THE EFFECTS OF WRITING ACTIVITIES ON L2 VOCABULARY LEARNING

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The Effects of Writing Activities on L2 Vocabulary Learning

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
- this is a true copy of the thesis approved by my advisor and thesis committee at Boğaziçi University, including final revisions required by them.

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ABSTRACT

The Effects of Writing Activities on L2 Vocabulary Learning

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of writing activities on story-based vocabulary learning. In total, 104 students from the 5th grades at a secondary school participated in the study. In order to conduct the study, 80 vocabulary items were selected randomly from four graded books. In the experimental group, 50 participants read the stories in the class and then performed the writing activities including the target vocabulary items. In the control group, 54 participants read the same stories; however, this group worked with word cards instead of writing activities. The study lasted 9 weeks, including four weeks of the readings and activities sessions. The results were compared through a pre-test and a post-test which were adapted from the Cambridge Starters Exam. The findings suggest that the experimental group who did the writing activities in addition to the stories outperformed the control group who only worked on the words through the stories. Moreover, the results also show that the control and experimental groups developed their knowledge of L2 vocabulary further. Overall, this study also has implications for the use of graded readers in vocabulary learning.

ÖZET

Yazma Etkinliklerinin İkinci Dilde Kelime Öğrenimine Etkileri

Bu çalışmanın amacı, yazma etkinliklerinin hikaye temelli kelime öğrenimi üzerindeki etkilerini araştırmaktır. Çalışmaya bir ortaokulda 5. sınıfa giden toplamda 104 öğrenci katılmıştır. Çalışma için dört basamaklı okuma kitabından 80 adet kelime rastgele seçilmiştir. Deney grubundaki 50 öğrenci hikayeleri okuduktan sonra hedef kelimelerle ilgili yazma etkinliklerini yapmıştır. Kontrol grubundaki 54 öğrenci ise aynı hikayeleri okumuş ancak bu grup yazma etkinlikleri yerine kelime kartlarıyla çalışmıştır. Dört hafta süren okuma ve etkinlik süresiyle beraber çalışmanın tamamı dokuz hafta sürmüştür. Cambridge Starters Exam'den uyarlanan ön-test ve son-test sonuçları karşılaştırılmıştır. Çalışma kapsamında elde edilen sonuçlara göre, her iki grupta yer alan öğrenciler kelime öğrenimi açısından gelişme kaydetmiştir, ancak okumaya ek olarak yazma etkinliği yapan deney grubu hedeflenen kelime öğrenimi bakımından sadece hikaye okuyan kontrol grubundan daha yüksek sonuçlar almıştır. Bu çalışmanın ayrıca basamaklı okuma kitaplarının kelime öğreniminde kullanımı konusunda da çıkarımları bulunmaktadır.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge of vocabulary has been regarded as one of the main indicators of language proficiency. In order to communicate in the second language (L2), sufficient vocabulary knowledge is necessary. A good amount of vocabulary knowledge is a key to achieve sufficient level of L2 proficiency (De Groot, 2012; Mulder, Van de Ven, Segers, & Verhoeven, 2019).

Vocabulary knowledge is also of high importance in language learning and teaching, lack of which is considered to be one of the main obstacles leading to difficulties, mistakes, and problems in the learning process of the L2 (Meara, 1982; Laufer, 1986; Henning, 1973). To this end, as an essential component, vocabulary development has long received considerable attention both in L2 learning and teaching (Levenston, 1979; McCarthy, 1984; Maiguashca, 1993).

Words, which are the main indicators of vocabulary knowledge, are acquired gradually (Carter, 1992; Schmitt, 2000). Given its complex and incremental nature, knowing a word means much more than its inherent meaning (Nation, 1990, 2001; Richards, 1976; Oxford & Scarcella, 1994; Faerch, Hasstrup, & Philipson, 1984). For Nation (1990, 2001), written form, spoken form, meaning, collocations, and associations of the word are some of the attributes of word knowledge. Oxford and Scarcella (1994), on the other hand, define knowing a word as a continuum that covers stages of knowledge of form, grammatical properties, collocates, receptive knowledge, and productive knowledge. Most researchers make a distinction between receptive and productive knowledge of words and suggest that these knowledge types require different aspects of word knowledge (Nation, 1990; Laufer &

Goldstein, 2004; Webb, 2008). Receptive word knowledge involves differentiation of the word in meaning and sound, grammatical knowledge of the word, and knowing collocations (Nation, 2001). Productive knowledge, on the other hand, is using the word productively in written and spoken language (Laufer & Goldstein, 2004). For many researchers, productive knowledge covers the underlying skills needed for receptive knowledge; in this regard, productive knowledge is considered to be the further stage in a continuum of word knowledge (Coxhead & Byrd, 2007).

The relationship between vocabulary learning and language skills has been explored by many researchers. As one of the productive language skills, writing, which is the scope of this study, is considered to contribute to language learning (Langer, 1986; Lange & Applebee, 1987; Smetanová, 2013; Cook & Singleton, 2014; Mejia-Hudson, 2016; Díaz-Larenas, Ramos-Leiva, & Ortiz-Navarrete, 2017). Much work has focused on various components of the writing skill. In particular, cognitive strategies which are used during writing such as planning, monitoring, revising, transforming knowledge, combining, selecting ideas, evaluation of written products are argued to support the learning process (Mu, 2005; Smetanová, 2013). In addition, writing is also postulated to have significant effects on vocabulary learning in the L2 (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001; Webb, 2005; Keating, 2008; Lu 2013; Rassaei, 2017; Alavinia & Rahimi; 2019). Combining the deeper processing that writing activates with lexical knowledge, it is suggested that the outcome of vocabulary learning is higher with output activities compared to input activities (Izumi, 2002; Izumi & Bigelow, 2000).

Within the scope of this study, the aim of which is to investigate the effects of writing activities on story-based vocabulary learning, four graded story books are used in this study. The selection of the words and the writing activities are based on

four stories which are level 4 of graded readers series of MM Publications. Graded readers are argued to be useful for language learners in terms of word learning and word retention. Those learners who have access to graded readers have a chance to encounter the words repeatedly, which is considered to support their learning and retention of the words (Nation, 2001). In addition, graded readers present more frequent words, make the words more salient, and provide a controlled context that is not beyond the level of learners (Schmitt, 2000; Waring & Takaki, 2003; Macalister & Webb, 2013; Allan, 2016).

Considering the close relationship between reading and writing (Lerkkanen et al., 2004; Shanahan, 2016; Wong, 2018), graded readers have provided support in the writing activities for young learners in the present study. As Hyland (2003) points out, readings are helpful in writing in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and organizational patterns. On the other hand, writing is challenging for young learners because writing requires cognitive and motor skills; consequently, writing activities in this study are designed on the basis of some guidelines by researchers. Firstly, writing activities with young learners are suggested to be simple and at the same time fun (Pinter, 2006; Scott & Ytreberg, 2004; Yangın-Ersanlı, 2010). Moreover, it is indicated that writing activities should go from simple to complex, guided to semi-guided to free activities. Such activities as copying, puzzles, gap-fills, and short diaries are offered for young learners (Graves, 1984; Byrne, 1991; Yangın-Ersanlı, 2010).

The present study attempts to explore the relationship between writing activities and vocabulary learning in the Turkish context. Secondly, as writing activities are based on 4 story books, the use of graded readers in vocabulary learning will be investigated.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the present study is to investigate the effects of writing activities in story-based vocabulary learning. The target population is the 5th grade students at a state school. This school is a pilot school in that it applies comprehensive English preparatory program, 11 hours of English per week. The participants are divided into two groups as the experimental group and the control group. Both groups are taught new words through the use of 4 story books from the graded readers series. The main difference between the two groups in terms of instruction is as follows: the experimental group practice the new words selected from the stories through a variety of writing activities, whereas the control group practice the same words with the word cards. The scores of two groups from a vocabulary test which is used both as a pre-test and post-test are compared and the findings are discussed in relation to the existing literature.

1.2 Significance of the study

As a language skill, writing has received relatively less attention in language learning and teaching in comparison to other skills. The reasons why writing is neglected are various. Firstly, writing is complex in nature, as it requires some cognitive skills such as planning, monitoring, analysis, evaluation, monitoring, memory and motor skills (Ruiz-Funes, 2015; Gillespie & Graham, 2011). Different from speaking and listening, writing also needs explicit instruction because it is not acquired naturally (Mejia-Hudson, 2016). Moreover, because of the irregularities in correspondences between spelling and pronunciation in English, writing in English requires stronger spelling and decoding skills (Farooq, Ul-Hassan, & Wahid, 2012; Khalilzade, 2014).

In terms of classroom applications, writing in the L2 is considered to be rather demanding for language learners, necessitating certain level of proficiency including spelling and decoding skills in the target language (Gilmore, 2009). As for language teachers, writing demands systematic planning, thorough analysis of learners' needs and levels, and development of materials (Hyland, 2003).

Despite all these challenges, writing has potentials for language development (Cumming, 1990). This study attempts to encourage both students and teachers to use writing activities as a tool to help vocabulary learning by attempting to investigate the contributions of writing to vocabulary learning.

The use of writing activities based on story books in the present study may inspire teachers about how to use writing activities as a teaching tool in language learning. They can adapt the activities in the study according to the level and the age of their students. As a result, they can explore the potentials of writing and both students and teachers can benefit from it.

The graded readers are also used in the current study to present the target words. There has been research in the literature that shows the contributions of graded readers to vocabulary learning (Macalister & Webb, 2013; Lee 2007). Consequently, this study can shed light on the effects of graded readers in vocabulary learning.

This study is also significant because the relationship between vocabulary learning and writing has received limited attention in the literature, most of the previous studies focusing on vocabulary learning and reading skills. Consequently, the present study can provide some useful information in the research of writing and vocabulary learning and thus contribute to the literature in terms of the effects of writing on vocabulary learning. Secondly, no studies up to date have explored the

effects of writing in vocabulary learning in the Turkish context. Hence, this study can be one of the first attempts in Turkey to the exploration of the effects of writing in vocabulary in different proficiency levels or the effects of writing in different components of a language other than vocabulary.

1.3 Overview of the thesis

Chapter 1 is an introduction chapter to the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of the existing literature on vocabulary learning, writing, relationship between writing and vocabulary learning, and the use of graded readers. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the study; research questions, participants, instruments, materials, and procedure are presented in this chapter. Chapter 4 reports the findings in relation to the research questions explored in this study. It provides information about the scores of the experimental and control groups in the pre-test and post-test and gives a comparison between and within groups. Chapter 5 presents the discussion of the results and relates them to the existing literature in the field. This final chapter is followed by implications, limitations of the study and, suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocabulary knowledge has always been an indispensable component of language acquisition. As a crucial aspect of language learning, the importance of vocabulary knowledge has long been emphasized by many researchers. Zimmerman (1997) argues that vocabulary is fundamental to language learning and has great importance for language learners. For others, vocabulary is not only an essential component in the second language (L2) learning for learners but also for teachers (Nation & Wang, 1999; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006; Waring & Takaki, 2003; Webb, 2007; Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001; Pichette, De Serres, & Lafontaine, 2012). De Groot (2012), for example, states that vocabulary knowledge enables L2 learners to comprehend tasks in reading and listening and express ideas in speaking and writing. To this end, in order to reach a sufficient level of L2 proficiency, constructing rich vocabulary knowledge is necessary (Mulder, Van de Ven, Segers, & Verhoeven, 2019).

In spite of its vital position in language learning, vocabulary was largely neglected in early research. Since the 1980s, however, vocabulary research in teaching and learning has gained importance in L2 studies (Maiguashca, 1993). Today, there seems to be a consensus among researchers that vocabulary is central to language learning and teaching (Zimmerman, 1997). A considerable number of researchers have presented the main reasons why vocabulary acquisition is an essential component in the L2 (Levenston, 1979; McCarthy, 1984; Laufer, 1986; Maiguashca, 1993). Firstly, it has been emphasized that in language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking, learners need to convey and understand the message, which requires sufficient vocabulary. In other words, a good amount of

vocabulary knowledge makes the way for effective comprehension and communication. A well-known quote from Wilkins (1972) highlights the importance of vocabulary in communication: "While without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." (Wilkins, 1972, p. 22). Secondly, given its importance in comprehension and communication, vocabulary knowledge is almost a prerequisite for both language learning and language teaching. Vocabulary learning is a long and gradual process, affected by a number of variables; the number of exposures is just one of these variables (Tongpoon, 2009). Consequently, research on lexical knowledge has a great potential to shed light on the question of how the second language can be learned in a more effective way. Thirdly, as has been pointed out by researchers, the process of vocabulary learning and lack of vocabulary knowledge may result in difficulties for L2 learners. Meara (1982), for instance, suggests that L2 learners regard vocabulary as being the greatest source of problems during the learning process. . On similar grounds, focusing on lexical errors produced by L2 learners, Laufer (1986) points out that difficulties concerning vocabulary may be more persistent than thought in language learning. Moreover, Henning suggests (1973) that the high percentage of mistakes in the compositions of L2 learners results primarily from the lack of lexical competence.

In conclusion, lack of necessary vocabulary is considered to be an obstacle for effective communication and a source of problems in language learning. Thus, research on vocabulary acquisition has gained momentum and attention since the mid-eighties. Although the need for more research has been expressed by many researchers, vocabulary now constitutes one of the most significant research areas in the L2 learning literature.

It should be noted from the outset that research on vocabulary acquisition has undergone a substantial development and throughout this process the word has been the main focus of the research. Defined as a distinct meaningful unit of a language, it is the main indicator of vocabulary knowledge (Carter, 1992). Starting with this idea, the following section will define what it means to know a word and present the main perspectives in knowing a word.

2.1 Knowing a word

Vocabulary is an indispensible part of language learning and it is complex in nature. Words are not acquired easily on their first encounter; rather it takes time to acquire words especially in the second language. According to Schmitt (2000), this incremental nature of vocabulary acquisition is observable and there are different degrees of knowing a word. For Schmitt (2000), learners can recognize a word in written texts or conversations but they may not be able to produce the same word while speaking or writing. What this suggests is that comprehension of words usually precedes their production. Using a word productively requires the knowledge of spoken and written output patterns. For example, a young learner may have the knowledge of the word ‘spaghetti’ but only produce ‘stigli’ in his/her production (Nation, 2001, p. 43).

Knowing a word includes the knowledge of form and meaning. In a detailed study, Nation (1990, p. 31) lists the following characteristics of knowledge of a word:

- Meaning of the word: word meaning and the underlying meanings of the target word;
- Written form: the knowledge of how the word is spelled correctly;

- Spoken form: the pronunciation of the word;
- Grammatical characteristics: the knowledge of in what patterns the word can be used;
- Collocations: words which are used frequently together with the target word; for example the word ‘too’ often collocates with ‘much’.
- Register constraints: the appropriate time and context that the target word can be used; for example some words or expressions such as idioms or phrasal verbs may be more appropriate for the informal contexts.
- Frequency: the knowledge of how often the target word is used; for example the word ‘student’ is more frequent word than ‘disciple’.
- Associations: the knowledge of what other words can be used instead of the target word or what other words this word makes us think of; for example the word ‘table’ often associates with the word ‘chair’ (Nation, 1990, p. 31).

As can be seen in Nation’s list above, learners need to know various aspects of a word to use it; knowing meaning and form connection is not sufficient. From a similar perspective, Coxhead (2007) and Zhong (2018) also argue that knowing a word involves many components that are needed to be incorporated in order for learners to use the word appropriately in a context. On similar grounds, Richards (1976) claims that there are seven components of knowing a word. These components are frequency, register, collocation, morphology, semantics, polysemy, and mother tongue equivalent. It should be noted that the sequence of these components in word knowledge; however, is not strict (Hulstijn, 2001). For Schmitt (2000), different types of word knowledge are not acquired at the same time; some of them may be acquired earlier or later than others. Mastering them all at the same

time and at the same rate is not possible. A learner's use of a word in spoken language does not mean that he/she can spell the word. In this regard vocabulary acquisition is gradual and incremental in nature (Schmitt, 2000).

Moreover, Oxford and Scarcella (1994) define knowing a word as a continuum that covers receptive and productive word knowledge. This continuum starts from knowing the word's form, the grammatical properties of the word, the collocates, the dictionary meaning of the word, receptive knowledge and finally reaching to the productive use of the word. Similarly, Faerch, Hasstrup and Philipson (1984) suggest that the continuum starts with an unclear familiarity of a word and ends up with using the word correctly. For Nation (1990, 2001) and Schmitt (2000), knowing a word is also a continuum and they make a distinction between receptive and productive knowledge in this continuum. The notion of continuum here refers to the view that receptive knowledge of vocabulary generally precedes productive knowledge although it is also stated that increase in the amount of receptive and productive knowledge goes parallel (Laufer & Paribakht, 1998). According to Laufer and Paribakht (1998), learners' receptive vocabulary is larger than their productive vocabulary but learners with high receptive knowledge also have high productive knowledge. As the current study investigates the influence of writing on vocabulary learning, receptive and productive knowledge of words will be examined in detail in the sub-section 2.2.

In terms of knowing a word, Henriksen (1999) suggests three dimensions of lexical competence in the second language (L2); (i) partial to precise knowledge, (ii) depth of knowledge, and (iii) receptive to productive knowledge. In partial to precise knowledge, knowledge includes translation of lexical items into the first language (L1), finding the right definitions of them in a multiple choice task, or paraphrasing

them in the target language. Depth of knowledge refers to the deep understanding of the word meaning. In other words, it means how well a person knows the word. Depth of knowledge comprises various aspects of knowledge of words such as word meanings, collocations, multiple meanings of a word, the use of a word in different contexts (Li & Kirby, 2015). Qian (2002) and Read (2004) also suggest that depth of knowledge covers phonological, morphological, orthographic, semantic, syntactic, collocational, and pragmatic properties of a word. Lastly in receptive to productive knowledge, word knowledge requires both receptive and productive use of the word and it should be tested in both ways.

Although there have been many ideas concerning knowing a word, there is a consensus that it is a continuum including aspects (Nation, 1990) and dimensions (Henriksen, 1999) which are acquired over time. As the current study focuses on the relationship between vocabulary knowledge of secondary school students and their writing skills, the next section will elaborate on receptive and productive knowledge of words.

2.2 Receptive and productive knowledge of words

In regard to the distinction between receptive and productive word learning, Nation (1990) discusses what is involved in learning a word. For him, both learning types require learners to know different dimensions of word knowledge. In receptive learning, learners need to recognize a word and remember its meaning. In order to do this, learners should be able to differentiate the word in form and sound. Clearly, grammatical knowledge of the word is necessary for receptive knowledge. That is, after hearing or seeing a word, a learner's prediction of the possible grammatical patterns in which the word may be used is accounted as receptive knowledge. For

instance, the knowledge that certain nouns are always singular shows the receptive knowledge. In addition, according to Nation (1990), receptive knowledge also includes knowing collocations of the words and understanding the appropriate choice of word according to the context. In parallel with Nation's (1990) idea of passive word knowledge, Laufer and Goldstein (2004) state that it is the ability to comprehend word form and meaning. On similar grounds, Webb (2008) defines receptive knowledge as an ability to perceive the meaning of the word or supply a synonym or the L1 translation for the word.

As for productive vocabulary knowledge, Nation (1990) suggests that it covers the skills needed for receptive knowledge and in addition, the ability to use the word in spoken and written language. Namely, pronunciation of the word, spelling, using the word in a correct grammatical pattern, collocations of the words, using the word in an appropriate context are involved in productive knowledge. As for Webb (2008, 2009), productive word knowledge is to retrieve the form and meaning when needed and produce the word when the L1 translation is given. According to Laufer and Goldstein (2004), active word knowledge is the ability to use the word appropriately in spoken or written form. It should be noted that the terms receptive and productive word knowledge are used interchangeably with active and passive word knowledge by many researchers (Laufer & Goldstein, 2004; Laufer, 1998; Meara, 1990).

While comparing receptive and productive knowledge of words, researchers suggest that acquiring productive knowledge is more burdensome (Nation, 2000). According to Ellis and Beaton (1993), learners need to get familiar with the new spoken and written output of L2 in productive knowledge, which requires extra learning. In receptive knowledge, on the other hand, it is sufficient to know the

distinctive features of the word. Coxhead and Byrd (2007) suggest that receptive knowledge is the former stage for productive knowledge and learners need many exposures to transfer their receptive knowledge to productive knowledge. Moreover, accumulated knowledge about the aspects of the word such as word families and collocations is necessary for productive knowledge. Consequently, productive knowledge is regarded as more demanding in terms of its underlying features during the learning process.

The use of receptive or productive knowledge can also change according to the needs of the learners (Nation, 2001). Schmitt (2010) points out that different language skills are linked with different types of word knowledge. For example, receptive knowledge is taken to be more related to reading and listening. Productive knowledge, on the other hand, is more related with speaking and writing skills. If reading and comprehension of a passage or listening to a lecture are the main goals of the learners, receptive knowledge will be needed and sufficient for the learners. However, if the learner aims at speaking or writing a paragraph, he/she will need to have productive knowledge. Kim (2013) highlights the importance of making a distinction among the skills that learners aim for. Accordingly, instead of focusing on four language skills at the same time, it is meaningful to develop skill-specific strategies for language learners in order to know whether receptive or productive knowledge will be necessary for these skills (Kim, 2013).

As can be seen from the discussion up to this point, researchers suggest that receptive and productive knowledge require different aspects of knowing a word (form, meaning, collocations, and word families). Moreover, they are associated with different language skills.

Given the scope of this study which has mainly two components; vocabulary and writing, the remaining part of this dissertation will focus more on vocabulary learning with special reference to writing skills in ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language)contexts.

2.3 Writing in ESL and EFL

Writing is an essential aspect of modern life in today's world; central to personal experience, careers, and social identities. We are always evaluated by the appropriate use of literacy skills in various contexts (Hyland, 2011). Writing is a type of language skill that helps learners express their ideas, attitudes or beliefs with a certain graphical system (Smetanová, 2013). Everything on a paper or computer can be counted as writing; the child's first attempts to write his/her name, shopping lists or emails. Writing can occur in a variety of conditions such as the need to inform somebody, expressing ideas, school tasks, or just for pleasure (Yangın-Ersanlı, 2010). On similar grounds, as Hyland (2011) points out, writing is purposeful and communicative activity which is formed according to demands and expectations of writers.

Writing is also indispensable in ESL and EFL contexts, being one of the four language skills in addition to reading, listening, and speaking. It has always received considerable attention in studies dealing with curriculum development and language teaching. In the majority of the work on writing, researchers have had two main dimensions of L2 writing (Manchón, 2011). The first dimension is to learn writing to express things in the target language. This is known as learning to write. The second dimension is to use writing as a tool to contribute to language proficiency in a variety of domains such as vocabulary, knowledge of grammar, or other skills. This is

known as writing to learn. As this dissertation investigates the effects of writing activities in vocabulary learning, the writing to learn dimension will be the main focus of the study. Although participants develop their writing skills via writing activities during the study, the main purpose is to explore the use of writing activities in vocabulary learning. Consequently, the next sub-section will present the importance of writing in learning.

2.3.1 The importance of writing and its contributions to language learning

Writing plays a very important role in the development process of a person no matter which background or talent the learner has. Writing is not just communicating knowledge but also a tool itself to reach knowledge (Mejia-Hudson, 2016). The idea that writing contributes to learning made a start in the contemporary research with the article of Emig (1977) entitled 'Writing as a Mode of Learning' (as cited in Hirvela, 2011). In her article, Emig proposes that the process-product feature of writing is unique and matches with powerful learning strategies. In addition to the process-product feature of writing, writing includes rethinking, revising, and reformulating of knowledge, which makes writing an effective tool in learning (Langer, 1986). In one of the earliest comprehensive study, Langer and Applebee (1987) put forward that writing promotes learning in three ways by making learners: (i) gain necessary information about the content, (ii) revise and consolidate the previous knowledge, (iii) reformulate the ideas. In a similar vein, McGinley and Tierney (1989) state that writing is valuable in that it leads to exploration and reexamination of ideas. These features that writing includes such as rethinking, revising, reformulation, and gaining necessary knowledge are some of the strategies that learners use in the process of writing.

In relation to the strategies needed for writing, Mu (2005) argues that writers use meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies while writing. Meta-cognitive strategies are self-regulations of learners' cognitive procedures. They refer to self-awareness and self-management of their cognition, including planning, monitoring, and revising (Mu, 2005). These strategies help learners have a control on their learning, monitor their own progress, and lead their own learning, all of which ultimately contribute to the learning process (Díaz-Larenas, Ramos-Leiva, & Ortiz-Navarrete, 2017). Cognitive strategies, on the other hand, help learners process, store, and transform knowledge to produce writing tasks by using the language effectively (Mu, 2005). Organizing information, reading aloud, analyzing, and summarizing are some of the cognitive strategies suggested by Oxford (2011). In addition, Smetanová (2013) states that searching for key information, getting information from a text, outlining, combining, selecting ideas, and evaluation of a written product are also important cognitive strategies that support the learning process. According to Díaz-Rodríguez (2014), meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies work together and depend on each other. They also support development in learning by making learners monitor and control their own learning (Cook & Singleton, 2014).

Apart from its importance in learning, writing is also significant in second/foreign language learning. There has been considerable research showing that writing helps students learn a second language (Williams, 2012; Ortega, 2012; Manchón, 2011; Williams, 2008; Raimes, 1983).

In the early nineties, Cumming (1990) called attention to composition writing. For him, composition writing is a psycholinguistic output condition in which learners need to analyze and consolidate their second language knowledge. For Cumming, form-meaning relations become more noticeable in composition writing,

resulting in more control over linguistic knowledge. Similarly, Williams (2008) asserts that writing encourages general linguistic proficiency. According to Swain and Lapkin (2002) with the help of reprocessing function of writing tasks, the knowledge on the use of the L2 is built by the learners. Moreover, Cumming (1990) and Swain and Lapkin (1995) shared the same idea that generating new linguistic knowledge and control over linguistic knowledge are encouraged by individual writing because of its problem-solving nature. Similarly, Ortega (2012) puts forward that because of the problem solving nature of writing, writing encourages language learning and its development. On similar grounds, Williams (2012) argues that writing contributes to language learning due to its unique features such as attention to language forms, which force learners to use more precise linguistic forms. Moreover, Manchón (2011) mentions that while writing, students are involved in learning processes such as noticing, formulation of linguistic forms and functions, producing and deciding among linguistic choices. Niu (2009) concluded that writing makes learners be careful about grammar and discourse features, including sentence structure, connection, and paragraphing.

In regard to the depth of processing, various studies have explored its relationship with writing. It has been put forward by many researchers that writing leads to deeper processes on the part of language learners, resulting in better learning outcomes. To exemplify, Qi and Lapkin (2001) propose that learning gains are positively affected by the depth of processing provided by writing. Also, Izumi (2002) and Izumi and Bigelow (2000) found that compared to the input learning condition, the output learning condition gives better results in learning discrete grammatical forms. Izumi (2002) explains that the output activates deeper and elaborate processing of the form, which results in long-lasting memory trace because

they make learners produce the output which is more effective in vocabulary learning than the activities that only provide input.

Studies focusing more on the relationship between writing and vocabulary learning also indicate that writing as a tool has a positive impact on vocabulary learning. In an early study, Coomber, Ramstad, and Sheets (1986) explain why writing can be effectively used for vocabulary learning. They suggest that writing enables learners to use the words in a meaningful context. In addition, while writing, learners are required to use higher levels of cognitive functions, which pave the way for vocabulary learning. Lastly, writing is a useful tool to learn vocabulary, because it allows more time for learners to elaborate (Coomber, Ramstad & Sheets, 1986).

Comparing the contribution of writing with other skills and tasks, Webb (2005) states that writing one original sentence with each target word is more influential than reading three sentences. In a similar vein, Laufer (2014) suggests that learners' handling with the words is more significant than just encountering them regardless of the number of times they see the words. In a study which compares the effects of sentence making, composition writing, and cloze tests on vocabulary learning, Talebzade and Bagheri (2012) found a relationship between vocabulary learning and task types of writing; the group which dealt with writing a composition was significantly better in vocabulary learning than sentence making and cloze tests. According to Talebzade and Bagheri (2012), writing with attention to vocabulary leads to improvement in the target language.

To conclude from the studies in language learning reviewed so far, the writing skill can be used as a tool to promote foreign language learning by making learners perceive the differences between the target language and the first language, developing the ability to think and express in the target language. As mentioned

previously, while writing, learners are required to use a variety of cognitive strategies including repeating, organization of ideas, making decisions, making a summary of provided input in listening or reading, guessing the meaning from the context, recalling the needed words, and creating (Smetanová, 2013). Due to the rich nature of such cognitive strategies used in writing, writing is argued to be significant in language learning and more specifically in vocabulary learning, both of which are at the core of the current study.

The next sub-section will present a detailed review of studies which focus on the relationship between vocabulary learning and the written output, with special reference to the major hypotheses addressed in this area.

2.3.2 Vocabulary learning and its connection to output

There has been a large body of research investigating the second language vocabulary learning from many aspects, some of which offer conflicting ideas relating to the effective ways of vocabulary teaching. Harris and Snow (2004), for example, argue that only a small proportion of vocabulary can be taught explicitly in classrooms; vocabulary should be learned incidentally with the help of extensive reading. Milton (2009), on the other hand, suggests that learners need vocabulary learning activities, with a specific focus on explicit teaching of vocabulary. Closely related to the current study, another crucial area concerns the effects of input or output on vocabulary learning. Although Krashen (1989) holds the idea that vocabulary is mainly acquired while reading through comprehension, there is evidence from various research which suggests that input is necessary for vocabulary acquisition but it is not sufficient alone. De la Fuente (2002) emphasizes that learners need output activities to pay attention and notice the new words in the input. Output

activities are vocabulary development activities which encourage learners to use newly learnt vocabulary in a productive way (Lee & Van Patten, 2003). As this dissertation investigates the influence of writing activities on vocabulary learning, output activities in this study refer to writing activities on word-level, sentence-level, and very short paragraph-level. Given the scope of this dissertation, the next section will present some studies examining the effects of output activities and more specifically writing activities on vocabulary learning.

A well-known hypothesis in terms of the contributions of output activities in vocabulary learning is Laufer and Hulstijn's Involvement Load Hypothesis (2001). This hypothesis puts forward the idea that involvement load of word knowledge is a determining factor in vocabulary learning. In other words, the more learners are involved in the word learning task, the more vocabulary learning occurs. The involvement load is dependent on three features; (i) need, (ii) search, and (iii) evaluation. Need is the motivation to complete a given task, which can be both intrinsic and extrinsic. Search is the effort to find the meaning and form of the word. Evaluation, on the other hand, is generating an original context which also includes choosing the suitable form and meaning. In their study, Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) compared three conditions; (i) reading comprehension with glosses, (ii) reading comprehension with a gap filling activity, and (iii) composition writing with target words. There was no involvement of the participants in the first activity, there was moderate involvement in the second activity, and a strong involvement in the third activity. The results of their study indicated that composition writing was the most influential task in vocabulary learning and retention, which was followed by reading comprehension with a gap filling activity. Accordingly, Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) pointed out that words which are processed with higher involvement load are learned

and retained better when compared to the words which are processed with lower involvement load.

On similar grounds, in the research of involvement loads of a variety of tasks, some researchers such as Pichette, de Serres, and Lafontaine (2012) and Laufer and Rozovski-Roitblat (2011) found that as the involvement load of writing tasks is higher, writing results in better learning of vocabulary. Sharing similar ideas, Nation (2001) has a chart in his book summarizing the tasks and involvement loads. (- = no involvement load, + = moderate involvement load, ++ = strong involvement load)

As can be seen in Table 1, output activities, in particular written output activities, increase involvement load, which pave the way for better learning of vocabulary. The Involvement Load Hypothesis (2001) supports the idea that vocabulary learning can be promoted more with written output activities compared to input activities such as reading only, reading with glosses, or reading followed by gap filling.

This view also complies with another important hypothesis known as the Output Hypothesis proposed by Swain (1985). Although its main focus is not on vocabulary learning, the Output Hypothesis sheds light on the role of output in language learning. Concluding from her observations of students who attended long-term French immersion programs, Swain (1985) states that the students could not reach native-like level in production skills especially in relation to grammatical accuracy. She further asserts that although the students were exposed to input, it was not sufficient for them to master native-like performance. For Swain (1985), students need more opportunities to produce the target language to achieve native-like proficiency because output can serve as a tool to help learners find the gaps in their

vocabulary knowledge and with the help of output, they can try to produce correct forms for their next use.

Table 1. Tasks and Amount of Involvement for Vocabulary Learning (Nation, 2001, p. 71)

TASK	NEED	SEARCH	EVALUATION
Reading with questions. Words glossed are not relevant to the task	–	–	–
Reading with questions. Words glossed are relevant to the task	+	–	–
Reading with questions. Needed words are looked up.	+	+	–
Read and fill in given words.	+	–	+
Write sentences using given words	+	–	++
Writing a composition	++	++	++

Among a number of studies that investigate the effects of output activities on vocabulary learning, Webb (2005) compared the comprehension and production based vocabulary learning activities in data from Japanese EFL students. The participants were assigned to two conditions: (i) writing novel sentences and (ii) reading sentences with glossary. The results indicated that writing novel sentences with target vocabulary was more influential in the retention of target words than reading sentences with the glossed target vocabulary. Webb (2005) claims that contextualized learning tasks such as writing sentences contribute to meaning and form knowledge of words.

In order to test the effects of involvement loads of tasks on word learning and retention, Keating (2008) investigated three types of tasks in the data from beginner level Spanish learners of English; i) reading comprehension (no effort), ii) reading comprehension with gap filling (moderate effort), and iii) sentence writing (strong effort). The results showed that sentence writing resulted in better vocabulary learning, which is in line with the Involvement Load Hypothesis (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). Keating (2008) postulates that a higher involvement load results in more effective initial and delayed vocabulary learning.

In a similar vein, Nassaji and Tian (2010) investigated two types of written output activities to find out their effects on learning phrasal verbs in English. The participants were low-intermediate adult ESL learners in Canada. The researchers set two conditions in the study. In the first condition, the participants were asked to fill in the text with target phrasal verbs. In the second condition, they were required to edit incorrect verbs and rewrite phrases. According to the results of the study, the group that edited the incorrect verbs and rewrote the phrases achieved higher scores

in terms of vocabulary learning. Nassaji and Tian (2010) point out the potential value of editing tasks in language learning.

On similar grounds, Lu (2013) designed a study investigating the influence of four types of written output activities on L2 vocabulary learning. The participants were 10th and 11th grade Taiwanese students at a vocational school and were assigned to four written output activities. The written output activities in the study were (i) a single gap filling activity, (ii) a triple gap filling activity (participants needed to use the target words three times), (iii) summarizing with the target words, iv) gap filling in the summary of the text with the target words. The results of the study indicated that the groups of a triple gap filling activity and gap filling in the summary outperformed the single gap filling activity and summarizing activity in terms of vocabulary learning. Lu (2013) puts forward that output activities help L2 vocabulary development.

Similarly, Marmol and Sanchez-Lafunte (2013) studied the effects of different task types in primary school ESL learners; (i) reading comprehension with glosses, (ii) reading comprehension and gap filling, (iii) writing with glosses, and (iv) writing with dictionary use. According to the results of the study, vocabulary learning was best promoted by output tasks; writing with dictionary use was found to be the most effective for primary school ESL students in Spain. Thus, Marmol and Sanchez-Lafunte (2013) state that the tasks with the highest involvement load contribute to the L2 vocabulary learning the most.

In addition, Rassaei (2017) explored the effects of three forms of output activities on EFL learners' recognition and recall of L2 vocabulary. The participants were students at a foreign language teaching program in Iran. In the study, three output activities were administered: (i) summarizing the text and including the target

vocabulary in the summary, (ii) producing several comprehension questions from the text and answering them by using the target vocabulary, (iii) making predictions about what will occur in the text, including the target vocabulary in the prediction. The results revealed that participants improved their target vocabulary in three forms of output activities; however, making predictions and making/answering comprehension questions were found to be more influential than summarizing. Accordingly, Rassaei (2017) asserts that learners' production helps development of vocabulary knowledge. Especially output tasks that require reconstructing information such as making predictions about a text have long term effects on vocabulary acquisition.

In a recent study, Alavinia and Rahimi (2019) also examined the task type effects on L2 vocabulary learning. Iranian ELT students in an academic reading course participated in the study. The researchers included (i) writing (semantically and grammatically acceptable sentences based on readings), (ii) combining (split sentences), (iii) filling in (with given target words), and (iv) definition tasks (writing the target words which correspond to definitions); the design of the tasks was based on Laufer and Hulstijn's Involvement Load Hypothesis (2001). The results indicated that writing and definition tasks as output tasks were more effective in receptive and productive vocabulary learning. Alavinia and Rahimi (2019) conclude that the involvement load of tasks affects vocabulary learning and retention positively and state that writing tasks particularly contribute to the extension of vocabulary knowledge.

In sum, there have been many studies which indicate the correlation between vocabulary learning and output activities (Swain, 1985; Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001; Webb, 2005; Lu, 2013; Rassaei; 2017; Alavinia & Rahimi, 2019). Output activities

are considered to have higher involvement loads and consequently, lead to better development of vocabulary knowledge as opposed to input activities. Overall, output activities can be used effectively to make learners produce the language, see the gaps in their knowledge, and learn the correct forms. In an attempt to choose the suitable form and meaning for the given context, learners may have a chance to work on different aspects of the word knowledge.

Given the scope of the current study on the relationship between vocabulary learning and writing skills, the next sub-section will focus on writing in language learning classrooms.

2.3.3 Writing as a learning tool in classrooms

As mentioned previously in Section 2.3.1, writing can be used effectively as a learning tool both generally in education and specifically in language learning and more specifically in vocabulary learning. Despite its power, writing has long been neglected in language classrooms, the potentials of which have not been explored fully by teachers (Smetanová, 2013). There are several reasons behind this, ranging from the nature of writing itself to demanding processes in application in classrooms.

Unlike speaking and listening, writing is not considered to be a part of the natural language system. The reason for this is that while speaking and listening do not require any explicit tools or coding, writing does. In order to write, you need an alphabet, literacy, pen and paper, or a computer (Mejia-Hudson, 2016). Moreover, King and Rentel (1979) argue that speaking and listening are naturally acquired because the first method of communication is the oral language. On the other hand, writing requires more advanced skills, processes and explicit instruction. Ruiz-Funes (2015) proposes that writing is a complex, cognitive phenomenon in which multiple

factors such as tasks and resources are involved. Following a similar line of thinking, Gillespie and Graham (2011) postulate that writing requires some crucial components such as strong memory, adequate attention span and specific cognitive skills such as evaluation, analysis, perceiving information. Especially for young learners, it takes time to develop their talents, motor and cognitive skills needed for writing. Apart from the writing skill itself, writing in English-like opaque languages may be more difficult for young learners because of the language particular characteristics of English. According to Farooq, Ul-Hassan, and Wahid (2012), the reason is that as English is not a transparent language and some letter combinations produce different sounds, writing in languages like English necessitates combining spelling and decoding skills with strong speaking and listening skills. Similarly, Khalilzadeh (2014) argues that because English is not a phonetic language, correspondences between spelling and pronunciation are mostly inconsistent. That is, there is not a one-to-one relationship between the letters and the sounds. Consequently, words are not spelled in the way they are pronounced. Especially learners whose first language is phonetic like Turkish experience further difficulties in writing, due to the irregularities of English (Khalilzadeh, 2014).

Writing can also be challenging in terms of classroom applications in various ways. Firstly, from the perspective of students, writing can be difficult and boring. According to Gilmore (2009), reserving its challenging nature in mind in the mother tongue, writing is perceived even more painful in the second language. Offering an explanation for why writing is disliked by students, Littlejohn (1991) states that as writing is generally used as a tool for evaluation, when students are asked to write, they think that they are evaluated but evaluation is not necessarily done for the purpose of writing.

As for language teachers, writing activities can be challenging in many ways; teachers need to plan writing activities carefully in advance, decide on many issues, such as the topic of the writing activity, what linguistic elements writing should cover, how to make students get better results and benefits from writing, the context necessary for a writing activity, and the evaluation process of the activity (Smetanová, 2013). This demanding nature of writing may be some of the reasons behind its negligence especially in crowded classrooms. In his book, Hyland (2003) points out that teachers need to develop a systematic plan for their writing classes, which necessitates a thorough planning and hard work. Firstly, they should analyze the learners' needs in terms of what the learner knows, what he/she does not know, and what he/she wants to know (Brown, 1995). Moreover, judgments, beliefs, values defined by the learner should be taken into account (Richards, 2001). In addition, the analysis of the context is needed so as to identify methods, available materials, teachers, and all other means, sometimes referred to as means analysis (Holliday and Cook, 1982). Finally, teachers are required to set precise goals and objectives for writing in order to keep students' aims, abilities, needs and institutional requirements in mind. Overall, writing puts high demands on teachers' shoulders.

Writing may also present some challenges in regard to the requirements of writing itself and the demanding processes needed in application. It may place additional and intensive effort both on students' and teachers' work load. Yet, writing still has great potentials to offer to develop learners' L2 vocabulary knowledge (Williams, 2012).

Given the scope of this study in which story books are the basis for the target words and writing activities, the next section will present a brief discussion about the relationship between reading and writing.

2.4 The relationship between reading and writing

In the present study, the main purpose is to explore the effects of writing activities on vocabulary learning. The words selected and writing activities designed for the study were based on 4 stories. These stories were used as a tool to trigger writing activities and create a content and context for the selected words and the writing activities in the study. Thus, it will be beneficial to mention the effects of reading and writing on each other. This section will present some studies showing the effects of reading on writing, effects of writing on reading, and reciprocal effects on each other.

Krashen (1993), depending on a series of research, proposes that extensive reading supports second language writing skills which cannot be acquired successfully only by writing. Reading is proved to affect writing positively especially composing skills at various stages of language development. For Carson and Leki (1993) and Grabe (2001), reading and writing comprise the use of common complex cognitive and linguistic skills, including problem-solving skills, retrieving prior knowledge of structure and content. In addition, Hyland (2003) states that reading not only provides students with the content of the subject under discussion but also makes them become knowledgeable about the rhetoric and the structure. This knowledge is used by the students to develop, modify, and activate schemata which are crucial components in writing. Hyland (2003) further explains that students' readings are really important in terms of its contributions to writing skills such as grammar, vocabulary, organizational patterns, and interactional devices.

There are numerous studies which show that reading and writing affect each other reciprocally. Although reading has received more attention than writing in

earlier studies, the mutual relationship has also gained interest in the following years (Andersen et al., 2018)

While explaining the relationship between reading and writing, Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000) and Shanahan (2016) argue that the relationship between reading and writing depends on the perspective that they draw on common knowledge and cognitive processes. This view is compatible with Carson and Leki's (1993) and Grabe's ideas (2001) discussed above. Pragmatic knowledge such as objectives of reading and writing, functions, domain knowledge in relation to content as well as vocabulary, syntax, text format, and procedural knowledge are all considered within this shared knowledge of reading and writing.

In one of the earliest studies on the reading and writing relationship conducted by Shanahan and Lomax (1986), it is suggested that for the 2nd and 5th graders, reading has an effect on writing and writing has an effect on reading, reading effects being stronger than writing effects on reading. More specifically on the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing, Lerkkanen, Rasku-Puttonen, Aunola, and Nurmi (2004) examine different reading and writing skills and their effects on each other in the first graders in Finland. The results reveal that reading predicts spelling skills and writing predicts reading performance. The researchers assert that reciprocal effects of reading and writing on each other may be determined by the ages of learners and may differ at sub-word, word-, sentence- and text-level. In a similar vein with Lerkkanen et al.'s (2004) assertion, Ahmed, Wagner, and Lopez (2014) conduct a study which examines the effects of reading and writing on each other at different levels: word-level, sentence-level, and text-level. The results indicate that for the word- and text-levels, effects of reading are higher on writing in that decoding predicts spelling skills at the word-level and reading comprehension

predicts fluency in writing compositions at the text-level. However, in the sentence-level, reading and writing sentences develop each other reciprocally because of the syntactic structures that reading and writing share (Ahmed et al., 2014). A more recent study also examines the effects of reading interventions on writing (Graham et al., 2018). The study suggests that reading instruction improves writing skills including spelling, words, writing quality. Moreover, Graham et al. (2018) argue that writing instruction focusing on sentence level, text structure, and process writing contributes to reading comprehension and fluency. Their study also indicates the reciprocal relationship of reading and writing. In another recent study, Andersen et al. (2018) investigated the development of reading and writing skills at word, sentence, and text level in the 2nd and 3rd grade primary school students in Denmark. The main purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between reading and writing in detail; so, the investigation was conducted on various levels. According to the results of the study, word-level skills of reading and writing predict higher-level skills such as sentence and text level skills, which suggest that reading and writing skills predict the development of each other. Wong (2018) also conducted a study with the 5th and 6th grade students who were learners of Chinese as a second language. In this study, Wong (2018) explored the relationship between reading and writing concurrently and longitudinally by assessing the Chinese character reading and writing, reading comprehension, writing fluency, and writing syntactic skills. The results indicated that reading and writing skills of students are considerably connected concurrently and longitudinally; literacy component skills are the main processes to connect reading and writing (Wong, 2018). The results of this study comply with the studies of Graham et al. (2018) and Andersen et al. (2018).

In sum, there has been a large body of research indicating that reading and writing, which are components of literacy skills, are related to each other in terms of sharing knowledge of pragmatics, syntax, text format, procedure (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Grabe, 2001; Carson & Leki, 1993; Lerkkanen et al., 2004; Shanahan, 2016; Wong, 2018). Their effects on each other are mostly reciprocal at different levels; word, sentence, and text levels (Ahmed et al, 2014).

The present study investigates the effects of writing activities in vocabulary learning in 5th grade middle school students (age range: 9-11) with low English proficiency. Given the scope of this study with a focus on the relationship between vocabulary development and writing, the next section will present an overview in regard to the types of writing activities recommended for young learners.

2.4.1 Writing activities used with young learners of English

As has been emphasized repeatedly in the previous sections, writing is an essential component of modern life both in young children and adults. Individuals are exposed to written language everywhere on a daily basis. Even young children systematically see written texts everywhere in their linguistic environment. Yangın-Ersanlı (2010) elaborates on this issue in her book chapter and states that by the time they arrive in the kindergarten, young learners become familiar with writing in some ways in the form of reading labels. At the same time, they become aware of the nature, use and the value of writing. However, when it comes to teaching writing to young children, it can be demanding for this group of learners, precisely because writing requires additional motor and cognitive skills. For this reason, with this group of learners writing should be simple and kept at a minimum stage; writing tasks should include fun and play. Some activities suggested by Yangın-Ersanlı (2010) are joining the

dots to form a word, labeling objects with given words already, making copies of dialogues, poems, songs, completing crosswords with given pictures, writing recipes or postcards (Yangın-Ersanlı, 2010).

Another list of suggested activities with young learners comes from Pinter (2006) who suggests that writing comprises complex processing skills, so it should start from the level of copying words and then reach to a state where learners become aware of text structures, genres, drafting, editing and writing for audience. With the mechanical basics of writing, it is more efficient for young learners to start with copying. Word snakes, puzzles, gap-fill exercises, matching pictures with words and sentences, preparing shopping lists, and simple diaries are among the activities offered by Pinter (2006).

Moreover, Scott and Ytreberg (2004) discuss writing activities used with young learners of English in class settings. While stating that writing exercises vary from controlled activities to free activities, they suggest that it is useful to use controlled activities with beginners without completely excluding simple free activities. Copying, matching, organization of sentences according to a given text or meaning, fill-in exercises, letters, invitations are some of the writing activities suggested for teachers.

In addition, Graves (1984) argues that for the first grade children, writing activities should cover writing captions, copying, placing words and writing simple sentences. On similar grounds, Pica (1999) notes that writing for beginner students should go from simple sentences to writing complex sentences. Byrne (1991) also proposes writing activities like copying, practicing with words, practicing with sentences, and some creative writing. In sum, as can be seen from the previous studies so far, writing activities usually proceed from simple to complex in classroom

practices and writing as a productive language skill is generally kept to a minimum level in teaching.

Writing activities in the current study were designed on the basis of graded readers; so, the next sub-section will present the use of graded readers in vocabulary learning.

2.4.2 The use of graded readers in vocabulary learning

The relationship between vocabulary learning and reading has been researched widely by many researchers through a large number of studies (Kinsella, 2014; Laufer & Rozovski-Roitblat, 2011; Krashen, 2004; Schmitt & Carter 2000). Graded readers, within the area of narrow reading, are useful tools which develop not only reading skills but also vocabulary knowledge of learners (Nation & Wang, 1999). They are increasingly used with various age and level groups of learners (Allan, 2016). Given the nature of this study which makes use of graded readers to present new words and create a context for writing activities, it will be useful to review some perspectives on the use of graded readers in language learning.

Nation (2001) defines graded readers as complete books that have been prepared specifically with strictly limited vocabulary. These books are generally grouped into various levels, each grade including a specific number of words. For instance, Oxford Bookworm series Level 1 includes 400 words. In MM publications graded books of which are used for this study, Level 4 includes 250 headwords for each book.

Graded readers can contribute to language development in various ways, one of which is associated with vocabulary development. First of all, vocabulary in graded readers is presented in a controlled context. As the word number is limited

and learners are familiar with some words already, the learning burden of the remaining words is not high. Remaining words can be learned via guessing from the context or dictionary use. Secondly, encountering previously met words result in word retrieval, which is argued to contribute vocabulary learning (Nation, 2001).

Schmitt (2000) also agrees with Nation (2001) in that graded readers are influential tools in vocabulary learning and they should not be ignored in language teaching. For Schmitt (2000), graded readers can support learners with limited vocabulary knowledge. The major reason he discusses is that native oral and written discourse include a wide range of vocabulary that may be too complex for the learners; graded readers make some words more salient paving the way for vocabulary learning. Finally, in regard to the benefits of graded readers, Schmitt (2000) also states that graded readers are important means of vocabulary expansion, providing chances to learn from the context and improving dictionary using skills. Like Nation (2001), he discusses that in graded readers, words that are partially known are encountered repeatedly, which in turn contributes to vocabulary learning. In addition to Nation (2001) and Schmitt (2000), other work has also investigated vocabulary use in graded readers and the relationship between vocabulary learning and graded readers. Some of these studies are presented below.

Allan (2016) examined the use of lexical bundles such as ‘what do you mean, for a moment, a cup of tea’ in graded readers in comparison with a corpus of authentic fiction. As a result of qualitative and quantitative comparison, Allan (2016) suggests that lexical bundles are richer in graded readers than authentic fiction. Moreover, it is stated that the use of lexical bundles reflects the authentic language; useful and important phrases are present in the graded readers.

In their corpus-driven study, Macalister and Webb (2013) compared three types of texts in extensive reading; texts written for children, texts written for language learners (graded readers), and texts written for older readers in terms of their potential to lead to incidental vocabulary learning. The analysis of the results indicates that the texts written for language learners are more suitable for extensive reading which can result in vocabulary learning. The researchers explain the effectiveness of graded readers in that graded readers provide learners with sets of word families which are high-frequent and encountered on a daily basis. Moreover, these sets of word families such as safe, safer, safely, safest, and unsafe create smaller lexical load compared to authentic texts, which helps L2 vocabulary learning.

Moreover, Lee (2007) explores the effects of graded readers on reading comprehension and vocabulary learning. In this study, three groups from university students in Taiwan were formed; the first group read graded readers and wrote the summaries of the books, the second group worked on a textbook followed by reading exercises, and the third group was encouraged to read outside the class. According to the results of a vocabulary test which was given as a pre-test and post-test, the study suggests that the first group with graded readers outperformed the second and the third group in terms of vocabulary learning.

On similar grounds, in a longitudinal study, Hsu and Lee (2009) investigated the long-term effects of graded readers on language skills including vocabulary. The experimental group received reading and writing instruction for the first year, whereas the control group received writing instruction. After the first year, the participants in the experimental group no longer had reading instruction; however, they were engaged in extensive readings in writing classes with graded readers. The control group continued their writing instruction. The results of the vocabulary tests

indicated that the experimental group who were provided with graded readers scored higher than the control group who only took writing instruction.

In sum, graded readers may be helpful in language learning in terms of developing reading skills, consolidating previously learnt vocabulary and grammar, and providing learners new vocabulary in a controlled way (Waring & Takaki, 2003) Supplying learners with an appropriate level of vocabulary helps them understand the texts, which is fun rather than a struggle for learners (Allan, 2016).

In sum, as can be seen from the discussion up to this point, vocabulary is an important component of language learning and teaching. A good amount of vocabulary knowledge is needed for effective communication in the L2 (De Groot, 2012). Vocabulary knowledge is an important issue of discussion in language teaching and has many aspects such as form, meaning, collocations, and associations which have long been addressed in language teaching (Nation, 2001). Moreover, there has been some research suggesting that vocabulary development is a continuum starting from receptive knowledge of words and ending with productive knowledge of words (Oxford and Scarcella, 1994). Closely related to the issue of receptive vs. productive knowledge, writing skills are considered to be indicators of the latter, namely, productive knowledge. In order to produce written output, learners need to have productive knowledge of words.

Given its widespread use in modern societies, writing is essential in daily life; notes, emails, messages, shopping lists are some forms of writing in daily life. All these ideas apply to language learning and teaching contexts, too. That is, the ability to write in the L2 is also crucial (Yangın-Ersanlı, 2010).In order to achieve this, writing activities can be used as effective tools in learning, especially in vocabulary learning in the L2. The cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies used during writing

are helpful in the learning process (Díaz-Rodríguez, 2014; Díaz-Larenas, Ramos-Leiva, & Ortiz-Navarrete, 2017).

As our discussion in the previous sections has shown, there is a close relationship between vocabulary learning and writing activities. It is suggested that because of the high involvement load and deep processing that writing requires, learners develop their vocabulary knowledge better in comparison to input activities (Swain, 1985; Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001; Webb, 2005; Lu, 2013; Rassaei; 2017; Alavinia & Rahimi, 2019).

Lastly, the importance of the use of graded readers in the language learning process is highlighted by some research in the area. Graded readers are argued to be influential in vocabulary learning by creating a meaningful context for the target words, giving learners a chance to repeatedly encounter partially known words, and providing rich content with high frequent words and word families (Allan, 2016; Macalister & Webb, 2013; Lee, 2007).

After providing a discussion on the existing literature in the field, the next chapter will present the methods and the research questions under consideration in this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aim

The primary aim of the present study is to investigate the influence of writing activities on the development of the second language (L2) vocabulary through graded readers in the 5th graders at a state school. This chapter will present the methodology of the study.

The organization of the chapter is as follows: First the research questions and hypotheses of the study are presented. Then, a detailed description of the participants and data collection instruments are discussed. Next, the data collection procedure is presented. This section is then followed by the analysis of the data and the results of the study. Finally, a conclusion chapter is presented at the end.

The next section will present the research questions investigated in this study.

3.2 Research questions

The current study was designed to answer the following questions;

1. Do writing activities contribute significantly to L2 vocabulary knowledge of the 5th grade students?

2. In what ways do graded readers contribute to L2 vocabulary knowledge of the 5th grade students?

Based on these research questions, the following predictions are made:

1. It is hypothesized that there will be a statistically significant difference between the post-test results of the control and experimental groups in terms of knowledge of the target vocabulary items.

2. It is hypothesized that writing activities will contribute to vocabulary growth of the participants in the experimental group as vocabulary growth is closely related with output.
3. It is hypothesized that there will be a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the control and experimental groups in terms of knowledge of the target vocabulary items because graded readers will contribute to L2 vocabulary knowledge of the 5th graders.

The next sections of the methodology chapter will present information about the participants, the tests used in the study, the materials administered to the experimental and control groups, and the process of the application.

3.3 Participants

The participants of the study were the 5th grade students at a state school. The experimental group consisted of 50 participants, whereas the control group consisted of 54 participants, in total there were 104 students in the study. The experimental group included 29 girls and 21 boys and the control group included 31 girls and 23 boys whose ages ranged from 9-11.

The experimental group and the control group were two classes formed according to students' GPAs (Grade Point Average) at the primary school; these two classes consisted of high achieving students whose GPAs were between 90 and 100 (out of 100) and the students were distributed into two classes in a similar manner. The general exam scores and the English exams based on Cambridge More 1 book also revealed the similarity in terms of background knowledge and academic success between two classes. The point average of the experimental group in Cambridge More 1 exam was 87, the point average of the control group was 89.96. In

conclusion, the experimental group and the control group did not bear significant differences that would affect the results of the study.

There were two reasons why these two classes were included in the study. The first reason had to do with the administration of the school. The school normally forms classes according to the primary school GPAs of the students. In other words, students who have high GPAs are gathered in some classes and the researcher teaches in one of these classes. Because of some administrative reasons, the researcher had to conduct the study in one of these classes. The study was incorporated into the weekly program of the classes without informing the participants about the aim of the study. Secondly, due to the design of the study which is based on the use of stories, graded readers, and which requires certain degree of proficiency, these two classes were involved in the study.

As for the participants' experience in English, the students had two hours of English at the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades at the primary school. According to the 2018/2019 curriculum of English (The Ministry of National Education, 2018), some basic words and structures were introduced to the students. Among these, greeting, family members, some animals, numbers, colors, jobs, clothes, and weather were covered in vocabulary items. Expressing likes and dislikes and expressing possession were examples of the themes the students were familiar with. The verb copula and auxiliary be and imperatives were some of the basic grammatical structures specified in the primary school curriculum. Some of the vocabulary items and grammatical structures were repeated within time at the 3rd and 4th grades.

Most importantly, as can be seen in the curriculum, writing is not one of the language skills that is given much attention. While listening and speaking skills are of high importance, writing is not focused. The students do not keep notebooks and

the activities administered in the classroom range from very limited to almost no writing. The students are not graded in English and they do not have any written English exams at the 2nd and 3rd grades. The grading, written exams and very limited writing are performed at the 4th grade. Table2 presents the skill focus of the curriculum from the 2nd to 8th grades.

Table 2. Skill Focus of the 2018/2019 Educational Year Curriculum, 2nd-8th Grades

Levels [CEFR] (Hours/Week)	Grades	Skill focus	Main activities/ Strategies
1 [A1] (2)	2	Listening and Speaking	TPR/Arts and crafts/Drama
	3	Listening and Speaking Very Limited Reading and Writing	
	4	Listening and Speaking Very Limited Reading and Writing	
2 [A1] (3)	5	Listening and Speaking Limited Reading Very Limited Writing	Drama/Role-play
	6	Listening and Speaking Limited Reading Limited Writing	
3 [A2] (4)	7	Primary: Listening and Speaking Secondary: Reading and Writing	Theme-based
	8	Primary: Listening and Speaking Secondary: Reading and Writing	

Activities suggested in the curriculum of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades are arts and crafts, chants and songs, role plays, drawing and coloring, games, making puppets, matching, question and answers, and labeling. As it is indicated in the philosophy of the curriculum, the main purpose of the curriculum in primary schools is to make students enjoy English lessons and acquire basic vocabulary and structures.

At the secondary school level, students in grade 5 start a preparatory program in English in some pilot schools. The school in which the current study is carried out has been one these pilot schools since 2017. The Ministry of National Education has introduced English intensive preparatory programs in 620 schools in Turkey. The English language is offered 11 to 18 hours per week within that program as opposed to 3 hours of instruction in regular schools. The pilot schools can offer 11 to 18 hours depending on their conditions, such as number of English language teachers in the school. Given that the data within the scope of the current study have been collected from the participants who attend one of those English intensive preparatory programs, it will be useful to give some detailed information about the current practice of such programs at the beginning, as it is of relevance to our discussion in the following sections.

The program is structured around a main course book with one non-native English teacher for each classroom. The main course book includes four language skills reading, listening, speaking, and writing. It starts from the beginner level with the supposition that the students have very limited or no previous contact with English.

An examination of the curriculum of English at primary schools reveals that the primary aim of the English lessons is to make an enjoyable and game-based start for students. Thus, vocabulary items and linguistic structures are simple and writing is not given much focus in the classroom. Students are beginner level learners both in terms of English language proficiency and writing.

The next section will present instruments used in the study.

3.4 Instruments

3.4.1 Sample test, pre-test and post-test

3.4.1.1 Sample test

In order to measure the participants' background knowledge of the vocabulary items in the study, a sample test was administered three weeks before the pre-test. The sample test was based on the sample tests of some previous studies which explore the relationship between task type effects and vocabulary learning; so share similarities with the current study. In their studies, Folse (2006), Bao (2015), and Rassaei (2017) asked the participants to write L1 translation of the target words in the sample tests. Following previous work in the literature, the sample test of the current study also required the participants to write L1 translation of the words. Moreover, in compliance with these studies, the sample test included all the known and unknown target words. The students were required to provide Turkish translation of the target words and if they did not know the meaning, they put a cross. The students put a cross for most of the words. Although some of the participants wrote Turkish translations, the answers were not correct for the unknown words. Only one participant who had a specific interest in English could present some correct translations. Both pre-test and post-test of this participant were excluded in the data analysis. Appendix A presents the sample test used in the present study.

3.4.1.2 Pre-test and post-test

A test used both as a pre-test and post-test was designed to measure the knowledge of vocabulary items. The question types of four parts (part 1, part 2, part 3, part 5) were based on the 'Cambridge Starters Exam' which is a standardized test for young learners but the questions were modified according to the words chosen for the study.

Part four was prepared on the basis of vocabulary activity of Cambridge More 1 book. As the participants had Cambridge More 1 book as a main course book, they were accustomed to the question types in the pre-test and post-test.

There were 80 vocabulary items in the study. These vocabulary items were taken from four stories; Peter Pan, The Wishing Fish, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, and Mowgli. From each story, 15 unknown words and 5 known words were taken; so, in total the study involved 60 unknown words and 20 known words; 45 nouns, 23 verbs, and 12 adjectives in total. The words were chosen according to some criteria. Firstly, from each book, every fifth content word was taken and a list was formed with these words. Afterwards, the words were ordered according to the frequency on the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The least frequent words were selected from each story to be used in the study. The words that are similar in English and Turkish were discarded from the word list such as captain and surprised even if they are infrequent. Moreover, adverbs were also excluded because of their diverse distribution in English and the difficulty involved in their presentation. Namely, the study included only nouns, adjectives and verbs, which are easier to be expressed with pictures. In regard to the known and unknown words, two teachers who had previously examined the curriculum of English at the 2^{nd}, 3^{rd}, and 4^{th} grades selected words that were already known by the students. The least infrequent known words were chosen. Appendix B presents the complete list of words used in the study.

After the test was prepared, first it was piloted on students who commented on the test. Accordingly, some pictures were changed and some sentences were modified. Also, 60 minutes was considered by the teachers to be sufficient for the test.

The test was comprised of 5 parts, each part involving 12 unknown and 4 known words from each story. The words were distributed to the parts in a pattern; for example, the first word in the list of the first story was taken to the first part, the second word was taken to the second part, and the pattern continued after all the words were placed in all parts. The questions in the parts were based on Cambridge Starters Exam and Cambridge More 1 book with small adjustments. Instead of giving the participants scrambled letters as a clue, they were provided with the first letter of the words in the part 2 and the first and the last letter of the words in the part 5. In addition, the picture stories of Cambridge Starters Exam include the words from a shared topic; however, the words were selected from different stories in the study. The picture story was designed by the researcher. During this process, comments from other English teachers were welcomed and taken into account. In spite of the fact that the words did not constitute a shared topic as they were selected from 4 stories, the picture story was meaningful as a context. In order for the story to sound English, native judgment was also requested from a British teacher. As the students already used Cambridge More 1 book, they were already familiar with the question types.

The pre-test and post-test were designed in a way that both receptive and productive knowledge of the participants was assessed. In order to assess productive knowledge, the participants needed to write the words in parts 1, 2, and 5. In part 1, the participants wrote the words in the picture story, In part 2, the first letter was given and the participants wrote the words looking at the picture. In part 5, the participants wrote the words with the help of the pictures and the first and the last letters. However, in part 3 in which the participants chose the correct option in a multiple choice test and part 4 in which the participants circled the correct word

among two options, the recognition of the words was sufficient for the participants to give the correct answer. Part 3 and part 4 were designed to assess the receptive knowledge of the participants.

The following section provides more detailed information about the parts of the pre-test and post-test. Appendix C presents the pre-test and post-test of the present study.

The first part of the test was a picture story in which the participants were required to write the missing words with the help of the pictures provided within the story. The story was about a weird dream of a child. The first part included 11 nouns, 2 verbs, 3 adjectives. Figure 1 shows 5 items from the picture story part.

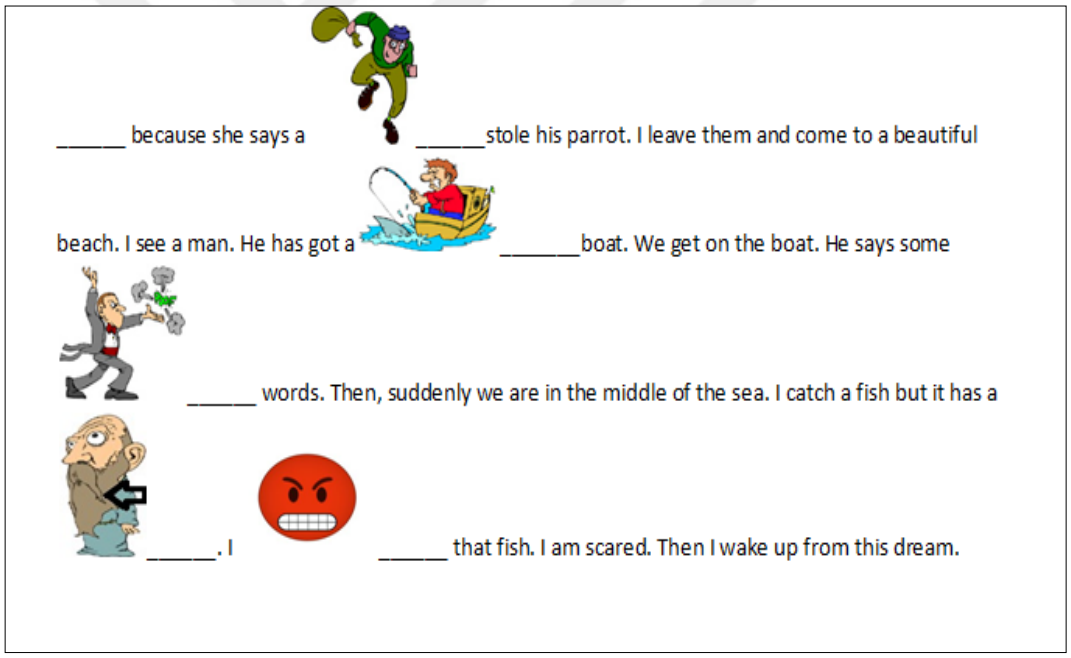


Figure 1. Five items from part 1 of the test

In part 2, the participants needed to complete the words whose first letters were given. There were 13 nouns and 3 verbs in this part. As mentioned before, this question type was modified on the basis of the Cambridge Starters exam. Figure 2 presents items from part 2.

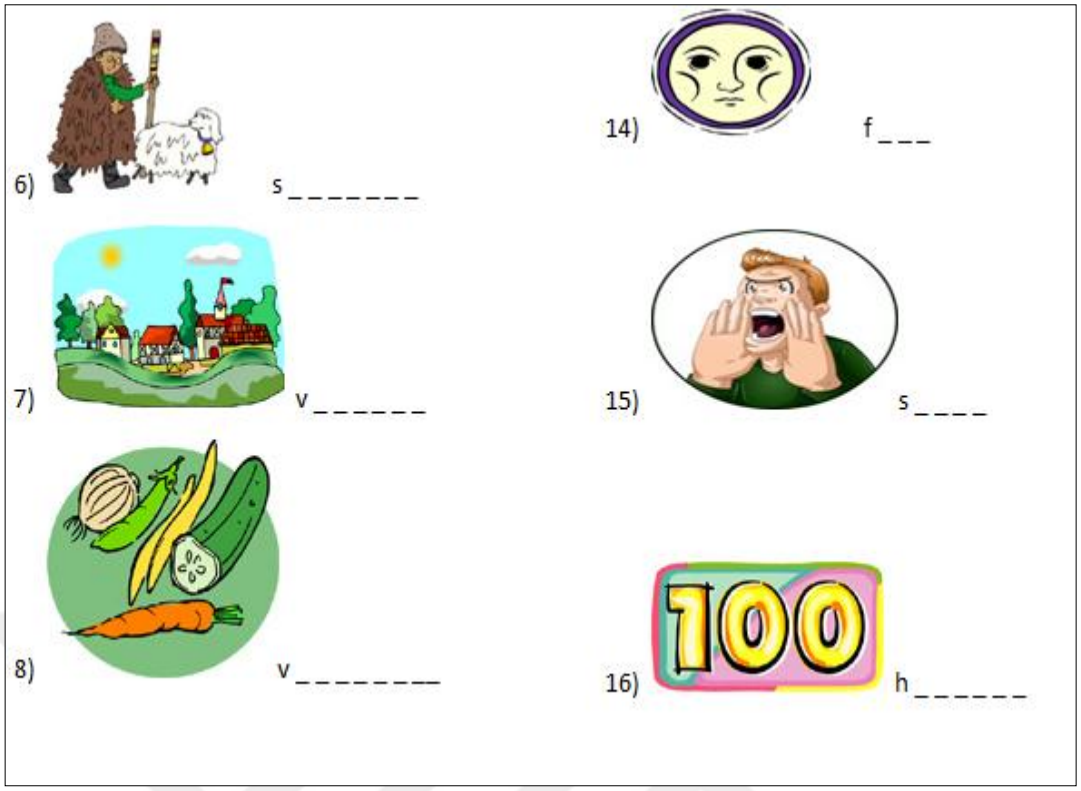


Figure 2. Six items from part 2 of the test

Part 3 of the test was a multiple choice which was also modified from Cambridge Starters Exam. In the original version, the participants choose among the pictures according to the sentence given. However, in both the pre-test and the post-test of the study, the participants were given the pictures and sentences with missing words and they chose the correct word among 3 options. Part 3 included 6 nouns, 7 verbs and 3 adjectives. Figure 3 presents an item from part 3 of the test.



Figure 3. An item from part 3 of the test

In part 4, the participants were given a sentence that included two options for the words. The participants were required to make a choice out of these two options according to the picture provided. This part of the test was modified on the basis of vocabulary activities of the Cambridge More 1 book. The items included 7 nouns, 5 verbs, 4 adjectives. Figure 4 presents two items from the fourth part of the test.

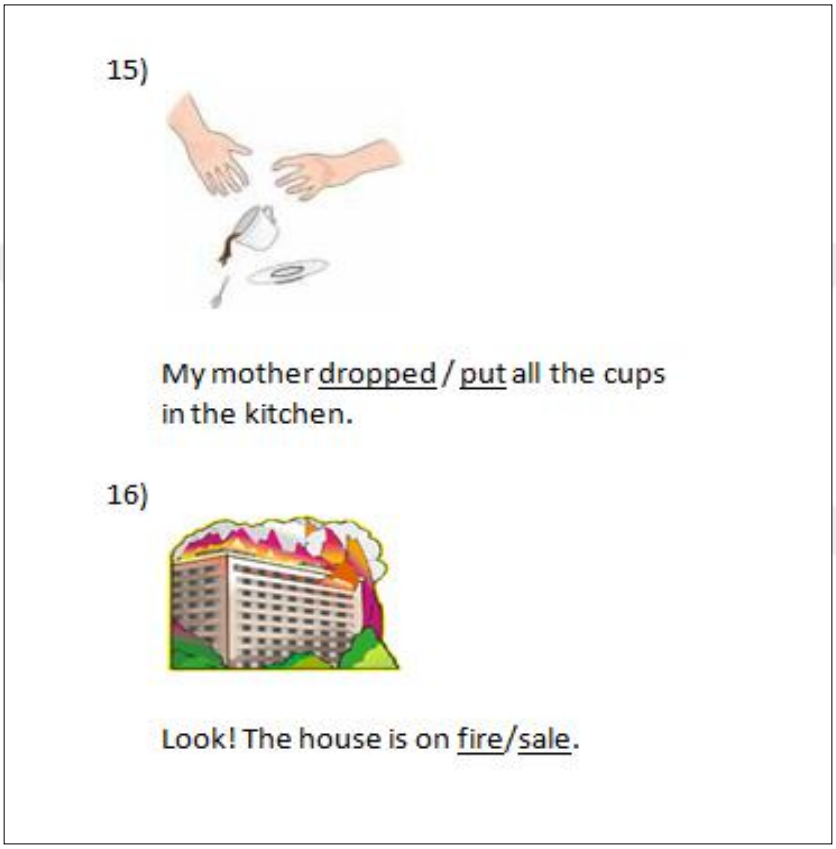


Figure 4. Two items from part 4 of the test

Part 5, very similar to part 2, required the participants to write the words correctly according to the pictures. As a clue, the first and the last letters of the words were given in the test. This part was also mainly based on the Cambridge Starters Exam. However, as mentioned before, instead of the scrambled letters, the first and last letters were provided as a clue. This part includes 8 nouns, 6 verbs, and 2 nouns. Figure 5 presents two items from the fifth part of the test.

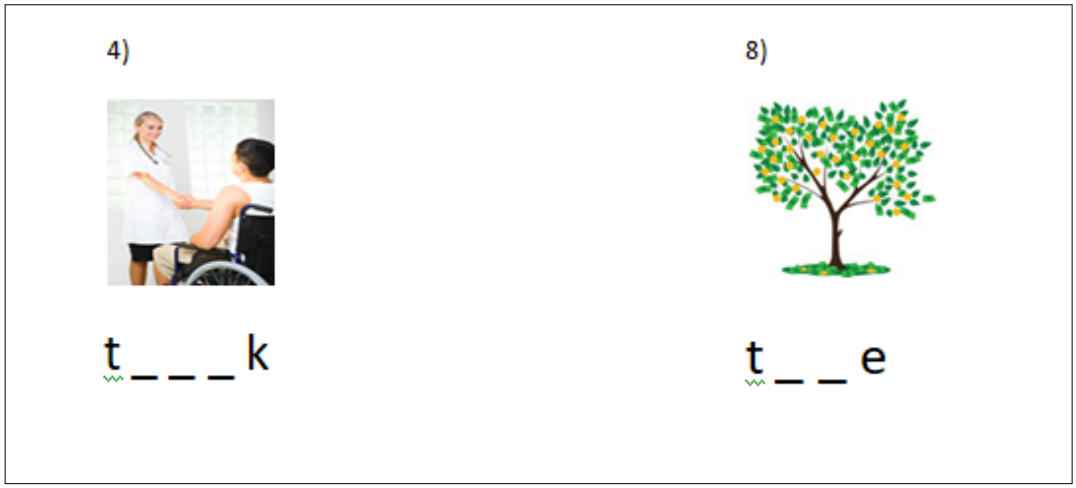


Figure 5. Two items from part 5 of the test

3.4.1.2.1 Pre-test

The pre-test was administered during a block-lesson which lasted 70 minutes. The participants were given 60 minutes to complete the test. Two classes, the experimental and the control groups, took the test at the same time. Two teachers monitored the participants and the researcher helped the teachers with explanations and further questions. The participants were not informed about the objectives of the test and the study in general.

3.4.1.2.2 Post-test

The same vocabulary test was administered as a post-test one week after the treatment. As in the pre-test, it was administered during a block-lesson which lasted 70 minutes; time for the completion of the test was 60 minutes. The participants in the control and experimental groups took the test at the same time. Two teachers were present in the classrooms to monitor the participants. The researcher visited the classrooms to help the teachers and give further explanations.

The next section will present the materials used with the experimental and control groups in the study.

3.5 Materials

3.5.1 Materials of the experimental group

The materials of the experimental group included four story books, activity pages of these books, and a series of writing activities.

3.5.1.1 Story books

The researcher selected the stories based on some criteria. These criteria are consistent with the ones widely used in the literature. Ghosn (2002), for example, states that an interesting and motivating theme, clear and satisfying storyline, appropriate level of the second language and colorful illustrations are the main criteria for selecting the books. On similar grounds, Vardell, Hadaway and Young (2006) mention some essential elements in selecting books for English learners. These elements are (i) content accessibility, whether the story is engaging, includes basic information and at the same time well-written; (ii) language accessibility whether students can deal with the language in the story; (iii) visual accessibility whether illustrations are helpful to convey the story line and information; (iv) cultural accessibility whether the story is connected to the lives of students. In a similar vein, Cameron (2001) states that quality of content, organization, and language in the stories are important issues in choosing story books for foreign language classrooms because these elements engage children, increase their motivation to learn and contribute to language growth.

Accordingly, four story books were selected to provide a context for both target vocabulary and writing activities in the study. The story books were all at level 4 of Primary Readers series of MM Publications. The Primary Readers series of MM

Publications are aimed to give basic grammatical structures and vocabulary. The stories are for young learners of English and they are full of illustrations to help learners visualize the scenes. In addition, each book includes activity pages in every 4 pages of reading and a glossary at the end of the book. Moreover, the stories have CDs providing audio input for the learners; however, in this study, the CDs were not used because the readings were made by the students and the teachers during the class time. The Primary Readers stories are divided into 6 levels, each level bearing a different number of headwords; grammatical structures are also adapted according to the levels.

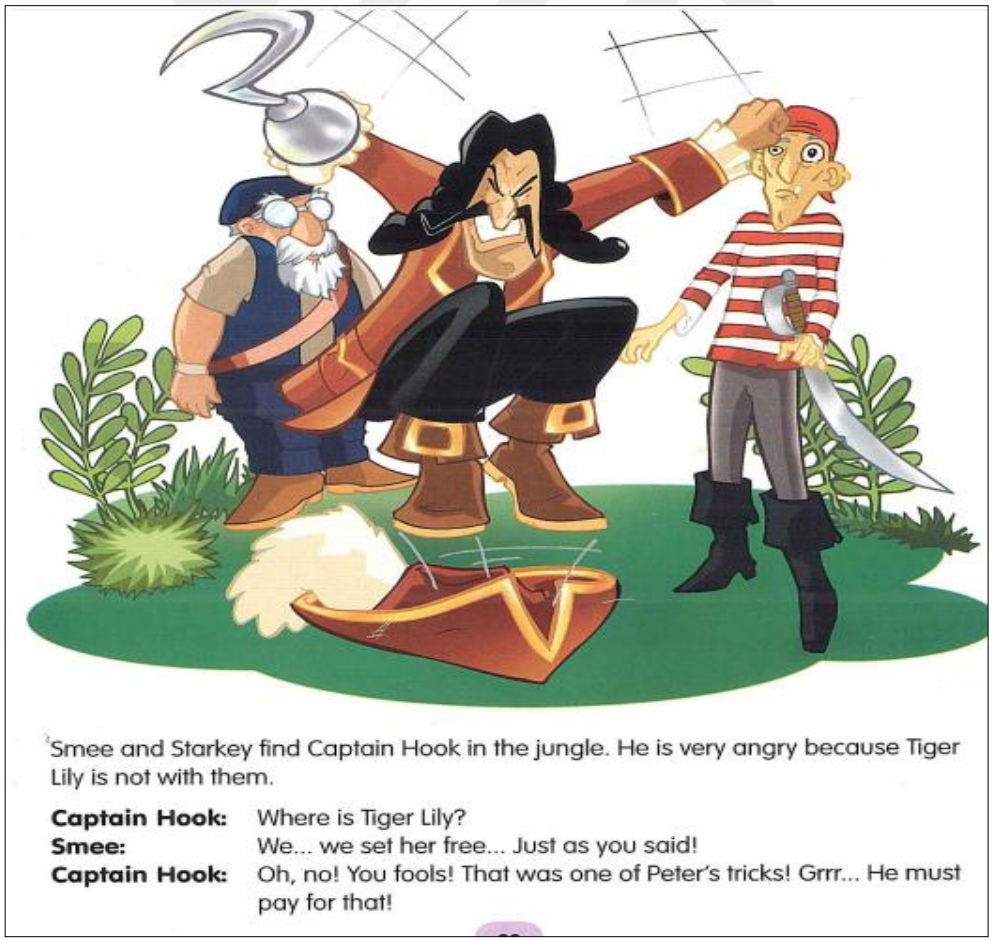
In order to choose the appropriate level of the stories, the English curriculum (2018/2019) for primary schools was examined. As can be seen in Table 2, the intended level of students for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades is A1 in Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR). According to CEFR, a person in A1 level can use very basic phrases and can interact in a simple way. He/she is categorized as a basic user. Moreover, total hours of English instruction given in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades were taken into consideration. Approximately, the students have received 220 hours of English instruction (two hours per week) throughout these three years.

After this analysis, level 4 was considered to be appropriate for the level of students; the books were accessible in terms of linguistic features, content, and illustrations. Although the stories included some sentences in The Simple Past Tense, the attention was mostly directed to the meaning and words rather than tense. Consequently, the participants did not ask any questions on this; were not confused and could follow the stories. Keeping the duration of the study in mind, four books were decided to be read in the study. The names of the books are (in the order they were used in the study) *Peter Pan, The Wishing Fish, Ali Baba and the Forty*

Thieves, and Mowgli. Each story has a different topic and they are not connected to each other. A short summary of each story book is presented in Appendix D. The next section will present samples from the pages and activity pages.

Samples from the pages and activity pages of the books

This section presents sample figures of the pages and activity pages of the story books. Figure 6 presents a sample page from the story Peter Pan which depicts angry Captain Hook and two pirates. All the stories include activity pages after 4 pages of reading. The activities in the story Peter Pan involve true/false exercises, fill-in exercises, matching, choosing the correct option, and a puzzle. Figure 7 presents a sample of activity pages of the story Peter Pan in which the participants are asked to say the given words and then circle the correct answer by looking at the pictures.



Smee and Starkey find Captain Hook in the jungle. He is very angry because Tiger Lily is not with them.

Captain Hook: Where is Tiger Lily?
Smee: We... we set her free... Just as you said!
Captain Hook: Oh, no! You fools! That was one of Peter's tricks! Grrr... He must pay for that!

Figure 6. A sample page from the story Peter Pan

Activity Page

1 Look and say.



bird



city



island



sky



run

2 Read, choose **a** or **b** and match with the pictures.

1. It is night
   a. when the children fly over London.
   b. when the children fly over Neverland.



2. Neverland is
   a. a beautiful city.
   b. a beautiful island.



3. In Neverland
   a. Peter leads the children through the night skies.
   b. a lot of little boys come to meet Peter.



14

Figure 7. A sample from an activity page of Peter Pan

Figure 8 presents a sample page from the story The Wishing Fish.

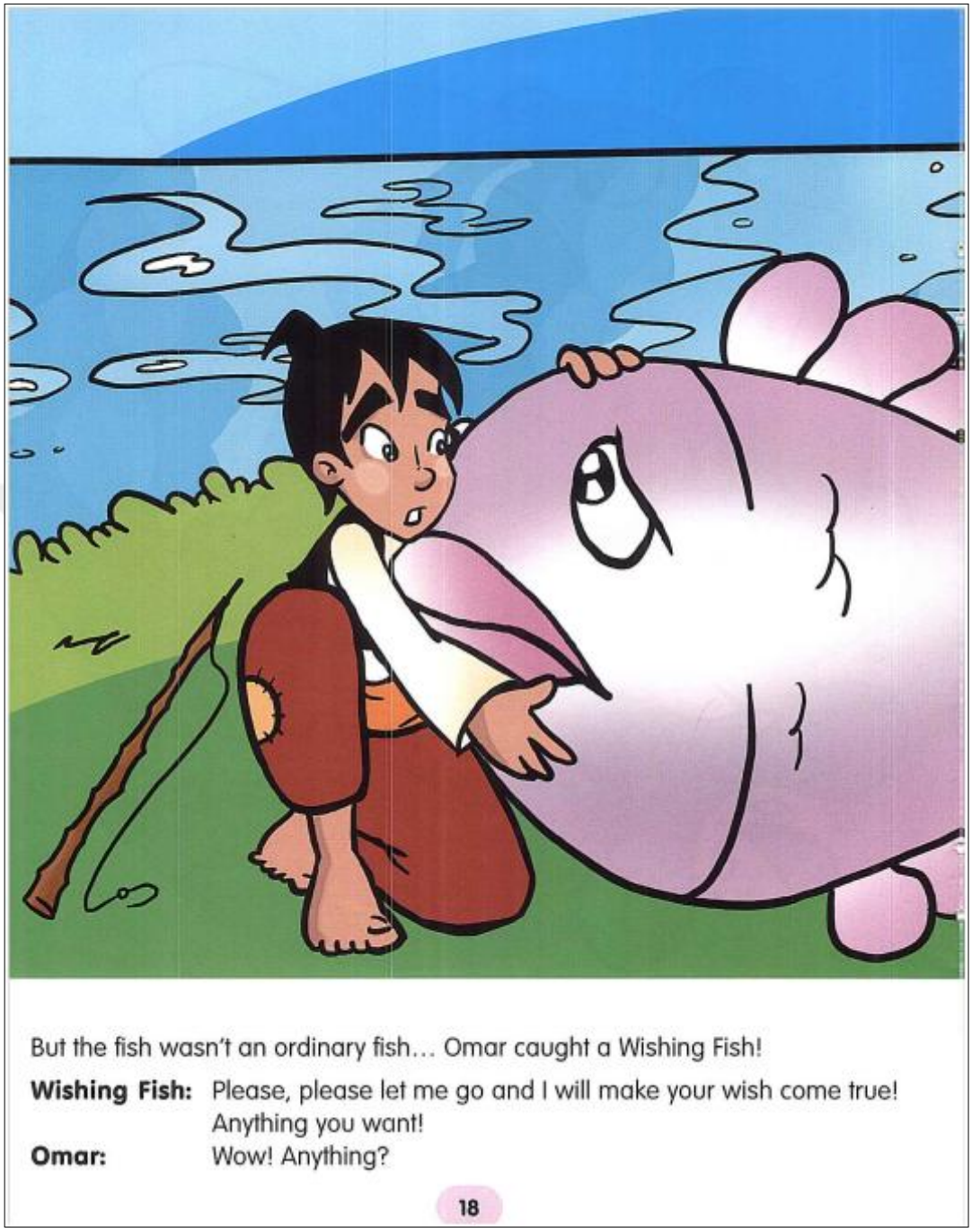
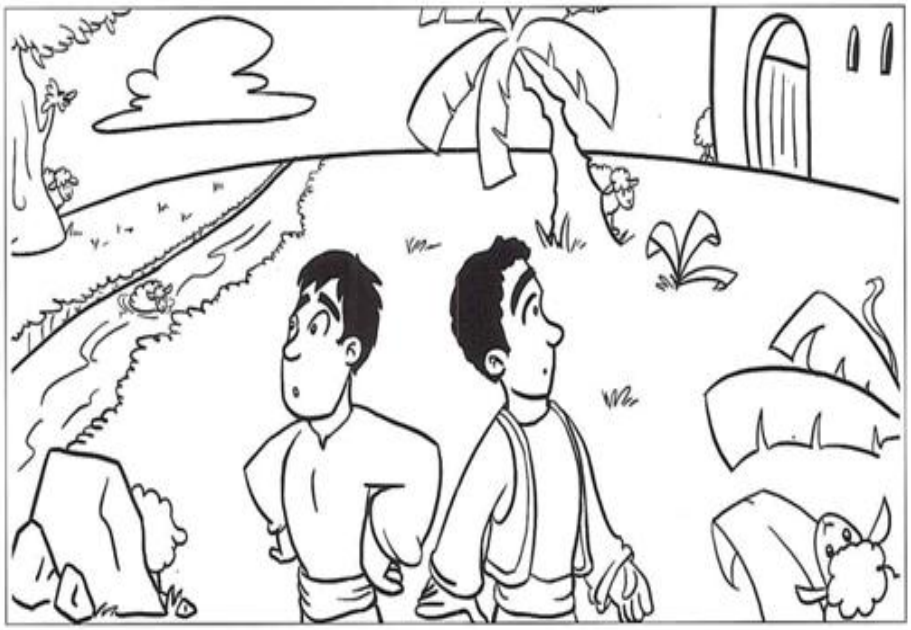


Figure 8. A sample page from The Wishing Fish

The Wishing Fish has also activity pages in every 4 pages. The activities include choosing the word from two options, fill-in exercises, who says what (speech bubbles given), and constructing short sentences with the words given. Figure 9 presents an activity page of the story The Wishing Fish.

Activity Page

3 Help Omar's brothers find their sheep. Then colour the picture.



4 Read and circle **a** or **b**.

1. Omar lived with his parents and brothers in a _____ house.

   a. big b. small

2. Omar's brothers _____ very hard.

   a. worked b. didn't work

3. Omar _____ forgot to feed the chickens.

   a. always b. never

4. Omar _____ planting vegetables.

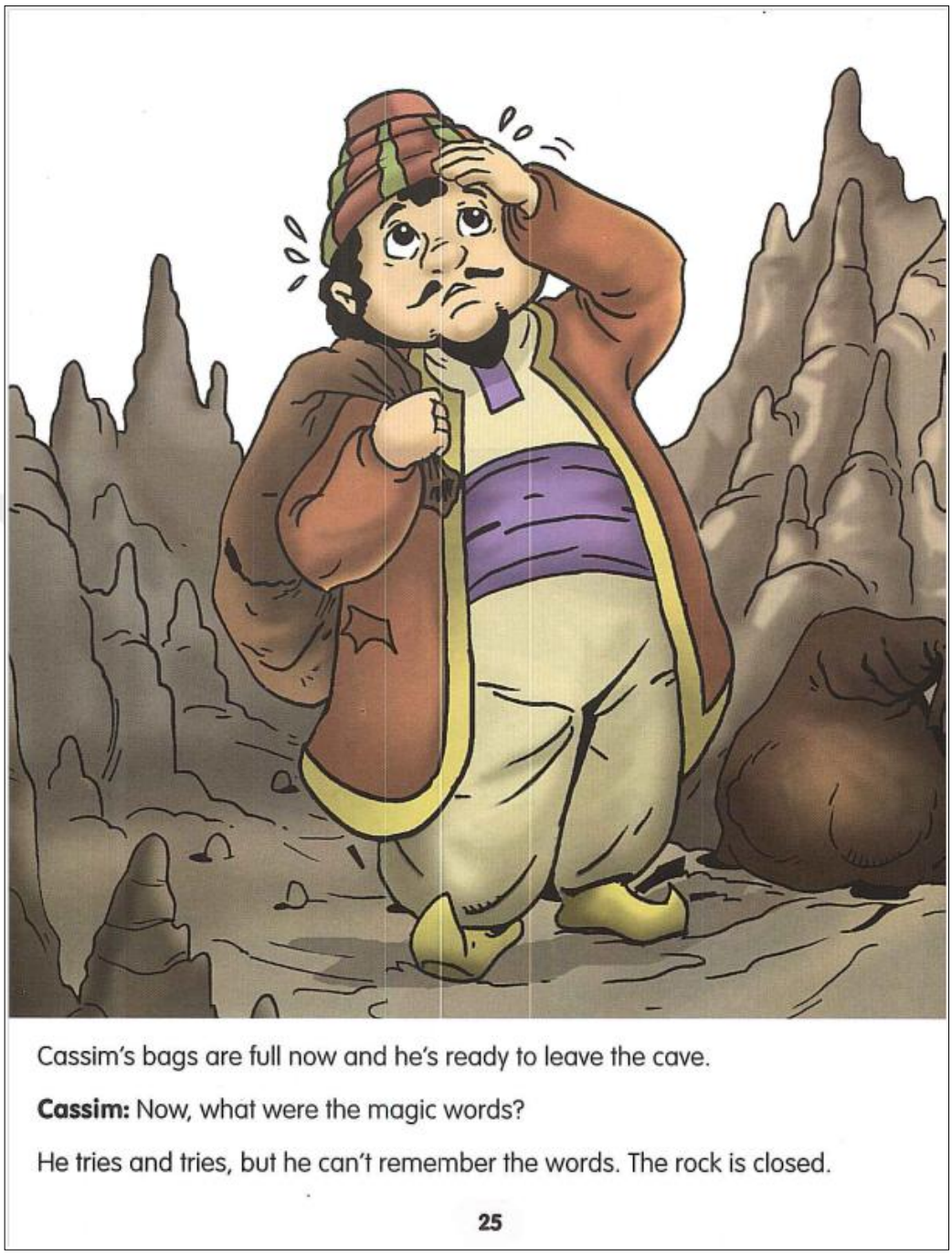
   a. liked b. hated

5. Omar was _____ years old when he started looking after the sheep.

   a. twelve b. ten

Figure 9. A sample from an activity page of The Wishing Fish

Figure 10 presents a sample page from the story Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.



Cassim's bags are full now and he's ready to leave the cave.

Cassim: Now, what were the magic words?

He tries and tries, but he can't remember the words. The rock is closed.

25

Figure 10. A sample page from Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

The story also has activity pages including tasks such as ticking the sentences that take place in the story, who says what, a picture puzzle, circling the correct words, true/false activity, writing the words according to the pictures given, and ordering the sentences. Figure 11 presents a sample page from the activity pages of the story Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.



Figure 11. A sample from an activity page of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

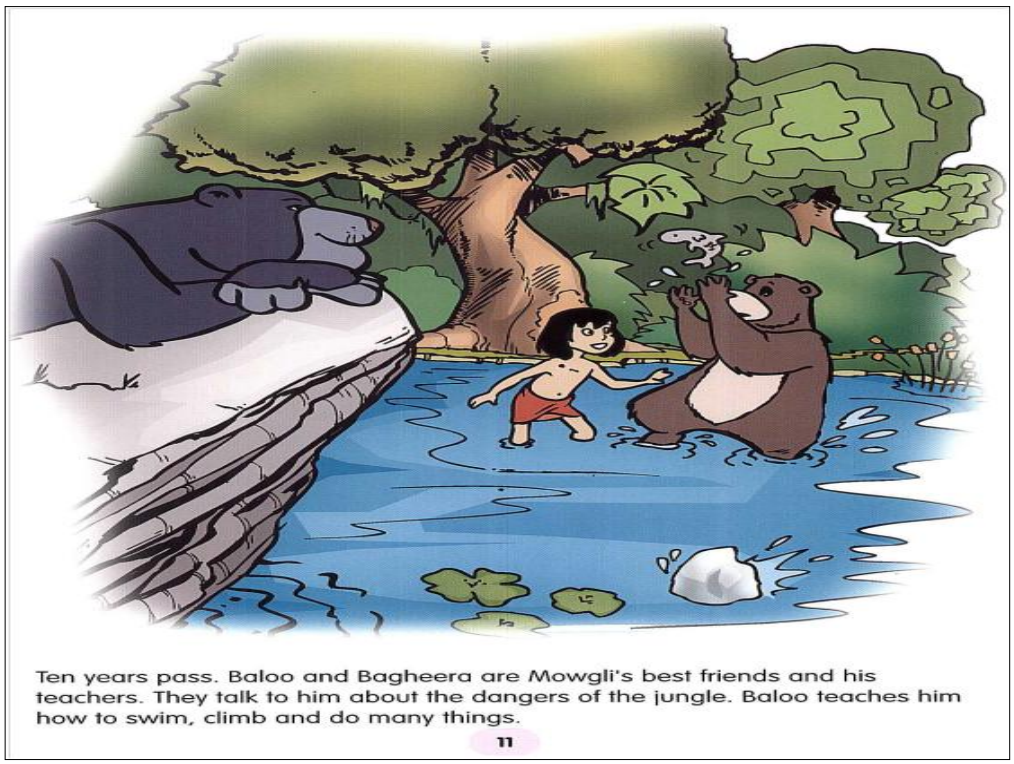


Figure 12. A sample page from Mowgli

In the activity pages of Mowgli, there are activities such as unscrambling the words, true/false activity, picture puzzle, who says what, a picture story, and ordering the pictures. Figure 13 presents a sample page from the activity pages from the story Mowgli.

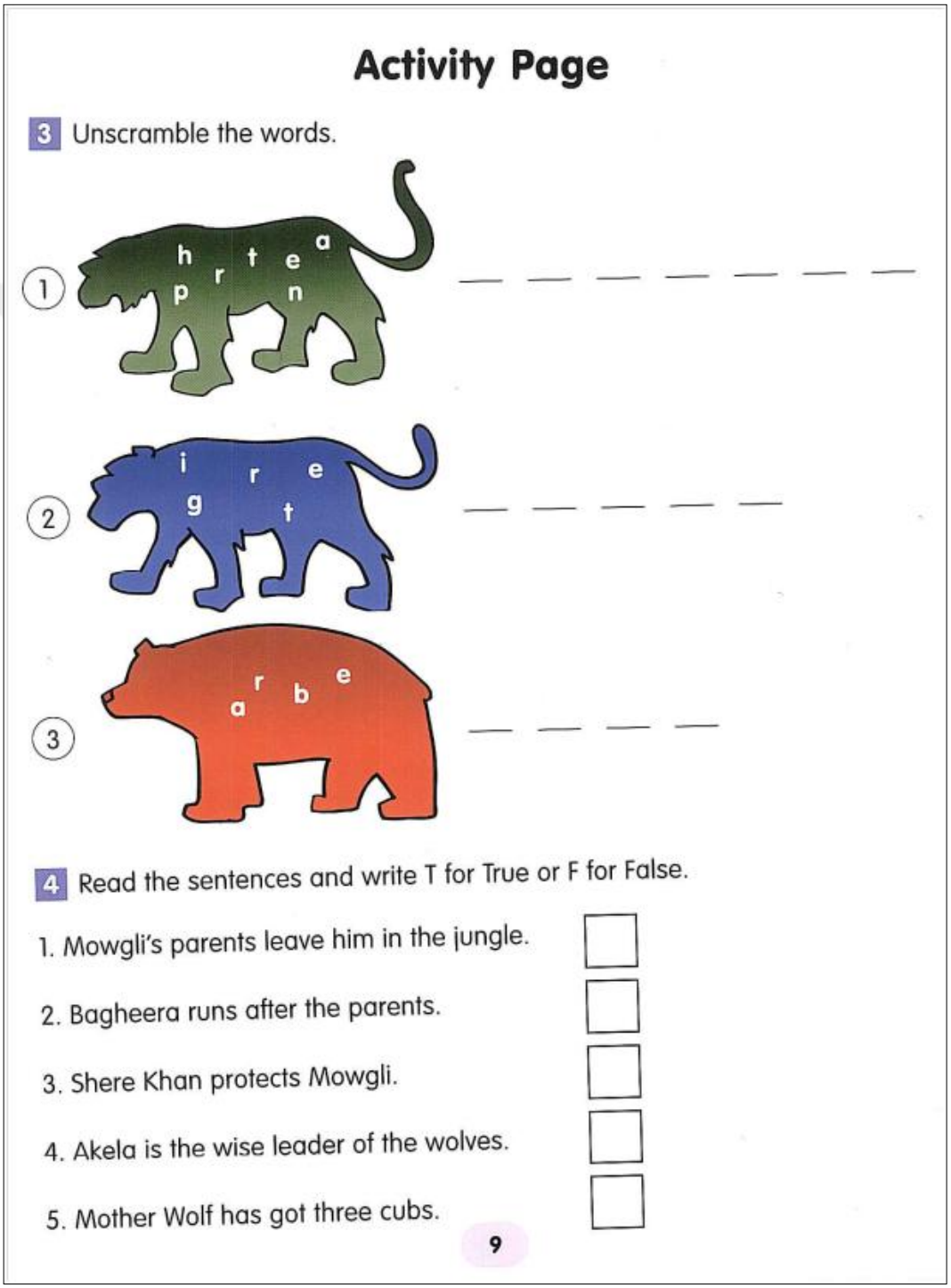


Figure 13. A sample from an activity page of Mowgli

The next section will present information about writing worksheets which were used with the experimental group to elaborate on the target words.

3.5.1.2 Writing worksheets

The experimental group was supplied with writing worksheets which include a variety of writing activities. The story books were used as a tool to create a context for the activities. The writing activities were designed by the researcher according to the points explained in the subsection 'Writing with Young Learners'. Moreover, some activities were adapted from the Cambridge More 1 book and Cambridge Starters Exam. Considering the level and the age of the participants and following previous work in the field, the writing activities in this study were designed in three levels (i) word-level, (ii) sentence-level, and (iii) very short paragraph level (Yangın-Ersanlı, 2010; Pinter, 2006; Scott & Ytreberg, 2004; Pica 1999). After making a list of activities, the researcher distributed the activities into four worksheets; each worksheet was administered after the researcher and the participants read the books during the class time.

Each worksheet covered five types of activities. (i) A crossword puzzle activity and (ii) comprehension questions were placed in every worksheet. Among other activities, there were (iii) substitution of words with the given words so that the story was correct and (iv) rewriting the sentences, (v) numbering the sentences in the correct order according to the stories and rewriting them, (vi) writing the sentences with the given words, (vii) rewriting the story with at least 4 sentences with the help of the words given, (viii) writing a postcard to main characters of the story. The worksheets ensured that the participants encountered the target words at least twice. As can be seen from the examples given above, the types of activities range from

guided to semi-guided, and to free writing activities in the study. The next section will present more detailed information on the handouts prepared for the stories used in the current study.

The worksheet of the story Peter Pan

Peter Pan was the first story read in the classroom. The worksheet was administered during two hours of English class (80 minutes in total). As none of the activities in this worksheet demanded free writing of the students, all of the activities were done and finished in the classroom. The students were allowed to look up words in the story book and dictionary. The activities of the worksheet were a crossword puzzle, comprehension questions, substitution of a word with the given words so that the sentence was correct and rewriting them, numbering the sentences in the order they appeared in the story and rewriting them, and finally writing sentences with the given words in which the participants were not allowed to copy a sentence from the story. The participants enjoyed the crossword puzzle activity most. Especially, the pictures of the crossword puzzle activity were entertaining for them. For the writing sentences activity, some participants produced correct and almost correct sentences. Some examples from their sentences are: “He love trick.’’, “Tinkerbell is can fly.”, “My friend is angry.”, “I am angry because today Monday.” Figure 14 presents the crossword activity of the story Peter Pan in which the participants are required to write the words with the help of pictures provided and Figure 15 presents the substitution activity of the worksheet in which the participants are required to substitute the words with the given words, so the sentences are correct according to the story.

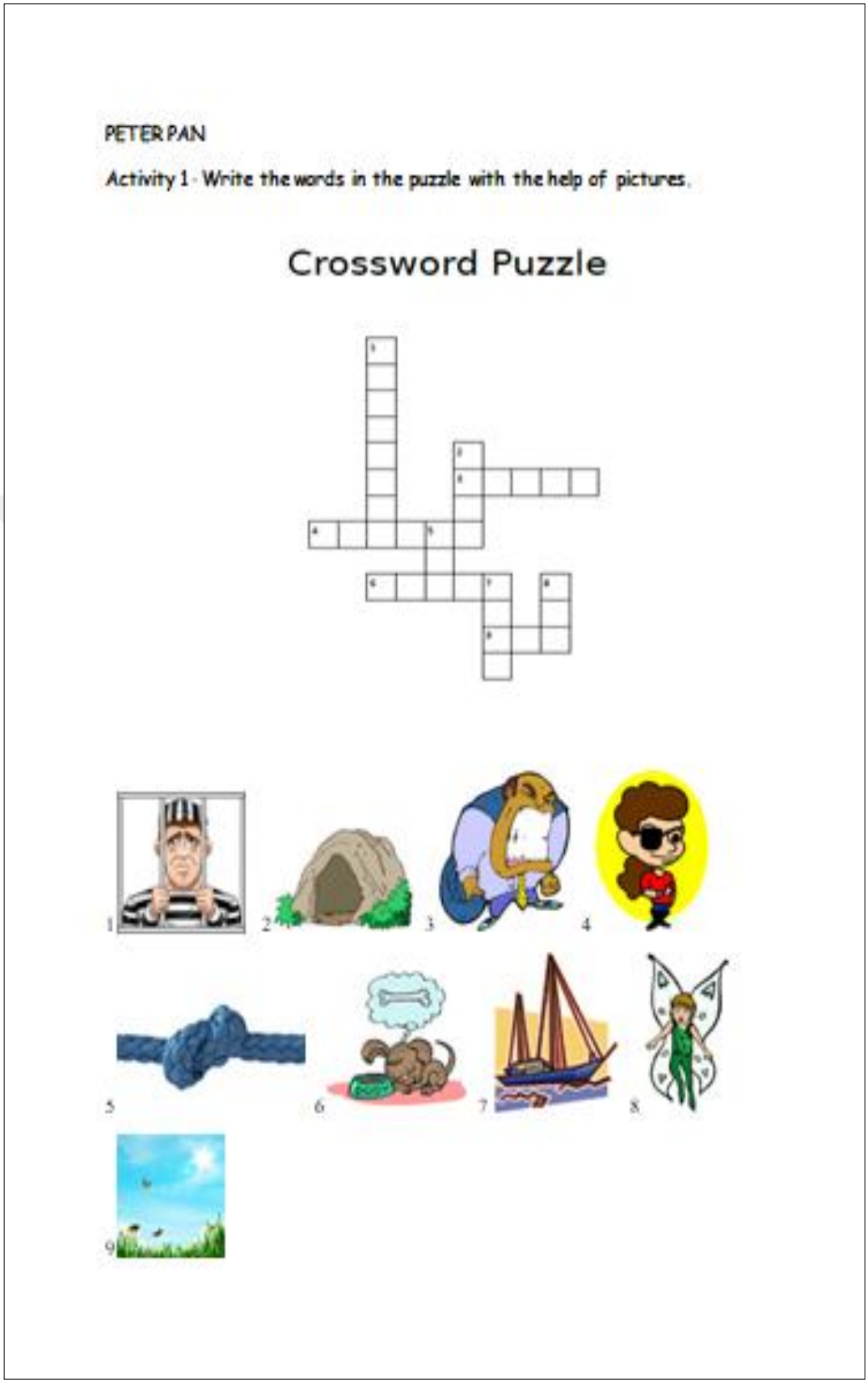
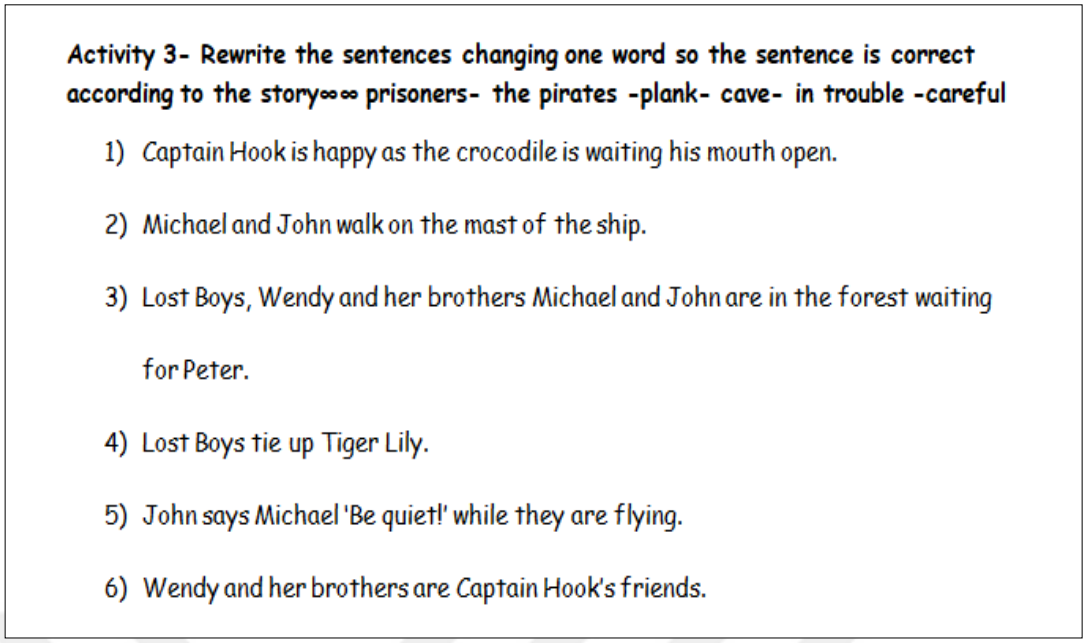


Figure 14. The crossword puzzle activity of the story Peter Pan



Activity 3- Rewrite the sentences changing one word so the sentence is correct according to the story∞∞ prisoners- the pirates -plank- cave- in trouble -careful

1) Captain Hook is happy as the crocodile is waiting his mouth open.
2) Michael and John walk on the mast of the ship.
3) Lost Boys, Wendy and her brothers Michael and John are in the forest waiting for Peter.
4) Lost Boys tie up Tiger Lily.
5) John says Michael 'Be quiet!' while they are flying.
6) Wendy and her brothers are Captain Hook's friends.

Figure 15. The substitution activity of the story Peter Pan

The worksheet of the story The Wishing Fish

The worksheet was administered in 80 minutes, which took two lessons of English in the weekly schedule. However, as there was an activity of writing a postcard in the worksheet, after the other activities were finished, the participants were advised to make a preparation for the postcard at home but they did not do the activity at home. Consequently, the postcard activity was completed the next day; the students wrote the part and then most of the participants were asked to read it. The researcher collected all the worksheets in order to examine the writings of the participants. The worksheet also involved a crossword puzzle, comprehension questions, filling in the blanks with the words, writing the story with the given words. During the latter activity, the students were permitted to look up the story or use a dictionary when they needed. Some responses of the students are as follows: ‘Omar, listen to your family!’, ‘Don’t make a silly wish!’, ‘Don’t lazy again!’. ‘They have sheep.’ Figure 16 presents the comprehension questions activity and Figure 17 presents the writing the story with the given words activity of the worksheet.

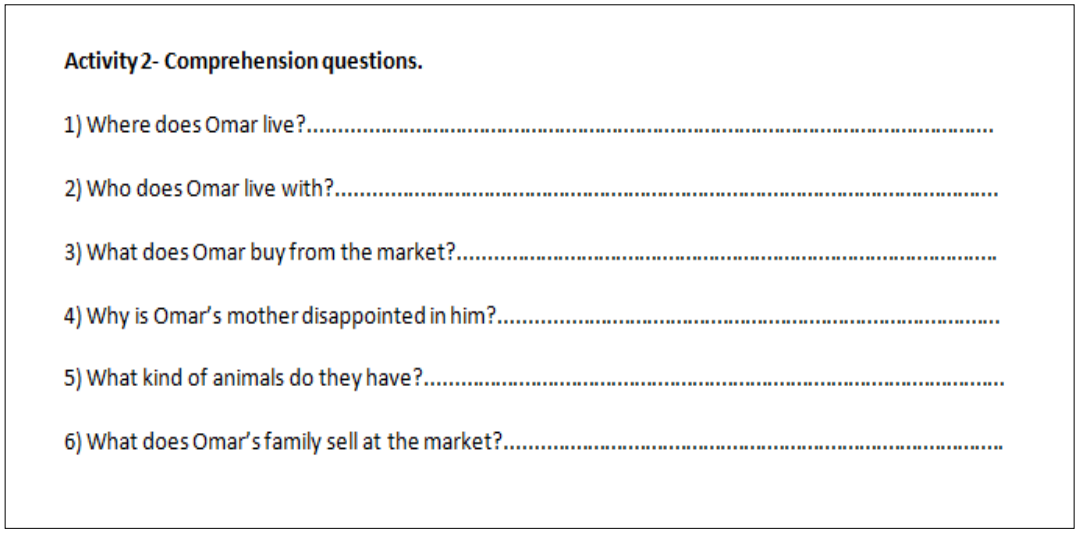


Figure 16. Comprehension questions activity of the story The Wishing Fish

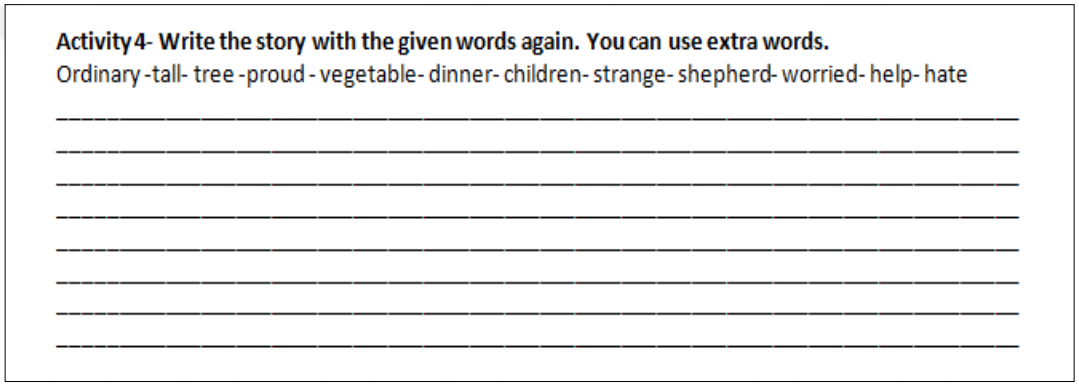


Figure 17. Writing the story activity with the given words and pictures activity

The worksheet of the story Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

The worksheet for the book Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves was administered in two lessons of English (80 minutes in total), which was enough for the completion of all activities. As in the case of other sessions, the participants were allowed to use the story and a dictionary when needed. The activities covered in the worksheet were a crossword puzzle, comprehension questions, numbering the sentences in the order they appeared in the story and rewriting them, substitution of the words with the given words, and writing sentences with the words given in which the participants could not copy a sentence from the story. 'Ali Baba is climb a tree.', 'I like eat.', and 'Merchant is upset.' were some of the responses by the participants. Figure 18

presents the activity of numbering the sentences in the correct order and rewriting them and Figure 19 presents the activity of writing sentences with the given words.

Activity 3- Write the sentences in order they appear in the story.

-Cassim goes into the cave and the rock closes behind him.

-Long before, the thieves discover Ali Baba's home.

-Now he is dressed as a silk merchant.

-It's about two brothers, Cassim and Ali Baba.

-He tries and tries but he can't remember the words.

-Morgiana takes Ali Baba to the yard and shows him.

-As he is cutting wood, he sees a cloud of dust far away.



1_____
2_____
3_____
4_____
5_____
6_____
7_____

Figure 18. Numbering the sentences in the correct order and rewriting them from the story Ali Baba and Forty Thieves

Activity 5-Write sentences with the words given.

1) climb _____
2) fantastic _____
3) beard _____
4) merchant _____
5) wood _____
6) dust _____
7) eat _____



Figure 19. Writing sentences with the given words activity from the story Ali Baba and Forty Thieves

The worksheet of the story Mowgli

The worksheet of the story Mowgli was the last worksheet given to the experimental group. It was administered during two lessons of English except for the activity of writing postcards. For the postcard activity, the participants were asked to make

some prior work at home but they were not permitted to do the activity at home. The postcard activity was completed the next day in the classroom. Apart from this activity, the worksheet covered a crossword puzzle, comprehension questions, substitution of the words and rewriting the sentence, writing the story with the given words. The participants could use their story books and dictionaries to get some help. ‘Mowgli is grow jungle.’, ‘Monkeys is very danger.’, ‘Baloo is a bear.’, and ‘Be careful Shere Khan.’ were some of the sentences from the participants’ responses.

Figure 20 presents the activity of writing the sentences with the given words and Figure 21 presents the activity of writing a postcard.

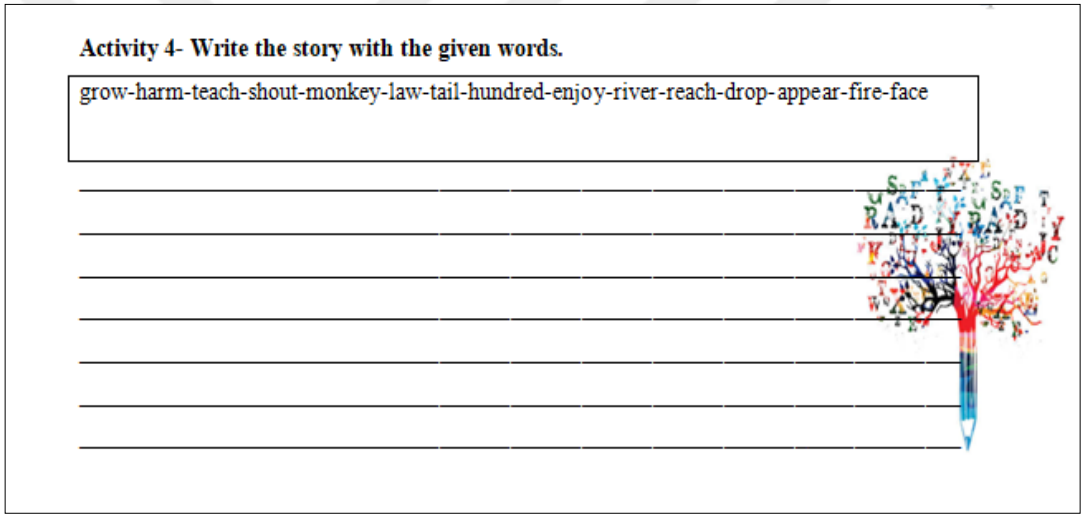


Figure 20. Writing the story with the given words from the story Mowgli

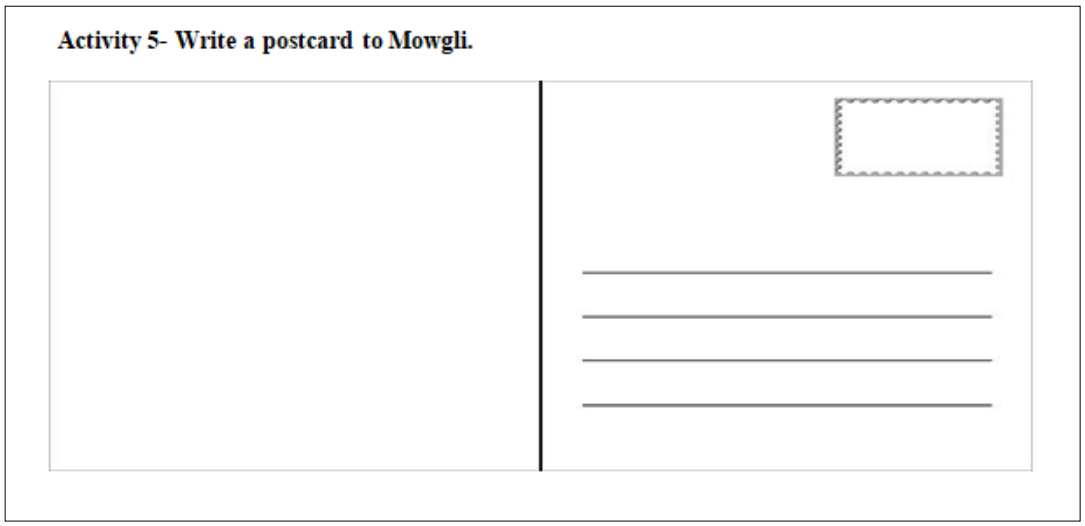


Figure 21. Writing a postcard activity from the story Mowgli

3.5.1.3 Activity pages of the story books

Each story book had activity pages after every 4 pages of reading. The participants were involved in a variety of activities such as choosing from the options, filling in the blanks with the words, writing the sentences with given words, matching, true/false activities, puzzles, and choosing the sentence that ended the story. Moreover, there were some other activities such as finding five differences between two pictures and drawing a route to help some characters in the story find their way. The participants were motivated to do all of the activities. Figure 7, 9, 11, 13 present samples from the activity pages of the story books.

The next section will present the materials used in the control group.

3.5.2 Materials of the control group

The materials for the control group are comprised of four story books, activity pages of the book and word cards in which written form of the words were used as input for the students. It should be noted that due to the major focus of the current study with respect to the effects of writing on vocabulary learning, the activities that require the participants to write in the experimental group's activity pages of the books were excluded in the control group's activity sessions. The next sections will present story books read in the control group, activity pages of the books, and the word cards prepared for each story.

3.5.2.1 Story books

The four story books which were the same as the books of the experimental group were used to create a context for vocabulary activities. The participants of the control

group also read the stories in the same order with the experimental group; *Peter Pan, The Wishing Fish, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, and *Mowgli*. All the books were covered during the class time and read by the participants and the teacher. The lesson was planned in the same way with the experimental group; a meeting was organized beforehand to determine the flow of the lesson. Moreover, the participating teacher of the control group observed one of the classes of the researcher in which a story-based methodology was used. This way, it was made sure that both the experimental and the control group students had similar experiences in terms of the general conduct of the story sessions.

3.5.2.2 Activity pages

The activity pages of the story books in the control group were adapted according to the study. As the study investigates the effects of writing in vocabulary learning, the control group was not given any writing exercises. The exercises that involved the participants in writing were omitted from the activity pages. Such exercises as matching, choosing from the given options, choosing the end of the story from given sentences, true/false activities and some game-like activities as mentioned previously were placed in the activity pages for the control group. Writing the words, crossword puzzles in which the participants were required to write the words, writing sentences with given words, writing the story with the given words and fill-in exercises were not conducted with the control group. As can be seen in Figure 22 and 23, the activity pages that did not require the participants to write any letters, words, or sentences were used with this group and activities requiring participants to write were omitted in the control group.

Activity Page

3 Read the sentences and write T for True and F for False.

1. Omar's mother was very disappointed in him. ☐
2. Omar went to the river the same day to try his fishing rod. ☐
3. Omar caught only a Wishing Fish. ☐
4. The Wishing Fish was very big. ☐
5. The Wishing Fish was an ordinary fish. ☐
6. When Omar let the Wishing Fish go, it disappeared into the water. ☐

4 Which of the fish is the Wishing Fish? Only one fish is the same as the one in Omar's picture. Help Omar spot it!

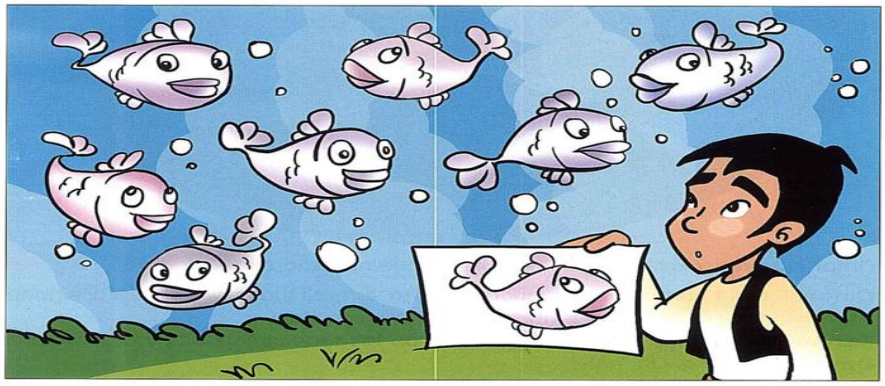


Figure 22. A sample activity page with no writing required

Activity Page

1 Look and say.



frightened



Indian Chief



pirate



rock

2 Circle the correct word.

1. Long ago, the Lost Boys left **their houses / Neverland**.
2. The Lost Boys wanted **Tiger Lily / Wendy** to take care of them.
3. Peter and the Lost Boys hear **a young girl's / Captain Hook's** voice.
4. Peter Pan **saves / leaves** Tiger Lily.
5. Smee and Starkey **do not let / let** Tiger Lily go.

3 Read and match.

1. Tiger Lily is	a. Peter Pan's family.
2. Smee and Starkey are	b. a pirate captain.
3. The Lost Boys are	c. the Indian Chief's daughter.
4. Captain Hook is	d. pirates.

20

Figure 23. A sample activity page with no writing required

3.5.2.3 Word cards

One additional type of material used with the control group involves the word cards prepared for this study. The word cards are the written form of the words focusing on the target words of the study. As mentioned before, the experimental group read the stories, completed the activity pages of the books, and did the writing activities designed by the researcher in which the participants elaborated on the target words more. However, the control group was not given any activities that asked the participants to write. In order to balance the activity numbers and to make sure that the participants in the control group also elaborated on the target words more, the researcher prepared word cards. Consequently, the control group read the stories, completed the activity pages without writing exercises, and worked with the word cards to consolidate what they have learned. The procedure for the use of the word card is as follows: After the stories were finished by the participants and the teacher in the class, the participants concentrated on the activities on the activity pages of the books. At the end, the teacher showed the word cards to the participants and asked them to show the word with movements if possible or provide L1 translation of the words. The reason why L1 translation was requested is that it was made sure that word meanings were received by the participants. According to Nation (2001) also, L1 is an effective tool to convey the meanings of target words in the L2. Figure 24 presents one of the word cards from the story Peter Pan.



Figure 24. A sample of word cards from the story Peter Pan

3.6 Classroom practice

3.6.1 Classroom practice with the experimental group

There were 50 students, 29 girls and 21 boys, in the experimental group which was a class of a state school. The study began with the vocabulary knowledge test three weeks before the pre-test. A week after the pretest was administered, the teacher started reading sessions. All the readings were finished during the class time and it took four weeks to complete all the story books, one week for each story book. The teacher and the participants read the stories together, especially dialogue parts of the readings were assigned to the participants. From time to time, the teacher made comprehension checks of some vocabulary (both target and non-target words) and the story in general by asking questions like “What happens to Tiger Lily?”, “Is the captain happy now?”, “Angry, what does that mean?, show me.” In every four pages, the participants dealt with the activity pages of the books. The answers were provided after the participants finished their works. Finally, writing handouts which helped the participants focus on vocabulary were distributed to the class. All of the activities except for writing a postcard activity which required planning and outlining were carried out in the classroom. In writing a postcard activity, the participants were asked to make some preparations before writing because it needed some thinking and planning. However, the participants wrote the postcard in the classroom. The activities and readings of the stories were implemented in the same way in four books. A week after all the activities and readings were fulfilled, a post-test was given to the participants. The total process including the sample test lasted nine weeks.

3.6.1.2 Classroom practice with the control group

The control group consisted of 54 students in which there were 31 girls and 23 boys. It was a 5th grade class of a state school. The study was carried out in the same way with the experimental group. However, in order to see the effects of writing activities, the writing activities were excluded from the activities of the control group. In other words, the differences between two groups were the activity pages of the story books which included writing exercises vs. word cards. The timeline and the flow of the study were identical in both groups. The study started with the sample test three weeks before the pre-test. After the pre-test was administered, the reading sessions of the stories began and all the stories were read aloud in the classroom by the teacher and the students. The dialogues were especially given to the participants. During the reading sessions, the teacher made comprehension and vocabulary checks by asking questions such as "Why is Omar crying?" "Cry, what does it mean? Can you show it?" It took four weeks to complete all the readings, activity pages and word cards activities. As mentioned previously in sub-section 3.5.2, activity pages of the control group were modified in that writing activities were excluded as the study investigates the effects of writing on vocabulary learning and in order to see this effect, writing activities were not used in the control group. As for the word cards, the participants were supplied with word cards as shown in Figure 24. The participants were asked to show the meaning of the word with their movements if possible or tell the L1 translation of the words. The readings, activities, and word card activities were conducted in the same way in four books. A week after all the readings and activities were completed, a post-test was delivered. The total process with sample test was nine weeks.

3.7 Data analysis

The quantitative data was collected in the study through a pre-test and a post-test. Four comparisons were conducted in total for the study; i) pre-test$_{control}$ vs. post-test$_{control}$, ii) pre-test$_{experimental}$ vs. post-test$_{experimental}$, iii) pre-test$_{control}$ vs. pre-test$_{experimental}$, iii) post-test$_{control}$ vs. post-test$_{experimental}$.

Before the analyses, the distribution of the normality was controlled and according to the results of normality tests and Skewness and Kurtosis values, the data had normal distribution.

A paired samples *t*-test was used to compare the pre-test and post-test results of the control and experimental groups within groups. It was conducted to find out whether there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the control group and between the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental group.

An independent samples *t*-test, on the other hand, was conducted to compare the results of pre-test and post-test between groups. It was conducted to find out whether there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of both groups.

In addition to the qualitative analysis, classroom observations of the researcher and the participating teacher relating to the use of graded readers in language classrooms were also provided in Chapter 5.

The next chapter will present detailed information on data analysis and results of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings and data analysis in relation to the research questions of the study.

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of writing activities on L2 vocabulary learning of the 5th grade students at a state school and the ways in which the graded readers affect L2 vocabulary learning of the 5th grade students at a state school. In order to collect data, a pre-test and a post-test were given to the participants in the experimental and control groups. The data was analyzed by means of the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS). A paired samples and an independent samples *t*-test were administered to investigate the differences within and between the experimental and control groups.

The analyses involved four comparisons in total, two of which were within group comparisons and the other comparisons were between group comparisons. Therefore, a Bonferroni adjustment was applied on the pre-determined .05 *p* criteria. Thus, the *p*-values from the analyses were compared against .0125 (.05/4).

An examination of histograms, Skewness and Kurtosis values regarding each data set assured that none of them disrupted the normality assumption; the data had normal distribution. This was evident either in non-significant normality test statistics or in Skewness and Kurtosis values lower than 1. Moreover, the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances assured that homogeneity of variances assumption was met for across group comparisons.

4.1 Within-group comparisons

The first comparison was made between the pre-test and post-test results of the control group. The results of this comparison indicated that the control group performed higher on the post-test (M = 42.98, SD = 11.56) when compared to the pre-test (M = 25.31, SD = 7.16) and this difference was significant $t(53) = -14.23$, $p < .001$. Table 3 presents the pre-test and post-test results of the control group.

Table 3. The *T*-test Results of the Pre-test and Post-test Scores of the Control Group

Control group	N	M	SD	df	t - value	p
Pre-test	54	25.31	7.16	53	14.238	.000
Post-test	54	42.98	11.56			

The second comparison between the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group revealed that the post-test scores of the experimental group were higher (M = 58.86, SD = 13.55) than the pre-test scores (M = 24.42, SD = 6.57). This difference was also found significant with the values $t(49) = -22.02$, $p < .001$. Table 4 presents the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental group.

Table 4. The *T*-test Results of the Pre-test and Post-test Scores of the Experimental Group

Experimental group	N	M	SD	df	t - value	p
Pre-test	50	24.42	6.57	49	22.022	.000
Post-test	50	58.86	13.55			

Table 3 and Table 4 show that both the control and the experimental groups improved their knowledge of the target vocabulary items. For the control group, reading stories followed by activities in the book (no-writing) and word cards

contributed to participants' vocabulary learning. Moreover, the experimental group performed higher in the post-test, which indicated that reading stories, activities in the book and writing activities helped the participants learn new words.

4.2 Between-group comparisons

Relating to the pre-test results of both groups, there was no significant difference between the control and the experimental groups. The *t*-test results showed the values for the control group as M = 25.31, SD = 7.16, whereas the *t*-test values for the experimental group were M = 24.42, SD = 6.57. The difference between the pre-test results of the control and experimental groups was not significant, $t(102) = .662$, $p > .05$. Table 5 presents the pre-test results of the control and experimental groups.

Table 5. The *T*-test Results of the Pre-test Scores of the Control and Experimental Groups

Groups	N	M	SD	df	t - value	p
Control Group	54	25.31	7.16	102	.662	.509
Experimental Group	50	24.42	6.57			

The final comparison was conducted to explore whether there were any differences in the averages of the control and experimental group's post-test results. The results of this comparison indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group. The *t*-test results presented the values for the control group as M = 42.98, SD = 11.56. The *t*-test values for the experimental group, on the other hand, were M = 58.86, SD = 13.55. This difference was also significant, $t(102) = -6.44$, $p < .001$. Table 6 presents the post-test results of the control and experimental groups.

Table 6. The *T*-test Results of the Post-test Scores of the Control and Experimental Groups

Groups	N	M	SD	df	*t* - value	p
Control Group	54	42.98	11.56	102	6.44	.000
Experimental Group	50	58.86	13.55			

The analysis of the results of the pre-test and post-test were given in the previous section. The results of the pre-test showed that at the beginning of the study both the control group and the experimental group were similar in terms of vocabulary knowledge of target words. With classroom applications, both groups improved their lexical knowledge; the post-test averages of the groups were significantly higher than the pre-test averages. However, when the post-test results of the control and experimental groups were compared, it is evident that the experimental group did significantly better.

The next section will present discussions of the above findings in relation to the existing literature.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The analyses carried out in this study revealed important findings in relation to the effects of writing activities on vocabulary learning. This chapter will discuss the findings regarding the research questions (RQ) and hypotheses (H) of the study. Implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research will follow the discussion section.

The main purpose of this study was to explore the effects of writing activities in L2 vocabulary development. In order to make the investigation, two research questions and hypotheses were formulated. The discussion regarding each research question is presented below.

RQ 1. Do writing activities contribute significantly to L2 vocabulary knowledge of the 5th grade students?

H 1. It is hypothesized that there will be a statistically significant difference between the post-test results of the control and experimental groups in terms of knowledge of the target vocabulary items.

H 2. It is hypothesized that writing activities will contribute to vocabulary growth of the participants in the experimental group as vocabulary growth is closely related with output.

The analyses were carried out by comparing the pre-test and post-test results of the control and experimental groups. According to the results, it is evident that the experimental group did significantly better, which suggests that reading stories followed by writing activities is more effective in vocabulary learning than reading the stories followed by word cards. Namely, writing activities administered in the

experimental group were found to be influential on L2 vocabulary learning of the 5th grade students.

These results are compatible with some of the previous research in the area. Firstly, as suggested in the Involvement Load Hypothesis constructed by Laufer and Hulstijn (2001), writing activities involve learners better in vocabulary learning because three features, need, search, and evaluation, are present in writing activities (See Table 1 in Chapter 2). Writing activities require learners to reprocess the knowledge, formulate the linguistic forms and functions and decide among the choices (Manchón, 2011). These features which are unique to writing result in more effective vocabulary learning. In their comparison of the effects of three activities in vocabulary learning, Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) find out that composition writing activity leads to more vocabulary learning compared to reading with gap-filling activity and reading with glosses. These findings are similar to the results of this study in that the experimental group which was involved in writing activities received better scores compared to the control group in the post-test. Although the pre-test results of the control group were higher than the experimental group, the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test.

Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985) may offer more reasons why the experimental group who did writing activities after the stories outperformed the control group who received some further input but was not required to produce any written output. According to the results of her study, Swain (1985) suggests that the production of output results in deeper processing of language both in meaning and linguistic forms. This processing required by production pushes learners to produce more accurate forms and forces learners to be careful about the means of expression which are necessary to convey the meaning. The better vocabulary learning of the

experimental group in this study may be attributable to the deeper processing resulting from writing activities. In their attempts to produce the forms in the L2, the participants pay more attention to the correct forms by elaborating on the knowledge, which paves the way for long-lasting memory traces (Izumi, 2002).

The results of this study are also compatible with previous studies exploring the relationship between vocabulary learning and writing as output. The effects of task types on vocabulary learning were compared in numerous studies (E.g. Alavinia & Rahimi, 2019; Rassaei, 2017; Lu, 2013; Marmol & Sanchez-Lafunte 2013; Nassaji & Tian, 2010; Keating, 2008; Webb, 2005). Researchers compared input activities and output activities as in the present study. The results from these studies are usually in line with the results of the current study, suggesting that output activities are more effective than input activities in vocabulary learning (Marmol & Sanchez-Lafunte 2013; Talebzade & Bagheri, 2012; Keating, 2008; Webb, 2005). They put forward that writing activities whose involvement load is higher in terms of need, search, and evaluation lead to more vocabulary learning (Alavinia & Rahimi, 2019; Rassaei, 2017; Lu, 2013; Nassaji & Tian, 2010). Talebzade and Bagheri (2012), for example, conducted a similar study to the present study investigating the relationship between vocabulary learning and the effect of task types of writing. Similarly, in this study, the group which wrote compositions with target words was better than the groups working on sentence writing and cloze-tests respectively. The reason could be learners' involvement was higher and learners used deeper processes during writing activities.

It can be concluded that the involvement load of the activities has an effect on vocabulary learning. Activities that require elaborate processing, search, and evaluation help learners gain vocabulary in the L2. Therefore, these findings are in

line with the Involvement Load Hypothesis (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001) and the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985), both of which support the beneficial effects of writing activities on vocabulary learning.

The results of the present study are also consistent with another line of previous research that has indicated that writing can be used as a tool to help vocabulary learning. In an early study, Coomber, Ramstad, and Sheets (1986) shared similar results stating that writing is an effective tool in vocabulary learning because it provides a meaningful context for learners. In a similar vein with Swain (1985) and Izumi (2002), they support that as writing requires higher level of cognitive functions, it leads to better vocabulary learning (Coomber & Ramstad, & Sheets, 1986).

Smetanová's (2013) discussions could also provide a basis to explain the findings in this study. The strategies used in writing such as organization of ideas, summaries, making decisions, creating drafts are effective in vocabulary learning (Smetanová, 2013). These cognitive strategies that writing includes in nature promote vocabulary learning. Similarly, Cook and Singleton (2014) emphasize that cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies used during writing contribute to learning by providing learners a chance to monitor and control their own learning.

RQ 2. In what ways do graded readers contribute to L2 vocabulary knowledge of the 5th grade students?

H 3. It is hypothesized that there will be a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the control and experimental groups in terms of knowledge of the target vocabulary items because it is predicted that graded readers will contribute to L2 vocabulary knowledge of the 5th graders.

Although the major focus of the study is not on reading stories, after treatment it was expected that the participants of the control and the experimental groups would perform better on the post-test compared to the pre-test. The reason is that it was predicted that graded readers would have an effect on vocabulary knowledge of both groups.

The comparison of the pre-test and post-test results of the control and experimental groups revealed that the participants did significantly better in the post-test compared to the pre-test. Accordingly, the results suggest that graded readers contribute to the vocabulary knowledge of the 5th grades.

These findings are compatible with some previous research. Lee (2007) and Hsu and Lee (2009) also found that the experimental groups involved in graded readers scored better than the control groups who were involved in only writing and reading activities in text-books. These results can be attributable to the context that graded readers create where learners can encounter the new words in a controlled way (Nation, 2001). As pointed out by Macalister and Webb (2013), in this controlled context, the learning burden of the new words is not high. Especially, for low-proficient learners as in the present study, this controlled context is supportive because it is not too complex (Schmitt, 2000). Moreover, graded readers give learners the opportunity of encountering the words repeatedly, which helps vocabulary learning (Schmitt, 2000; Waring & Takaki, 2003). By providing learners with sets of words which are frequent and reflecting authentic and rich language, graded readers are useful tools in vocabulary learning (Allan, 2016; Macalister & Webb, 2013). The controlled context, low learning burden, encountering the words repeatedly, and authentic and rich language may be the reasons why graded readers contributed to the vocabulary knowledge of the 5th grades in the current study.

The experimental group's higher scores can also be related to the contributions of reading along with writing to L2 vocabulary learning. The participants in the experimental group in the present study performed the writing activities which were based on graded readers. Consequently, writing activities supported with reading might have resulted in better learning of vocabulary. These findings are also in line with the views of some researchers in the area. As Hyland (2003) points out when writing is based on reading, it gives the learners clues about vocabulary, grammar, and organizational patterns, rhetoric and structure. These clues can further promote vocabulary learning. As reading and writing share some common knowledge and processes (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Shanahan, 2016), reading has an influence on spelling in word level and fluency in writing in the text level (Ahmed et al., 2014) Considering the effects of writing in L2 vocabulary learning, it is expected that development in writing in both word level and text level will also contribute to vocabulary learning. The significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental group might have resulted from the joint use of graded readers which served as a meaningful context to present the target words and writing activities which gave learners a chance to produce the words.

In addition to the qualitative results gained through the pre-test and post-test, classroom observations of the researcher and participating teacher also pointed out the development in L2 vocabulary knowledge of the participants. The teachers observed that the participants could use the target words in the activities and also they could provide the meanings when they were asked to show the meanings with movements or provide L1 translation. The participating teacher of the control group pointed out that even though some words were not learned, the participants became familiar with these words with the help of graded readers and they had a chance to

learn these words after a few more encounters. Moreover, both teachers observed that the participants became eager to read stories in the L2 although they had expressed their concerns when the first graded reader was introduced. The participants first thought that they could not understand a story in the L2; however, an interesting theme, a clear storyline, and an appropriate level of the L2 increased their motivation and contributed to their reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, colorful illustrations, activity pages, and read aloud processes entertained the participants. Consequently, as the teachers suggested, the participants gained an understanding that reading in the L2 can also be enjoyable. Another observation of the teachers was about the use of graded readers in crowded classrooms in which the current study was conducted. The teachers stated that in such crowded classrooms, it might be challenging for a teacher to involve all students in the lesson. The graded readers helped the teachers keep students active and involved during the class. When the students took active parts in reading and doing the activities, managing crowded classrooms became easier for teachers. Therefore, the teachers suggested that graded readers could also be used effectively with crowded classrooms on the contrary to the assumption that only a few students attend the reading sessions.

In sum, overall results indicated that in learning the target words, the experimental group involved in writing activities based on graded readers performed significantly better than the control group who worked with graded readers and word cards. Consequently, the current study is compatible with the previous research that suggests output activities contribute to vocabulary learning more compared to input activities. In addition, the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the control and experimental groups may indicate the effectiveness of

graded readers in vocabulary learning in the L2. This finding also supports the research which highlights the importance of graded readers in vocabulary learning.

The next section will present the implications which can be concluded from the results of the current study.

5.1 Implications

The present study suggests some implications in relation to the use of writing activities and graded readers in language classrooms on the basis of the findings.

Firstly, the current study revealed that writing activities were effective in vocabulary learning of the 5th graders. It can be concluded that writing opens effective ways of improving in the second language. Thus, it should not be neglected in classrooms and teachers should create opportunities to use writing as a learning tool. Observing the positive effects of writing on learning, teachers should push the limits and explore the potentials of writing in their classrooms.

Concerning the design of writing activities for young learners, the activities of the present study were kept simple on the basis of some previous research by Pinter (2006), Scott and Ytreberg (2004), and Yangın-Ersanlı (2010). Consequently, the participants did not find the activities too complex or demanding to perform; instead, they were motivated to do them. The researcher of the present study observed that the participants enjoyed performing them. Thus, considering that writing is a complex skill, language teachers are suggested to design writing activities carefully according to the level and age of the students.

Secondly, as for the use of graded readers, they were also found to be effective in vocabulary learning. According to the teacher's observations, all the participants liked the stories and enjoyed reading them. The activity pages of the

books helped the teachers break the boredom of continuous reading sessions. The illustrations of the books caught the attention of the participants, which increased motivation and curiosity in the class. However, in Turkey, despite their efficacy in language learning, stories are not used widely (Haznedar, 2012). According to results of a survey study Haznedar (2012) conducted with English teachers in Istanbul, only 31.19% of 388 teachers used stories in their lessons. Haznedar (2012) emphasizes that stories are motivating and instructing for young learners because they provide a meaningful context for language learning. Consequently, stories, graded readers within the scope of the current study, are suggested to be used more frequently.

Regarding the practice of reading the graded readers aloud, the researcher and the participant teacher observed that the participants actively attended the lesson when they role-played the dialogues in the graded readers. They had fun during the class by changing their voices and acted out the scenes according to the characters in the stories. In addition to having a pleasant time, reading aloud may have an effect on vocabulary learning. Spencer (2011) asserts that reading aloud can increase students' comprehension and vocabulary knowledge in the second language. Thus, during the reading sessions, it may be good idea for teachers to create opportunities in which students will have a chance to read aloud and role-play the texts.

5.2 Limitations and suggestions for future research

The present study has several limitations. Firstly, because of administrative challenges and the proficiency level needed for the graded readers used in this study, two intact classes which were of students who had high GPAs in the primary school were involved in the study. The sampling of the classes was not random but purposeful. Therefore, the results obtained in this study cannot be generalized to the

entire 5th grade learners of English. Consequently, further research can be conducted with other participants who have diverse GPAs; such a study can reveal different findings.

Secondly, the researcher teaches one of these classes in which the study was conducted. Once again due to administrative limitations, it was impossible to change the classes.

Thirdly, because of the large number of students in one class, not every participant had a chance to read aloud the stories in each story session. In classes with a smaller number of students, every student can have that chance and benefit more from the positive effects of reading aloud in language learning.

Lastly, because of time limitations, the present study only explored the short-term effects of writing activities on vocabulary learning. Investigating the effects of writing activities on the retention of vocabulary can be beneficial for language teachers and learners. The use of writing activities as a tool in long-term vocabulary learning may be encouraged if writing activities are found to be effective in the retention of vocabulary in future research.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE TEST

Aşağıda bulunan kelimelerin anlamlarını yazınız, anlamını bilmiyorsanız kelimenin karşısına X koyunuz.

1. dream
2. angry
3. fly
4. careful
5. tie
6. trick
7. cave
8. prisoner
9. sprinkle (v)
10. pirate
11. plank (n)
12. mast (n)
13. trouble
14. save
15. sky
16. parent
17. proud
18. fishing
19. magic
20. ordinary
21. fault
22. rod
23. sheep
24. boring
25. wool
26. shepherd
27. disappoint
28. strange
29. worried
30. village
31. yard
32. cloud
33. discover
34. climb
35. word
36. fantastic
37. beard
38. servant
39. merchant
40. thief
41. rich
42. axe
43. wood
44. dust
45. carry
46. grow
47. reach
48. bear
49. animal
50. river
51. harm
52. appear
53. tail
54. jungle
55. shout
56. enjoy
57. law
58. teach
59. face
60. drop
61. daughter
62. live
63. love
64. bird
65. tall
66. tree
67. dinner
68. hate
69. vegetable
70. eat
71. brother
72. close
73. forest
74. upset
75. fire
76. walk
77. hundred
78. monkey
79. tiger
80. thank

APPENDIX B

WORD LIST

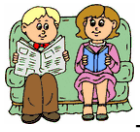
1. dream
2. angry
3. fly
4. careful
5. tie
6. trick
7. cave
8. prisoner
9. sprinkle (v)
10. pirate
11. plank (n)
12. mast (n)
13. trouble
14. save
15. sky
16. parent
17. proud
18. fishing
19. magic
20. ordinary
21. fault
22. rod
23. sheep
24. boring
25. wool
26. shepherd
27. disappoint
28. strange
29. worried
30. village
31. yard
32. cloud
33. discover
34. climb
35. word
36. fantastic
37. beard
38. servant
39. merchant
40. thief
41. rich
42. axe
43. wood
44. dust
45. carry
46. grow
47. reach
48. bear
49. animal
50. river
51. harm
52. appear
53. tail
54. jungle
55. shout
56. enjoy
57. law
58. teach
59. face
60. drop
61. daughter
62. live
63. love
64. bird
65. tall
66. tree
67. dinner
68. hate
69. vegetable
70. eat
71. brother
72. close
73. forest
74. upset
75. fire
76. walk
77. hundred
78. monkey
79. tiger
80. thank

APPENDIX C

VOCABULARY TEST USED AS PRETEST AND POST TEST

Part 1- Read the story. Look at the pictures and write the word.

I had a funny  _____ last night. We are alone on an island. I 

_____there with my  _____. But one day I want to travel around the island. I go into the  _____. I see a  _____and a 

_____there. The monkey has got a very long  _____. It is nearly 5 meters long. I am surprised. I go deeper into the island. I see a  _____. He is  and he is  _____ at his  _____ because she says a  _____stole his parrot. I leave them and come to a beautiful beach. I see a man. He has got a  _____boat. We get on the boat. He says some  _____ words. Then, suddenly we are in the middle of the sea. I catch a fish but it has a  _____. I  _____ that fish. I am scared. Then I wake up from this dream.

Part 2- Look at the picture and complete the word. The first letter is given.

1)  t _ _

2)  c _ _ _

3)  m _ _ _

4)  b _ _ _

5)  r _ _

6)  s _ _ _ _ _ _ _

7)  v _ _ _ _ _ _

8)  v _ _ _ _ _ _ __

9)  c _ _ _ _

10)  c _ _ _ _

11)  a _ _

12)  b _ _ _ _ _ _

13)  a _ _ _ _ _

14)  f _ _ _

15)  s _ _ _ _

16)  h _ _ _ _ _ _

Part 3- Look at the picture, read the sentences and circle the correct answer.

1) 

Birds can ------.

A) speak B) fly C) draw

2) 

I am sorry, this is my .....!

A) fault B) computer

C) desk

3) 

Christopher Columbus

..... America.

A) walked B) started

C) discovered

4) 

Flowers ..... in the garden.

A) grow B) water C) see

5) 

I ..... cats.

A) give B) love

C) work

6) 

Be .....! A car is coming!

A) angry B) beautiful

C) careful

7) 

My sweater is made of .....

A) iron B) wool

C) paper

8) 

A) Can you ..... these apples for me?

B) Yes, sure.

A) carry B) make

C) cut

9) 

Let's swim in that .....!

A) ocean B) sea

C) river

10) 

We always have ..... at 20.00.

A) lunch b) dinner

C) breakfast

11) 

Please, ... some salt on my beef.

A) sprinkle B) make

C) write

12) 

We are all ..... about Maths exam.

A) happy B) worried

C) hungry



13)

Istanbul is a/an .....

city.

A) fantastic B) ugly

C) hot



14)

A- Do you ..... riding a bike?

B- Yes, it is my favourite free time activity.

A) sleep B) drink

C) enjoy

15) 

It is good to walk in the .....

A) street B) forest

C) house



16)

..... are wild animals.

A) tigers B) elephants

C) donkeys

Part 4- Look at the pictures and choose the correct option.

1)



A prisoner/ a tailor is coming.

2)



It is an ordinary/a busy day.

3)



My family is rich /poor.

4)



The sun appears/ sets in the morning.

5)



James has a daughter/ son.

6)



A carpenter cuts the plank/ stone.

7)



Lisa disappoints/ pleases the teacher because she does not do her homework.

8)



The chair is made of yellow wood/ iron.

9)



I teach/ learn Maths for 10 years.

10)



A tall/ plump postman brings the letters.

11)



The sky is/ clouds are clear and blue.

12)



A strange / well built man knocked on the door.

13)



The house is very dirty and full of dust/mud.

14)



If you eat/ cook healthy food, you will not get ill.

15)



My mother dropped / put all the cups in the kitchen.

16)



Look! The house is on fire/sale.

Part 5- Look at the pictures and complete the words.

1)



t _ _ _ k

2)



t _ _ _ _ _ e

3)



s _ _ e

4)



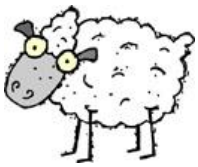
t _ _ _ k

5)



p _ _ _ d

6)



s _ _ _ p

7)



b _ _ _ _ g

8)



t _ _ e

9)



y _ _ d

10)



w _ _ d

11)



m _ _ _ _ _ _ t

12)



c _ _ _ e

13)



r _ _ _ h

14)



h _ _ m

15)



l _ w

16)



w _ _k

APPENDIX D

SUMMARIES OF THE STORIES

Peter Pan

Peter Pan is an adventure story whose main character Peter Pan is a magical boy. With the fairy, Tinkerbell, they visit children in their dreams and sometimes take them to their homeland, a magical place called Neverland. In the story, during their visit to the Darling children, Tinkerbell sneezes and the children Wendy, Michael and John wake up. With the help of fairy dust, Peter Pan and Tinkerbell take the children to Neverland. However, when they arrive, they see that Tiger Lily, the daughter of Indian chief, is in trouble as the pirates kidnap her and tie her up. Peter Pan plays a trick on the pirates and saves Tiger Lily. However, the captain of the pirates becomes angry when he understands that Peter Pan deceives the pirates. The captain and the pirates go to the cave where the Darling children stay and make them prisoners. Tinkerbell sees what happens to the children and at the end of the story, Peter Pan comes and saves children. The captain falls into the sea where a crocodile waits for him. The Darling children miss their parents and they go back to their homes.

The Wishing Fish

Omar is a very lazy boy whose family has many sheep and they earn money from the wool of the sheep. One day, Omar's mother gives him some money asking Omar to go to the market and buy some fruit and vegetables. However, Omar sees a man in black clothes and the man suggests selling a fishing rod which is magical. The man says that Omar can catch a fish called the Wishing Fish with that rod and the fish makes wishes come true. Omar buys the rod and goes to the lake. Then, he catches the Wishing Fish and tells him to make the sheep disappear so that Omar will not work again. After some days, it does not rain, the weather becomes hotter and hotter and finally the sheep become ill and some of them die. As the family cannot sell the wool, the father announces that they do not have enough money to buy food and Omar's brothers need to go to other villages to work. Omar is very sad and goes to the lake again with the rod to catch the Wishing Fish again. As he cries, he fills the dry lake and finally the fish appears. Omar wishes from the fish to change everything back and says that working is important. At the end of the story, he becomes a good shepherd and never uses the rod again.

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

Ali Baba is a poor woodcutter who has a rich brother called Cassim. One day, Ali Baba's wife tells him that there is not any food at home and Ali Baba decides to go to the forest to cut some wood. While he is cutting wood, he sees many men. Ali Baba hides on the tree. The forty men stand in front of a cave with bags full of treasure. The captain of forty men says 'Open, Sesame!' and the rock in front of the cave opens. The thieves go inside the cave. After a while, they get out of the cave and the captain says 'Close, Sesame!' to close the rock. The thieves leave the cave and Ali Baba arrives in front of the cave and says the magic words. He goes inside and finds gold, jewels, and silk in the cave. He fills his bags and returns home. While he is showing the treasure to his wife, Cassim and his wife arrive and Ali Baba cannot hide the treasure. He has to tell everything to Cassim and warns him to be careful. The next morning, Cassim goes to the cave and says the magic words. The rock opens and Cassim goes into the cave. He fills his bag and he is very happy. However, when he wants to leave, he forgets the magic words. When Cassim does not return home, his wife gets worried and goes to Ali Baba's house. Ali Baba goes to the cave again and he finds his brother dead. He brings his brother back home. The thieves realize that the body of Cassim is taken by another person and try to find who knows their secret. They discover Ali Baba's house and want to play a trick on him. The captain tells Ali Baba that he is an oil merchant and he has oil jars in which other thieves hide. However, Morgiana, the servant, notices the thieves in the jars and kills them by pouring boiling oil on them. The captain escapes but he comes again dressed in a silk merchant a few days later. Morgiana recognizes him again and dismisses him. Ali Baba appreciates Morgiana and makes her marry his son. Mariana is no longer a servant but a member of the family now.

Mowgli

Mowgli is a story of a jungle boy whose parents have to leave him in the jungle when a tiger called Shere Khan attacks his parents. The baby is taken by a wolf to their cave where Father Wolf and Mother Wolf live with their four cubs. Although Shere Khan wants to get the baby, Father Wolf does not give the baby called Mowgli and wants to ask all the animals in the jungle. They have a meeting and the leader of the wolves who is wise decides to keep Mowgli in the jungle. Shere Khan cannot do anything. After years pass, Mowgli grows up playing and learning with his best friends Baloo and Bagheera. One day, Mowgli tells his best friends that he meets with The Monkey-People who look like with Mowgli but have a tail. The Monkey-People want Mowgli to become their leader. However, Baloo and Bagheera warn Mowgli not to talk to them again because they are bad and silly and they do not have any laws. Later, The Monkey-People come for Mowgli and kidnap him; fortunately, Chil sees what is happening. The best friends Baloo and Bagheera ask help from the python Kaa to save Mowgli. They all together go to the Monkey-City and find Mowgli there. The monkeys attack them but they jump into the water. Kaa, the python, makes a circle around the monkeys and hypnotizes them. Baloo and Bagheera take Mowgli and thank Kaa for his help. After they return back to the jungle, Mother Wolf tells Mowgli that Shere Khan still wants to take Mowgli and he had better go to his own house to the man village. Mowgli does not want to leave the jungle but one day he goes nearer to the man village to see the people there. When he returns to the jungle, Shere Khan attacks Mowgli but Mowgli burns the tiger with his branch. Mowgli decides to go back to his own kind and says goodbye to his family and friends there. Mowgli goes to the village and sees a woman there. The woman

touches his face and says once she has a son but a tiger takes him in the jungle. Although Mowgli does not understand her, he knows he has a lot to learn there.

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