences as a unit									
Groups	Positive		Negative		Equivocal		Mixed		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
First-grade	110	37	100	33	87	29	3	1	300	100
Sentences as a whole									
First grade	15	14	12	12	6	6	70	68	103	100

Of 300 sentences written by first graders based on "Sentences as a Unit", 37%, 33%, 29% and 1% were positive, negative, equivocal and mixed, respectively. Of 103 sentences written by first graders based on "Sentences as a Whole," 14%, 12%, 6% and 68% were positive, negative, equivocal and mixed, respectively.

The second research question was "what is the distribution of fourth-grade preservice Turkish teachers' narrative texts according to the categories (positive, negative, equivocal and mixed)?" To answer this question, fourth graders' narrative texts were grouped according to the categories of positive, negative, equivocal and mixed. Table 2 presents the statistical data.

Table 2. Frequency (f) and percentage (%) distribution of fourth graders' narrative texts (based on unit and whole sentences)

Groups	Positive		Negative		Equivocal		Mixed		Total	
Sentences as a unit										
	f	%	F	%	f	%	F	%	f	%
Fourth-grade	267	60	113	25	58	13	9	2	447	100
Sentences as a whole										
Fourth-grade	42	28	12	8	-	-	97	64	151	100

Of 447 sentences written by fourth graders based on "Sentences as a Unit", 60%, 25%, 13% and 2% were positive, negative, equivocal and mixed, respectively. Of 151 sentences written by first graders based on "Sentences as a Whole," 28%, 8% and 64% were positive, negative, and mixed, respectively. They had no equivocal sentences.

The third research question was "do first- and fourth-grade preservice Turkish teachers' narrative texts differ affectively?" To answer this question, the narrative texts were analyzed using an independent measures t-test. Table 3 presents the results.

Table 3. Results of independent measures t-test for grade difference

Groups	N	$\overline{\text{X}}$	S	sd	T	p	% (positive)	% (negative)
Sentences as a unit								
First-grade	300	4.09	2.50	748	6.84	.000	37	33
Fourth-grade	450	2.86	2.35				60	25
Sentences as a whole								
First-grade	103	3.27	1.50	254	3.85	.000	14	12
Fourth-grade	153	2.62	1.18				28	8

There was a statistically significant difference between first- and fourth graders in favor of the latter. For "Sentences as a Unit," first graders had 37% positive and 33% negative messages while fourth graders had 60% positive and 25% negative messages. For "Sentences as a Whole," first graders had 14% positive and 12% negative messages while fourth graders had 28% positive and 8% negative messages. These percentages show the statistical difference between the two groups. The

results showed that first graders used more negative sentences than fourth graders, suggesting that the lower the grade level, the higher the percentage of negative sentences.

The fourth research question was "do male and female preservice Turkish teachers' narrative texts differ affectively?" To answer this question, the narrative texts were analyzed based on gender using an independent measures t-test. Table 4 presents the results.

Table 4. Results of independent measures t-test for gender difference

Groups	N	$\overline{\text{X}}$	S	Sd	T	P	% (positive)
Sentences as a unit							
Female	615	3,48	2,50	208,44	3,22	,001	49
Male	135	2,76	2,31				61
Sentences as a whole							
Female	210	3,93	1,37	254	1,27	,205	21
Male	46	2,65	1,28				28

The analysis of sentences as a unit showed that male participants had significantly more positive views than female participants. The analysis of sentences as a whole showed a difference between male (28%) and female (21%) participants. However, the difference was not statistically significant.The analysis of sentences as a unit showed that female and male participants had 49% and 61% positive messages, respectively. The analysis of sentences as a whole showed that female and male participants had 21% and 28% positive messages, respectively.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study analyzed narrative texts written by 13 first- and 13 fourth-grade preservice Turkish teachers.

The results are as follows:

• Of 300 sentences written by first graders based on "Sentences as a Unit", 37%, 33%, 29% and 1% were positive, negative, equivocal and mixed, respectively. Of 103 sentences written by first graders based on "Sentences as a Whole," 14%, 12%, 6% and 68% were positive, negative, equivocal and mixed, respectively.

• Of 447 sentences written by fourth graders based on "Sentences as a Unit", 60%, 25%, 13% and 2% were positive, negative, equivocal and mixed, respectively. Of 151 sentences written by first graders based on "Sentences as a Whole," 28%, 8% and 64% were positive, negative, and mixed, respectively. They had no equivocal sentences.

• First graders mostly used mixed sentences consisting of positive, negative and equivocal expressions. However, fourth graders used significantly more positive sentences and fewer negative and equivocal sentences than did first graders (.000).

• Male participants used more positive sentences than female participants. This difference was statistically significant especially considering sentences as a unit (.001).

These results might be due to numerous reasons such as the failure of colleges or cities to meet the expectations of students. However, by the time students reach fourth grade, they develop more positive views because they become more adjusted to college and city life. The gender difference might be due to the fact that women have higher expectations and are more perfectionist than men. The literature contains no studies that perform affective analysis on narrative texts. There are, however, some studies that compare students or employees in terms of positive/negative affectivity. We will discuss our findings in relationship to those studies. In our study, male participants had more positive sentences than female participants. Zubaroğlu and Yanardağ (2017) reported that male students had significantly higher positive affectivity and negative affectivity scores than female students. Topal (2011) also found that male students had higher mean positive affectivity score than female students. These results are consistent with our findings. In our study, fourth graders had significantly more positive sentences than first graders. Alver (2005) reported that fourth graders had higher mean problem solving skills and academic achievement scores. This result is consistent with our result.

Deniz, Arslan, Özyeşil and İzmirli (2012) compared Turkish college students and those from other countries. They could, however, not find any difference in terms of positive-negative affectivity.

There are some other affect studies, the results of which cannot be compared with ours. One of those studies is the "affect analysis of messages in fables in the fifth-grade Turkish textbook" conducted by Çiftçi and Kaya (2018). They performed affect analysis on each sentence of the fables in the fifth-grade Turkish textbook. According to their results, 60%, 42% and 60% of the fables "Pigeon," "White Rabbit" and "Snowflake" consisted of positive sentences, respectively. They concluded that "Pigeon" and "Snowflake" were qualified fables that contributed to the cognitive and affective development of children, but not the "White Rabbit." Another study is the "examination of the texts in the fifth grade Turkish textbook in terms of their values" conducted by Çırak, Şahin, Özberk and Eriş (2014), who analyzed 2173 sentences in 40 texts both in terms of value categories and affect analysis. They concluded that 15 categories consisted mostly of positive sentences.

Erdoğan (2009) also reported that differences in mood affected problem-solving performance, indicating that groups with negative mood had poorer problem-solving performance than those with positive mood.

Suggestions

According to Doğan and Özdevecioğlu (2009, p. 166), affects are obtained through experiences and prepare people to act. They are as important in perception and attitude development processes as cognitive and behavioral factors and play a key role in all relationships and adaptation to the environment. It is, therefore, important not only for preservice teachers but also for future generations to be able to think positively and have positive affect because positive or negative affectivity causing satisfaction or dissatisfaction has an effect not only on us but also on people around us. All results considered; the following suggestions can be made:

- Learning settings should be improved to help preservice teachers develop more positive affectivity.

- Curricula should be designed in a way to encourage preservice teachers to develop positive perceptions of and attitudes towards the future, and course contents should be prepared accordingly.

- The profession of teaching should be made more attractive to teachers and preservice teachers in a way that they feel the urge to develop positive perceptions and attitudes towards it.

Further research should be conducted on this subject matter.

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