

## Consistency of the Narrative Texts Written by Middle School Students and Their Textual Creation Levels

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### Abstract

The present study aimed to identify and classify the consistency problems in the texts written by middle school 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students and to determine their textual levels. In the study, numerical data were also used within the context of descriptive analysis design, a qualitative research method. The study group included 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students attending two middle schools in Van province, located in the Eastern Anatolia Region in Turkey. Ten students were randomly selected from each grade level. The texts were analyzed by assigning codes to 40 participating students and their narrative texts based on the grade level. The analysis of the narrative texts written by the students was conducted with the “Narrative Text Consistency Rubric” developed by the authors. The validity and reliability of the rubric were determined based on the expert opinion. The texts written by the students were analyzed based on the rubric by additional 2 faculty members. The study findings demonstrated that the students experienced consistency problems in narrative texts such as inability to precisely reflect the relations between events in the text, alteration of the narrative between the events narrated in the text and sudden transitions, contradictions and irrational transitions between the sections, the lack of a conclusion, inconsistencies about the protagonists, and non-identification of the characters in the story. It was also determined that the number of creative texts was 4, the number of successful texts was 8, the number of texts that could be accepted as a text partially was 9, the number of texts that could be considered in the phase of text creation was 12, and the number of texts that could not be accepted as texts was 7.

**Keywords:** Consistency, narrative text, textual level, middle school students.

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## Introduction

Writing can be considered as an image of the mind of an individual. As a concept, writing is the sum of the codes and symbols that reflect the mental structure of the individual in particular, and the society in general. In other words, writing is a reflection of an individual's personality. The act of writing, which is a reflection of an individual's personality, is a process. Accurate management of this process could only be possible through taking the achievements, goals and activities associated with writing in the education and instruction programs into account and conducting related writing practices.

Writing, a time consuming and challenging act, is a mental process. According to Hartley (2008), this process includes four stages: planning, writing, editing and review. Since writing is a constantly changing and developing process, the first stages of this process are associated with planning and design/thought, while the final stage is associated with editing and review. According to Wellington (2003), planning could be considered as a prerequisite for good writing practice. Therefore, the first stage of textual creation, planning is the main element of the text and it is indispensable for creating a solid text. Writing is directly associated with thinking. Because, creating a text is the task of organizing ideas. Thus, it is obvious that someone with good writing skills could easily identify the weak and strong chains of thought or logic in any communication environment (Topuzkanamış, 2014: 7).

The first stage of the transfer of the thoughts and emotions of an individual into an organized text within a genre type is the sentence and the last stage is the manuscript. The transition from sentence to text occurs within an order. This order should exhibit consistency. On the one hand, the text is the concrete expression of an individual's emotions and thoughts, on the other, it is the sum of the particles of text (sentence, and units of sentence equivalents) that form content integrity (Günay, 2013: 45). Consideration of the text as the concrete form of emotion and thought would limit the linguistic and semantic framework of the text.

The text is an organization of sentences based on a certain order with a unique discursive value and an infinite universe for the reader. According to Aktaş (1994), the sentence units are the integral parts of the text and this integrity is associated with the connection between the sentences and how the text reflects these sentences. Based on this approach, it could be suggested that the text is hyper-word. The fact that the text is a hyper-word unit transforms the text into a product that requires high-level writing skills in terms of form and semantics. Therefore, it is not an easy task to author a formal and semantically consistent, effective and clear text.

A complete definition of the concept of text, determination of whether a written or verbal expression is a text, separation of a text and non-text require certain criteria (Dilidüzgün, 2017: 27). The discourse in the text, the contextual and functional meanings of the words in the text and the

construct of the text are among the elements that determine whether a text is a text. Based on these elements, the text creates its own linguistic presence (Bülbül, 2011: 48).

The texts are the products of the act of writing. Providing feedback to the creators of text in writing contributes to the development of writing skills of the text creators. Furthermore, according to Hyland & Hyland (2006) and Kepner (1991), factors such as the native-language and foreign language, and the ability to speak a second language affect writing (text creation) and the development of writing skills. Thus, the impact of feedback on the skill to create and write text could not be repudiated.

Every text, that is, writing, should be based on a plan. The plan is an indispensable element in writing/text. Planned writing/text requires mental integrity since this plan is initially formed in the mind. Planned and integrated writing is closely associated with textual consistency. Writing, in other words, text creation is not solely consist of producing words and sentences for students at a certain level. These students should possess the text creation skills rather than producing words and sentences. The created texts are not just random lines of sentences. In order for a writing to be a text, it should meet certain criteria. In linguistic terms, a text is a series of sentences that include sequential and semantic elements (Wellington, 2003; Günay, 2013). These elements that provide semantics include the text itself and the external textual elements. The consistency and cohesion associated with the text are correlated.

The main purpose of writing education is to create a robust and consistent text that ensures self-integrity (Bae, 2001; Can, 2012; Coşkun, 2005; Eryaman, 2008; Karatay, 2010; Ramadan, 2003; Witte & Faigley, 1981). In writing, it is important to connect words, sentences, and the elements that connect the sentences. These elements form a semantic integrity (Karadeniz, 2017). The sentences and the relationships between the sentences in the text reflect the consistency. These relationships formed by grammatical structures indicate certain grammatical and lexical qualities (Gutwinski, 1976). This constitutes the discursive structure in the text and sentences.

### **Consistency**

Consistency was described as the examination of a text based on correlations and to reveal the order and linearity of its sentences and paragraphs (Günay, 2013: 118), the semantic connections within the deep structure of the text (Karaağaç, 2013: 803), the relationship in the deep textual structure (Kerimoğlu, 2014: 238), the logical connection between the meanings created in the deep structure (Onursal Ayırır, 2014: 172), and holistic and interconnected semantic particles in the whole text (Gül, 2015: 139). Linguists utilize textual criteria to better understand and analyze the written/created texts and to create more quality texts (Kocaman, 1999). Consistency is one of these criteria. Consistency is the analysis of sentences and paragraphs in the text in general. It is also

associated with the mental competence of the reader. Because, consistency depends on the success of the writing skills of the creator of the text.

As reported in previous studies on consistency (Onursal Ayırır, 2014; Toptaş, 2016), there are no specific linguistic factors that reflect consistency. Therefore, it is not possible to understand consistency with a superficial approach to the text. Gao (2008) considered consistency as the most important feature of the text, Çoban & Karadüz (2016) described consistency as establishing connections between sentences in the text that reflect semantic and logical integrity of ideas. Yaylagül (2015) reported that consistency was based on a logical relationship. Bahar (2014) stated that the logical relationship is the presentation of ideas that support or refute one another in a certain order in the text and the ability of the author to reveal ideas on the topic without contradiction in the same text. Çeçen (2011) and Karatay (2010) also argued that consistency was associated with the integrity of the text. According to Gutwinski (1976) and Melanlıoğlu (2017), consistency was associated with the paragraph. Consistency is not just a textual feature but rather a result of cognitive processes among the text users (Beaugrande & Dressler, 1986). It was observed that Coşkun Ögeyik (2008) also described consistency as a basic textual criterion that guides the author in the process of production and the reader in the reception phase.

Each text is organized and created based on a certain theme, construct and discourse. Sentences in a text are deliberately put together in a certain logical framework by the author. To ensure the textual integrity, it should include the introduction, development and conclusion sections (Demirci, 2014). Thus, the quality of a text - this could be either verbal or written text - and whether the text really contains textual qualities, the steps in the process of the text creation, how a creative text could be created are the questions that should be asked in the process of writing/creating a text. Consistency relies on the logical order and connections between the parts of the text based on the characteristic of creating a text (Onursal Ayırır, 2014; Özkan, 2004; Toklu, 2011). The consistency of a text depends on the sound construction of the relationship between “subject”, “event” and “situation.” The robust construction of this relationship is associated with the use of pronouns, indirect expressions and repetitions in a certain order. Furthermore, every new sentence and paragraph in the text should not be superfluous, present a new information based on the preliminary knowledge and the explanations should be complete.

### **Research problem**

Writing formal and semantically sound organized texts poses difficulties for every segment of society. Particularly, creating a text with introduction, development and conclusion sections based on the genre, and establishing coherent and consistent transitions between the sentences are the most difficult aspects of writing a text. It could be suggested that writing, which is a difficult skill to acquire, would result in creating logically sound, well-constructed and discursive texts when the

textuality criterion consistency is significantly ensured. In a study conducted by Can (2012), the paragraph aspect of consistency was emphasized in compositions written by students. The author focused on the construct and deep structure of the paragraphs. The analysis of the texts written by the students based on consistency, construction and transition between the sentences is important for the achievements of the students in creating deeply structured texts. Ercan Güven (2019) investigated the writing consistency levels of students and addressed the problems he identified in various categories. In a study by Keklik & Yılmaz (2013), the consistency of the narrative texts was reflected using numerical data. In that study, it was determined that the texts were not analyzed based on deep structure, construct, introduction, development, conclusion, paragraph and logic. The study was significant for the classification the narrative texts written by the students based on consistency. The fact that Yıldız (2016) analyzed the student texts based on several elements of feedback but failed to discuss consistency was another reason to conduct the present study. Furthermore, in the studies conducted by Parlak (2009) and Balyemez (2006), the older studies were analyzed based on coherence and consistency. Biçer & Çoban (2015), on the other hand, investigated consistency in narrative texts in Turkish as a foreign language sets. That study was also conducted on existing texts.

The fact that the above-mentioned studies were conducted on existing texts, not on the works of the students, renders the present study significant since it aimed to analyze students texts based on consistency.

### **The aim of the study**

The present study aimed to analyze the consistency of the narrative texts written by middle school students. Thus, the following research problems were determined:

What are the consistency problems observed in middle school student narrative texts?

What are the consistency levels in middle school student narrative texts and which factors positively or negatively affect these levels?

What are the consistency levels in middle school student narrative texts based on the analysis?

## **Method**

### **The research design**

In studies where data derives from descriptive analysis, the aim is to present the findings using an organized and interpreted approach. The collected data are first described systematically and clearly. Then, these descriptions are discussed and interpreted, causalities are investigated, and certain conclusions are extrapolated. Descriptive analysis involves association and making sense of the obtained themes and estimating predictions (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In the present study, the texts written by 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students were analyzed for consistency with descriptive analysis,

the collected data were discussed based on descriptive statistics obtained with the consistency analysis rubric and the sample texts written by 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students were digitized based on the analysis rubric.

### **The study group**

The study sample included 40 middle school students in Van province located at the Eastern Anatolia Region in Turkey. These 40 students attending the middle school were randomly selected from 2 schools. Ten students attending the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades in the middle school were selected randomly. The study sample was determined with simple random sampling. In simple random sampling, all elements in the population have the same chance to be selected (Karasar, 2014).

### **Data collection instrument and data analysis**

The study data were collected with the “Narrative Text Consistency Analysis Rubric,” which was used to assess the texts written by students and written texts. Written documents are documents written about a target topic. Written documents could be memories, letters or any other written product (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013; Taşdemir, 2019). The data collection instrument was the texts written by 40 students who were attending 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades in middle school in the present study. These written texts were collected from 40 middle school students that were written on the topic “the story of a fawn living in the forest”. Data were collected with the texts written by the students, which was used as the data collection instrument in the study. The written texts collected from the students were analyzed with the “Narrative Text Consistency Analysis Rubric” developed by the authors. The written texts collected from the students are presented with direct quotes based on the research problems, and the data were evaluated based on the rubric and presented quantitatively. The texts written by 10 students at each grade level are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The Codes and grade levels for the texts written by the students

Grade	The Written Text Codes Based on Grade Level and Student
5	5SM1, 5SM2, 5SM3, 5SM4, 5SM5, 5SM6, 5SM7, 5SM8, 5SM9, 5SM10
6	6SM1, 6SM2, 6SM3, 6SM4, 6SM5, 6SM6, 6SM7, 6SM8, 6SM9, 6SM10
7	7SM1, 7SM2, 7SM3, 7SM4, 7SM5, 7SM6, 7SM7, 7SM8, 7SM9, 7SM10
8	8SM1, 8SM2, 8SM3, 8SM4, 8SM5, 8SM6, 8SM7, 8SM8, 8SM9, 8SM10

The “Narrative Text Consistency Analysis Rubric” developed by the authors includes five textual levels. These levels are presented in the table below.

**Table 2.** Textual level, textual properties, and scores

Textual Level	Textual Property	Score
5th Level Text	Could be accepted as creative text	5
4th Level Text	Could be accepted as successful text	4
3rd Level Text	Could be accepted as partially a text	3
2nd Level Text	Could be accepted as a textual development level	2
1st Level Text	Could not be accepted as a text	1

The “Narrative Text Consistency Analysis Rubric” developed by the authors is a 5-point Likert-type Rubric. The texts written by the study participants were scored 1 point for a text that could not be accepted as a text, 2 points for a textual development level text, 3 points for a text that could be accepted as partially a text, 4 points for a successful text, and 5 points for a creative text.

The texts written by the research participants were analyzed based on five textual levels and classified based on textual consistency. Furthermore, the texts written by the students were analyzed with descriptive analysis, and consistency problems were identified as sub-categories.

In the study, 40 middle school students were asked to write a story on the topic “the story of a fawn living in the forest.” The purpose of asking students to write stories on this subject was the fact that writing a narrative text was the subject of the research.

The narrative texts written by the participating students were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. While the qualitative study data were analyzed with the descriptive analysis technique, the quantitative data were statistically calculated based on the 5-point Likert-type rubric and the authors attempted to determine the consistency in the narrative texts written by the students.

### **Validity and reliability**

The validity and reliability of the study was determined in two stages. The validity and reliability of the rubric used in the study was determined in the first stage, and in the second, the validity and reliability of the study findings were controlled.

Expert opinion was obtained from 5 Turkish language experts and 2 measurement and evaluation experts to determine whether the rubric measured the consistency of the narrative texts.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the rubric developed for the study, a literature review was conducted to investigate the method that could be employed to determine consistency. The literature review demonstrated that a Turkish language scale/rubric was developed by Coşkun (2005) based on international scale/rubric. It was observed that most studies on consistency were based on the evaluation of written texts in printed resources. Furthermore, the literature on consistency was reviewed, the properties associated with consistency were determined, and a new rubric was developed to determine narrative texts. The rubric was developed based on narrative text properties. The review of the literature on the consistency of narrative texts and obtaining the expert opinion based on a certain form were conducted to determine the validity and reliability of the rubric used in the study.

After the textual consistency was determined by the authors, the view of another faculty member specialized in Turkish language education was obtained to determine the consistency in the student based on the texts written by the research participants and the narrative text consistency analysis rubric developed for the study and the items that aimed to determine the consistency in these

texts. This process was conducted to improve the validity and reliability of the research findings. In the study, both Turkish language education and measurement and evaluation field experts were consulted. It was determined that the feedback provided by the experts improved the validity and consistency of the stages that were employed to determine and interpret the study findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). This facilitated the collection of in-depth data in the study and improved the study validity and reliability.

**Table 3.** The relationship pearson correlation showing intra-observer consistency

	1. Expert	2. Expert
1. Expert	1	
2. Expert	,989**	1

When Table 3 is examined, in order to determine the relationship between the experts, Pearson Correlation analysis shows that there is a highly positive and significant relationship between the first and second expert/observer ( $r = .989$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

### **Findings and Interpretation**

In this section, the findings obtained in accordance with the aim of the study and their interpretation are presented. Certain consistency problems experienced by the participating students whose written texts were analyzed for consistency in the study are presented below.

#### **Findings on the first problem**

The data associated with the first research problem, “What are the consistency problems observed in middle school student narrative texts?” are presented below:

Inability to completely reflect the associations between the events to the text.

Disruption of the flow of the story abruptly and sudden transitions.

Inconsistencies and irrationality between the text sections.

Lack of a conclusion section.

Confusion about the protagonists, lack of consistent characters.

Five sub-categories were obtained for the first research problem. It was determined that the middle school students could not reflect the events that they imagined exactly to the text, there were contradictions and irrational passages between the sentences in the text, the texts lacked a conclusion, the protagonists were not exactly defined and transitions between the events were not adequate. The narrative texts written by the participants could be exemplified as follows:



### **Inability to completely reflect the associations between the events to the text**

Example:

“On its way, a fawn suddenly got lost. As its parents were looking for it... the fawn was afraid of the first tree that appeared” (5SM1).

The fact that the parents of the fawn realized that it was lost and started to look for it was not included in the text. This problem led to a discontinuity in the story. The example could be considered unacceptable based on the above-mentioned criteria. The description of this criteria; "No unity between the sentences. Each sentence refers to a separate topic. The transition between sentences is very weak" could be found in the above example.

Disruption of the flow of the story abruptly and sudden transitions

Example:

“The fawn is left there alone, but I should not have left it there, I did like my parents, and gets worried as if it had the mistake of its life and it has been months since I lost it” (5SM4).

In the story, the strong gazelle regrets the fact that it did not protect the fawn; however, immediately it starts to talk about months later. In the same story;

“It would have found it, but it had left the area. The gazelle was very old. It had become an invalid.” The transition to the time when the gazelle was elderly was sudden (6SM4).

The analysis of the above-mentioned examples demonstrated that the statement included in the first level of the rubric, “The topic is not clear. The sentences are confusing, and the meaning is not obvious. There are sudden sentence transitions in most parts of the text, and the text lacks a construct” was reflected in the examples. Furthermore, the statement about the second rubric level, “The subject is more or less clear, but there is almost no unity between the sentences. The introduction section is present, but the development and the conclusion sections are not clear” was also true.

### **Inconsistencies and irrationality between the text sections**

Example:

“When they heard that mother gazelle was giving birth to the fawn, the lions came to chase the mother gazelle and the fawn, but the fawn could not run since it was a newborn and fell to the ground. When the mother gazelle saw this, looked right behind her, stopped and went to the front of the fawn. The big-eyed lions were big and out of breath. The lions ate the mother gazelle with pleasure, but they were not full. When the fawn saw that they were not full, it immediately started running. It ran and ran...” (5SM6).

When the author stated that the fawn could not run to escape from the lions because it was newborn and fell to the ground in the second structure of the story, it was mentioned that the fawn ran away from the lions in the third structure.

Example:

“One day a very lonely fawn was born in the forest and its mother named it Bambi. Bambi loved to live in the forest and in nature. It said to his father: ‘Daddy, would you teach me how to protect myself against the lions?’” (6SM7)

At the beginning of the text, the author stated that the fawn was alone; however, in the next sentence, we learned that it had parents.

Example:

“The uncle of Bambi was a sumo wrestler, so he was a very strong gazelle and consoled Bambi. Bambi was very safe with him, because no one could beat her because her uncle was a sumo. In general, the king of the forest is the lion, but the king of the Huzurkin Forest was the gazelle, or sumo. When the lions saw him, they were scared of him. One day, a lion said let us attack the big gazelle together and eat him, but [the attempt was] in vain. All of them gathered, eventually gathered, albeit difficultly, and Bambi heard about this treacherous plan and hurried to her uncle. Uncle: What is this fuss? Bambi: Lions! Uncle: What lions? Bambi: Uncle, lions are all united and they will kill you. The uncle said: They should come and see their fate. And all the lions arrived with spear-knives, rifles and put the sumo on the ground, Sumo said to Bambi: Take this necklace, it will strengthen you, and Bambi lost his uncle and cried a lot” (5SM2).

In the text, it was mentioned that uncle gazelle was the king of the forest and stronger than everyone else, and then the lions’ plan to kill the uncle gazelle was mentioned. In the next part, it was stated that the plan was in vain, but also the uncle gazelle was killed by the lions.

Irrational and contradictory events are the most common examples of inconsistencies in a text. These cases were especially exemplified in the texts quoted above. The statement included in the rubric, “Although certain parts of the text exhibit integrity, there are contradictions and logical errors in the textual construct” was associated with these cases.

### **Lack of a conclusion section**

Example:

"The mother went to the cave where the fawn went, and the mother of fawn also chased the lion, and when the mother of fawn fled, the fawn hide behind the door and went out and cried and the story of the mother of the fawn and the fawn." (M23)

The lack of a conclusion in the text is a serious consistency problem. In this text, there was no hint of a conclusion after the events that the fawn, its mother and the lion experienced were told. Instead, the story ended by stating that it was a “story of the mother of the fawn and the fawn.”

Example:

“A lot of lions prepared. They asked the fawn.

Where is the shelter of you gazelles? they said.

The fawn was very scared. It could not make a sound. But the lion asked again.

-If you tell us where it is, we will not eat you.

The baby gazelle was brave and did not tell” (7SM4).

In this text that talks about the fawn who was caught by the lions when it was strolling with the permission of its mother, it was stated that the fawn did not concede the location of their shelter and this behavior was considered a bold move. The text did not bear a clue about the fate of the fawn. The questions in the reader's head were not resolved at the end of the text.

One of the frequent consistency errors encountered in texts that are expected to possess integrity and should have a conclusion is the case where the events do not lead to an outcome. Thus, the reader may think that the text is incomplete when reading the text. Based on the rubric, the property of the 3rd level texts, namely “Partial integrity is provided in the introduction, development and conclusion sections of the text. But the whole text lacks integrity,” was observed especially due to the fact that the link between the development and conclusion sections was missing.

### **Confusion about the protagonists, lack of consistent characters**

Example:

“The fawn was left there all alone, but when I had to leave it there, I did like my mother and father did, it was worried, as if it did the mistake of its life and it had been months since it lost it. It was so sorry, it would find it, but it had left. The gazelle was very old and became invalid” (5SM9).

In this story, after talking about the growth and strengthening of the fawn, the attack of lions to the gazelles was mentioned. At this stage, another fawn without parents appears. The strong fawn does not help the other fawn. The personalities of these two protagonists, who meet again at a later time, were mixed. It becomes difficult to determine which one was the strong gazelle, and which one was the fawn.

### **Findings on the second research problem**

The findings on the second research problem, "What are the consistency levels in middle school student narrative texts and which factors positively or negatively affect these levels?" are

presented in tables. For each consistency level where five textual levels were determined based on the rubric, two written text examples are presented, and a total of ten examples are included for the levels of the narrative text consistency based on the narrative text properties. These examples are associated with the positive and negative aspects of consistency, as per the research question.

**Table 4:** Grade levels and textual levels for these grade levels

	<b>Not acceptable as a text</b>	<b>The text could be accepted as a development stage</b>	<b>Partially acceptable as text</b>	<b>Successful text</b>	<b>Creative text</b>
8th grade			M2, M10	M3, M5, M7, M8	M1, M4, M6, M9
7th grade		M4, M7	M1, M6, M9, M10	M2, M3, M5, M8	
6th grade	M7, M8	M3, M4, M6, M9, M10	M1, M2, M5		
5th grade	M1, M3, M4, M7, M9	M2, M5, M6, M8, M10			

The analysis of Table 4 demonstrated that the texts written by 5th grade students were mostly in the 1st and 2nd level textual groups. Furthermore, the texts written by 6th grade students were mostly in 2nd and 3rd levels, the texts written by 7th grade students were in 3rd and 4th levels, and the texts written by 8th grade students were mostly in the 4th and 5th levels.

**Table 5.** The general construct of a sample text for the not acceptable as a text level 1

<b>Topic: The Fawn</b>	<b>Title: The Fawn</b>
Introduction: The fawn was friends with three hundred gazelles, they strolled together, went out, visited each other, spent their days, ran, grazed and got excited together.	
Development: There are no events that could be associated with a development section in the text.	
Conclusion: There are no events that could be associated with a conclusion section in the text.	

(5SM3)

The review of the general structure of a text written by a 5th grade student and given in Table 5 demonstrated that the text included a partial introduction section but no development and conclusion sections. The introduction of the text included consecutive independent sentences. This was the reason why the text was considered as first level. In this story, no specific subject and plan were observed. The events in the text were listed one after without integrity and repeated. It was not possible to determine separate sections in the text. It was difficult to argue that this writing was a text. There were no separate introduction, development and conclusion sections in this text, only a few introductory events were described.

**Table 6.** The general construct of a sample text for the not acceptable as a text level 2

<b>Topic: The Fawn</b>	<b>Title: The Life of a Gazelle in the Forest</b>
Introduction: The fawn and the forest, the fawn goes to the forest, it sees a bear and runs away, other animals and the fawn, the fawn goes back to the forest, the animals in the forest live happily ever after, they help those who were lost.	
Development: There are no events that could be associated with a development section in the text.	
Conclusion: There are no events that could be associated with a conclusion section in the text.	

(6SM7)

The review of the general structure of a text given in Table 6 demonstrated that the text included a haphazard introduction and no introduction and conclusion sections. Several events were intertwined in the introduction section in the text. It was not possible to determine a topic and a plan in this text. There was no link between Event 1 and Event 2 in the text. It cannot be suggested that a story was created in this text.

**Table 7.** The general construct of a sample text for the level that could be accepted as a development stage 1

<b>Topic: The Fawn</b>	<b>Title: The Fate of the Fawn</b>
Introduction: The mother of the fawn dies during birth, the fawn is left all alone, it grows up, it is two years old and can take care of herself, can run fast	
Development: The fawn falls into a well, it falls into a well when strolling in the forest and goes to the bottom and faints, she finds herself in a cage when she recovers, sees many animals in cages, cannot free herself despite her efforts, thinks that she has nothing else to do but sit down	
Conclusion: No events that could be associated with a conclusion section in the text.	

(6SM3)

The review of Table 7 demonstrated that the introduction and development sections were partially present in the general construct of the text, which was considered within the development stage level; however, these sections were not completely exemplified. It was observed that there were sudden changes between the events in the introduction and development sections and the text did not include a conclusion section. The first problem in the text, which was considered a third level text, was the fact that the time passed very rapidly. The section started with the phrase "one day when the fawn was two years old" took the text that started with the birth of the fawn two years later. There were also some difficulties in the development and conclusion of the story. The fawn, who found itself in a cage when it opened its eyes and saw other animals in the same situation, was not surprised. The fawn, who attempted to get out very briefly, failed and the text ended.

**Table 8.** The general construct of a sample text for the level that could be accepted as a development stage 2

<b>Topic: The Fawn</b>	<b>Title: The Fawn and The Fox</b>
Introduction: When strolling, the fawn is followed by a fox, and the fox invites the fawn to lunch subtly,	
Development: The fawn refuses the fox's offer and invites the fox to her home, the lunch is delayed, they start eating together, the fox schemes to eat the fawn but cannot see the fawn, and the fawn sneaks behind the fox with an axe and cuts his head into two, and says the hunter is hunted	
Conclusion: No events that could be associated with a conclusion section in the text.	

(6SM9)

The review of Table 8 demonstrated that the general construct of the text included the introduction and development sections; however, there was no event that could be associated with the conclusion section and it was a repetition of the introduction and development sections. This plain and short text, which was considered to be in the textual development stage, described the fox's plan and action to eat the fawn. The fox, who did not have the opportunity to implement the plan, was killed by

the fawn with an ax and paid the price for his scheme. At the end of the text, the message that "the hunter was hunted" was given to the reader. This narrative text was negative since the events were narrated very briefly almost like a summary.

**Table 9.** The general construct of a sample text that could be partially accepted as a text 1

<b>Topic: The Fawn</b>	<b>Title: The Dog of the Gazelle</b>
Introduction: The swan is small and beautiful, and an orphan.	
Development: The gazelle is lost in the forest, encounters the lion, starts running, got caught and taken to the den of the lion, the gazelle is saved, asks for help, the dog enters the den and saves the gazelle,	
Conclusion: The death of the lion, the dog kills the lion with a bomb, the gazelle thanks the dog, and the gazelle and the dog become a family	

(7SM1)

As seen in Table 9, the text could be considered as an example for a partially acceptable text, and included introduction, development and conclusion sections; however, the sections did not exhibit integrity. Furthermore, it was observed that the sections were disconnected and sudden events and changes in the characters were observed. Despite certain flaws, this story reflected partial topical integrity. The previous events paved the way for the events that followed. The facts that the protagonist of the story, the gazelle was lost when left alone, got caught by the lion and saved by the dog were given in a certain order. All these events focused on the gazelle.

There are certain significant inconsistencies in this text. For example, the fact that the gazelle was an orphan was not attributed to any reason. It was not logical that the gazelle, who decided to go on a long journey, started this journey only because of boredom. The lion who caught the gazelle takes it to his home; however, the home was never mentioned again in the rest of the story. The home was replaced by a den. It was stated that when the dog entered the place where the gazelle was held, it immediately extended a rope and rescued the gazelle. It could be argued that how the dog, who was already inside, extended the rope inside. Another inconsistency was the fact that the web, which has a perforated structure, was made of tree leaves.

**Table 10.** The general construct of a sample text that could be partially accepted as a text 2

<b>Topic: The Fawn</b>	<b>Title: Happiness of the Little Gazelle</b>
Introduction: The fawn, the fawn was very scared, the fact that fear was hereditary	
Development: The fawn and the monster, the fawn goes to the forest for a stroll, encounters a monster, escapes from the forest, the fawn and the fairy, the fawn sees a fairy in her dream, the fairy tells the fawn that she will be happy, the fawn grows up, everything that the fairy told happens, nothing bad ever happens to the fawn.	
Conclusion: No events that could be associated with a conclusion section in the text.	

(7SM2)

As seen in Table 10, it was determined that this text sample, which could be partially accepted as a text, included introduction and development sections, but no conclusion section. It was observed

that the introduction and development sections included repetitive events (construct). There was no conclusive event, since the introduction and development sections were duplicates.

The title of the text was “Happiness of the Little Gazelle”. However, in some parts, the word fawn was used instead of "little gazelle". There was a certain plan in this text; however, it was observed that the links between the events and situations were weak in the text. The links between the fawn going to the forest, encountering the monster and escaping from the forest were very weak. All these events were narrated in a single sentence.

**Table 11.** The general construct of a sample for a successful text 1

<b>Topic: The Fawn</b>	<b>Title: Poor Fawn</b>
Introduction: The mother gazelle dies when giving birth to the fawn, the fawn is left alone, finds a place where there is plenty of grass	
Development 1: The friend of the fawn, the fawn is lost, finds a friend	
Development 2: Lion attacks, the two friends escape from the first attack, in the second, the friend of the dawn is caught, the fawn is sad and cries.	
Development 3: The strong gazelle, the fawn grows up and becomes strong, encounters the lion again and gets away.	
Conclusion: The fawn discovers the original habitat, her brother and father while running away from the lion, the fawn sees her brother and father in the old place, all are happy	

(8SM3)

As seen in Table 11, the text could be considered at a level that could be accepted as successful text. It was observed that the text included introduction, development and conclusion sections and there was a certain consistency between the sections. Furthermore, the development section of the text was partially diverse. This was an important factor in the consideration of the text as successful.

The story tells the adventures of a fawn. The fawn, who lost her mother at birth, was alone and hungry. The events that started with that fact continued within a logical sequence. However, there are certain consistency problems. The subject suddenly changes as the fawn, who lost her way, slowly walks in the forest, and the story skips a day to the time when the fawn finds a friend. There was no fixed mode in the story. Sometimes, heard past tense, in other times, observed past tense mode was used. The growth and strength of the fawn was not a process but occurred suddenly.

**Table 12.** The general construct of a sample for a successful text 2

<b>Topic: The Fawn</b>	<b>Title: The Life of a Fawn</b>
Introduction: Failure of the lazy fawn despite her efforts, her absenteeism	
Development: Encounter of the fawn with another similar fawn, the fawn has an idea when walking on the road, sees someone just like her, they become friends, they study together, being happy, and the fawn becomes industrious thanks to her friend	
Conclusion: They live happily ever after.	

(8SM5)

As seen in Table 12, it was determined that the text included introduction, development and conclusion sections and was partially consistent. Similar events were narrated in all three sections of

the text; however, these events were not successfully constructed. This is what made the text weak in consistency. The text begins with the introduction of the fawn. The reasons for the laziness of the fawn were explained. Although there were some problems in the connections between the events described in the text, the whole text was constructed with a plan. The fawn, who was lazy at the beginning of the story and was uncomfortable with her laziness, became a hard worker after she found a friend who looked like her and started studying with her.

There were certain inconsistencies in the text, albeit a few. For example, the fawn had an idea when walking on the road; however, what the details of that idea was never mentioned. A second example of inconsistency could be observed in sudden time lapses. While it was told that the fawn was walking on the road, the subject was changed abruptly and it was mentioned that the fawn encountered someone who looks like her.

**Table 13.** The general construct of a sample for a creative text 1

<b>Topic: The Fawn</b>	<b>Title: The Fate of the Gazelle Family</b>
Introduction: Introduction of the forest and the gazelle family, the solidarity among the animals in the forest, the migration of the gazelle family to the forest 3-4 years ago, the frustration in the forest after their arrival	
Development: The insidious scheme of the gazelle family, their desire to torture all other animals, inviting everyone to a dinner honoring all animals, setting a trap during the dinner by placing bombs under the tables, arrival of the guests, while everyone was eating the gazelle family excuse themselves due to illness, other animals follow the gazelles to help them, the bomb goes off, the fawn remembers that she forgot her bag of necessities and goes back, the parent gazelles explode the bomb unaware of the absence of the fawn.	
Conclusion: The death of the fawn and destruction of the gazelle family.	

(8SM1)

As seen in Table 13, the example given for the general construct of a creative text demonstrated that the introduction section of the text was different, and this different introduction was constructed as a plan in the development section. In the conclusion section, the end of the story was remarkable. It was determined that the introduction, development and conclusion sections were consistent. In this story, the topical integrity was maintained from the introduction to the conclusion section. The plot was firm, and the traps set by the protagonists (the gazelle family) were successfully narrated.

The story evolved based on a fundamental problem. This problem was the gazelle family's desire to harm other animals. The story ended when the problem was resolved unexpectedly and against the original plan. The gazelle family lost their offspring as a result of their own trap. Thus, this story was successful in terms of consistency.



**Table 14.** The general construct of a sample for a creative text 2

<b>Topic: The Fawn</b>	<b>Title: The Event that the Fawn Experienced</b>
Introduction: The gazelle and her friend the squirrel, the characteristics of the gazelle and the squirrel, they become good friends.	
Development: The gazelle goes to the forest to search for grass alone and encounters friends, encounters a wolf, the gazelle eats some grass and falls asleep, sees a cub wolf in her dream, when she wakes up, she encounters a wolf and carried to the home of the wolf.	
Conclusion: The squirrel looks for the gazelle, hits the wolf on the head and saves the gazelle and live on happily ever after	

(8SM4)

The review of Table 14 demonstrated that the general textual consistency was good, it was also determined that the introduction, development and conclusion sections were consistently integrated.

In the story, topical integrity was robust. A logical sequence could be observed in the succession of events. The fact that the gazelle and the squirrel who always went out together went out separately on the day of the events was left unexplained and the only negative property in the text. Furthermore, the fact that the fawn was worried about encountering the wolf, saw this possibility in her dream and eventually encountered the wolf demonstrated that the events in the story were written based on a plan and a certain consistent construct. In addition, the fact that the squirrel searched for the gazelle, who was a friend, and saved his friend by neutralizing the wolf was also one of the factors that positively affected the flow of the events.

### **Findings on the third research problem**

The data associated with the third research problem, “What are the consistency levels in middle school student narrative texts based on the analysis rubric?” are presented below:

**Table 15.** Consistency levels of the texts written by middle school students

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Textual Consistency</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
5	The text could be accepted as creative	4
4	The text could be accepted as successful	8
3	The text could be partially accepted as text	9
2	The text could be accepted as a textual development	12
1	The text could not be accepted as a text	7

The review of Table 15 demonstrated that 7 out of 40 texts were in the first level, 12 were in the second level, 9 were in the third level, 8 were in the fourth level, and 4 were in the fifth level textual consistency category.

The common problem in the two texts that were considered within the scope of the “The text could not be accepted as a text” category, which was the first level, was the fact that the text was not even a text, let alone a narrative text. In these two examples, there was not even a single well-formed and understandable sentence throughout the page.

The first common problem in the texts that were considered in the “The text could be accepted as a textual development” category, which was the second level, was the poor topical integrity in the texts. However, semantic gaps that readers could not easily bridge were also noticeable in the texts. The fact that temporal transitions between the events were quite sudden in the texts was one of the common problems observed in that category.

The general problem in texts in the category of “The text could be partially accepted as text,” which was the third level, was the lack of causality in the events that occurred due to the behavior of the protagonists. In other words, the factors that led to these events were not mentioned. Another problem observed in texts in this category was the lack of the consequences of the events. The fact that the protagonists and other characters in most of the nine texts determined in this category were not promoted as they should be was also among the factors that negatively affected the consistency in the texts.

The problem frequently encountered in the eight texts included in the "The text could be accepted as successful" category, which was the fourth level, was the absence of a constant temporal mode. In these texts, the heard past tense and the known past tense were used together. Another noteworthy problem was that the events given in the conclusion section were semantically weak since the required details were not provided.

The inconsistencies described above were not observed in the texts in the "The text could be accepted as creative" category, which was the fifth level. These texts were significantly narrative texts. The texts at this level were considered successful based on the progress of the events that developed around a certain topic (revenge 8SM1-trap 8SM4) from the introduction to the conclusion section in a logical order and provoking curiosity.

### **Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

Several studies have been conducted on consistency. One of these studies on consistency was the study where Coşkun (2005) developed the narrative consistency rubric. The rubric was used in subsequent research. Güven (2014) analyzed three stories by Mustafa Kutlu based on the rubric developed by Coşkun (2005) and concluded that the texts were original and interesting in terms of coherence and consistency. However, Coşkun (2005) consistency rubric is a descriptive analysis that aim to determine consistency. Since the interest in the stories vary based on the interests, needs and attitudes of the students, Güven’s scale/rubric (2014) could not be accepted as valid and reliable in this respect. However, the compatibility of the textual sections and the integration of the stories could be determined with the rubric.

Seçkin, Arslan & Ergenç (2014) analyzed the texts written by high school and college students based on consistency in the study conducted with the rubric developed by Coşkun (2005). The

application conducted with 40 male and 40 female students demonstrated that the average consistency score of the narrative texts written by female students was 3.53, and the same average score for the male students was 2.90. The findings obtained by Seçkin, et al. (2014) could be reinvestigated based on various perspectives since it should not be overlooked that the difference could be due to other validity and reliability factors in the study. Keklik & Yılmaz (2013), on the other hand, analyzed the narrative texts written by 11th grade students with Coşkun's (2005) scale/rubric. The analysis of consistency demonstrated that the mean consistency score of 300 students was 1.87. The mean score was lower than that reported by Seçkin, Arslan & Ergenç (2014). Another research, where the rubric developed by Coşkun (2005) was used, was conducted by Biçer & Çoban (2015). The mean consistency score of the narrative texts published by New Hittite books was determined as 3.52 in the study, where the consistency of the narrative texts in Turkish as a foreign language books published by the New Hittite and used in Ankara University and Gazi University TÖMER organizations. It was determined that the mean consistency score in narrative texts in New Hittite books was 3.52 and the same in Gazi Turkish as a foreign language books was 3.57. In the study conducted by Bayburtlu (2019), the students' cohesion and consistency levels in verbal texts were investigated. The study findings demonstrated that students' cohesion and consistency levels were not good.

Literature review revealed that consistency was investigated based on two different approaches in previous studies. The first approach entailed the analysis of the texts in printed resources for consistency, and the second entailed the analysis of the texts written by students in various levels of education for consistency. Sample studies on the consistency in texts written by students included the studies by Can (2012), Keklik & Yılmaz (2013), Ercan Güven (2019) and Yıldız (2016). The studies by Biçer & Çoban (2015), Parlak (2009) and Balyemez (2006) were on the consistency of texts in printed resources. In the present study, the narrative texts written by 40 middle school students were analyzed with a novel rubric developed by the authors. In the current study, where the consistency of the narrative texts and the effect of consistency on text creation was determined, it was determined that the narrative texts written by the students were at the third level, that is, they were partially acceptable as texts. The difference between the present study and the studies conducted by Can (2012), Keklik & Yılmaz (2013), Ercan Güven (2019) and Yıldız (2016) was the fact that the consistency problems and textual levels were determined in the narrative texts.

In studies on the consistency and/or coherence of the texts written by those who were learning Turkish as a foreign language, it was determined that the consistency of the written texts was poor (Aramak, 2016; Karakoç Öztürk & Dağistanlıoğlu, 2018; Mantı, 2017; Yıldırım, 2016). Based on the present study findings, the consistency of the narrative texts written by 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students whose native language was Turkish was poor as well. In studies conducted by Ayaz (2007), Can (2012), Coşkun (2005), Çeçen (2009-2011), Çocuk & Kanatlı (2012), Kafes (2012), Karadeniz (2015- 2017), Karatay (2010), Özşavli (2016), Seçkin et al. (2014), Tiryaki & Mengüllüoğlu (2016),

Ülper (2011) and Yılmaz (2012), it was determined that the consistency and cohesion of the texts written by the students and/or pre-service teachers were generally not good. In the present study, where the narrative texts written by middle school students were investigated for consistency, it was concluded that the number of texts that could be accepted as fully consistent was very low.

The present study findings demonstrated that the consistency of the texts written by 8th grade students were better when compared to those written by 5th grade students. Jin (2011) analyzed the levels of the texts written by the Chinese who were learning English and concluded that the written texts of the advanced level students were better. This finding demonstrated that as the level of education increased, the level of consistency in written texts increased as well. The study findings demonstrated that the authors jumped from one event to another, references were made to an unrelated individual, and these sections were mostly irrational. Bae (2001) reached similar conclusions in another research. According to Bae (2001), children who learn English mostly make mistakes in references. This is also among the common consistency and coherence mistakes of students whose mother tongue is Turkish. The present study also demonstrated the events changed suddenly in the texts written by the students and the course of the event changed suddenly. This finding was consistent with the findings reported by Çeçen (2011) and Tiryaki & Mengüllüoğlu (2016).

The present study findings demonstrated that the middle school students experienced problems in writing on a particular topic and could not express the event in writing. According to a study conducted by Ercan Güven (2019), students created more successful texts when they were free to choose the topic. Malgwi (2015) also reported similar findings. In studies conducted by Bayburtlu (2019) and Ercan Güven (2019), consistency problems experienced by the students included inconsistency between the text and the topic, formation of irrelevant sentences, illogical sequence of sentences, sudden changes in the course of events, sudden transitions and narration of events in a consecutive manner in a short text, contradictions and illogical events between the text sections, inability to reflect the relations between events already considered by the author in the text, lack of a narrative focus, divergence of text from narrative features, lack of an effective introduction, and lack of a main idea/ lack of auxiliary ideas. Similar mistakes were observed in the present study.

The analysis of the consistency of the narrative texts written by the study participants demonstrated that it was possible to mention a plan, topic and links in the texts; however, it was concluded that certain problems had a negative effect on the structure of these text. Furthermore, it was concluded that although the students did not experience problems in visualizing the requested text, they experienced serious problems in transferring these ideas into written texts on a regular basis. This was determined due to the fact that the events in the texts were diverse, but these events were not related to one another. These problems that students experienced when transforming their ideas into text were due to the lack of text creation skills.

The findings on the first research problem "What are the consistency problems observed in middle school student narrative texts?" demonstrated that the authors could imagine but could not transfer the associations between the events to the text, there were sudden changes in the course of events in the text and sudden transitions between the events, there were contradictions and illogical changes between the textual sections, there was no conclusion, the authors confused certain protagonists, and were unable to identify the original protagonist.

The findings on the second research problem "What are the consistency levels in middle school student narrative texts and which factors positively or negatively affect these levels?" are presented in tables. The review of the tables where the findings on the second research problem were presented demonstrated that the students experienced various problems in creating narrative texts and the most important of these problems was the construct and inability to write about the event in an orderly manner. Furthermore, it was concluded that several events were mixed in the texts written by the students, which led to complex and incomprehensible events. Furthermore, it was determined that students experienced various problems in organizing these events. In brief, it was determined that the students experienced problems in writing about the events in detail and presenting the events in a logical order.

The findings on the third research problem "What are the consistency levels in middle school student narrative texts based on the analysis rubric?" demonstrated that 7 texts were not acceptable as a text, 12 were accepted as developmental stage texts, 9 were partially acceptable as texts, 8 were accepted as successful texts, and 4 were accepted as creative texts. Thus, it was determined that the consistency of the narrative texts written by the students was mostly at the textual development stage.

In general, excluding the very good texts, it was determined that the majority of the students experienced consistency problems in the texts they wrote. Thus, paying attention to the following points could allow the student to write quality narrative texts and contribute to the integrity of the texts:

The determination of the student level at the beginning of the instruction process, which is an important principle in education, plays an important role in understanding the improvement after the instruction process. A level determination application that Turkish language teachers would conduct with the students during the first days of education could guide future writing studies. This would serve as a guide for the acquisition of basic skills (topic, plan, construction, and integrity in writing) by the students.

Written exams are applications where the teacher can clearly observe the writing levels of the students. Encouraging students to participate in regional and national competitions could also contribute to the integrity and consistency of the texts written by the students.

In addition to the reading hours commonly implemented in schools, practical writing hours could be organized for the students to acquire writing habit. In particular, the analysis of the texts written by students for consistency in front of the whole class and presentation of the strengths and weaknesses in these texts could contribute to more consistent narrative texts.

It was observed that most studies on consistency were conducted with descriptive and content analysis on written documents. The present study was similarly based on descriptive analysis of written documents. Thus, future action research could be conducted on consistency.

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