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# Consciousness of writing, spelling errors and their causes in Turkish alphabet

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## Abstract

Calligraphy is making the symbols of letters infinite through giving them special meanings, and stabilizing them within a certain plane order. Learning to write well depends on the training of the hand and the eye. During the process of learning, however, writing is a kind of skill that asks for continuous and regular practices for improvement. It is also crucial to have a conscious and inclination to write well at the time of acquiring this skill permanently.

What are the misspellings of the students at the Department of Primary School Education within their writing activities, and the causes of this phenomenon? The answer of this question will be exemplified and explained.

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*Key words:* Consciousness of writing; alphabet; writing; consciousness; spelling errors.

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## 1. Introduction

Writing is to give meaning to letter signs, to fix them on a certain plane, and to make them immortal. Since speaking is a natural human ability, the act of communication which had been maintained through various primitive methods until the invention of writing has gained a different aspect and dimension. Furthermore, it is not causeless that the invention of writing is accepted as the beginning of history.

Writing is defined as follows in the Turkish dictionary: “fixing ideas through certain signs; act of writing; figures and signs that we show by drawing or scraping on any material in order to declare our feeling and thoughts to others.” Writing is a product of the act and activity of writing.

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The term of “writer” differs from one who writes artistically. The term of “artistic writing” is used for works which are written beautiful in literary terms. It would be more realistic to name a writing written by an individual as “self-writing” or his/her “own writing”. So, possible concept confusion can be overcome.

An individual’s own writing varies according to text composition. “Writing with a proper dispersal of words and lines is called ‘loose writing’. In ‘close writing’, words and lines telescope into each other. ‘Spaced writing’ is characterized with big spaces put between words and lines. ‘Wavy writing’ is written different directions up and down.” (Genç Larousse, 1993). In self-writing, age and writing habit have an important role. In order to make the writing to breathe, one has to leave proper space between lines so that eye can easily follow them. Visual attraction of letter composition and priority of esthetics are important criteria.

“At first, human beings drew their hunts in order to bewitch them. These drawings on stones show people killing their hunts. So, they believe that they will achieve hunting. Ice Age people begin to construct an abstract world other than their concrete world after beginning to think. Because causes of fertility, growing up and improvement are not visible, they express them with the help of symbols.” (Vural, 1997) Symbols reference to meaning. So, signs of writing transform into symbols. These signs imitate the most known objects (items, animals, tools etc.) of their ages as schematic forms. These schematic signs transform in time into various alphabets in different regions. Therefore, a culture can be differentiated from others by looking at its symbols.

In a world where universal science and technology are spread into all realms of life, corruption of writing is a serious problem because writing is one of the fundamental elements of culture and civilization. In a world with fast transformations, people have also a fast life style. Although life gets easier with the help of science and technology (washing machine, dishwasher, iron, telephone etc.), its fast flow continues at the same time. In such an environment, writing is one of the elements which are to be corrupted possibly. In our country which has a young population, young people use buttons of technological products (writing sms with cell phones, chatting with computer keyboard) by writing and so, writing with hand and pen becomes a problematic issue. Especially young people write by hand unreadable, inattentive, and careless and without any esthetic value. Today, majority of students and even teachers use computer and information technologies in every realm of their lives, and therefore they think that there is no need to writing by hand.

Writing is also an element which makes feelings, thoughts etc. visible and reflects personality and identity of the individual. Children, who express themselves through pictures and drawing at early ages, thereafter begin to express their inner world through writing (diaries, journals etc.). During primary school years, writing helps children to control themselves and to reflect their inner world out. Writing even manifests the character of individuals.

Learning to write a good hand is based on training of hand and eyes. The writing gets better parallel to amount of training and effort during eye, hand and mind education. Therefore artistic writing is a skill which has always to be improved. “Aside advantages stemming from human brain and ability of making sounds and speaking, the telescopic character of human eye is important. So, objects can be seen from both sides, distance of objects can be perceived with the help of parallax, and eyes and fingers can function coordinated.” (Sayılı, 1999) During acquisition of this skill, consciousness of artistic writing and willingness level of the individual have an important role. While writing is something characteristic and personal, it will improve with the help of training of eyes, hand and mind. Willingness of the student and positive attitude of the teacher has significant roles during this acquisition process. As a result of relating the act of writing with the universe of art and esthetic, the fact of “artistic writing” comes into being.

Students have to be encouraged to write by hand, and their level of interest has to be increased proportionally and carefully. “There is a certain kind of attention at a relatively low level, and animals have also this kind of attention. However the level of attention needed during acts and activities such as learning, thinking, understanding and interpreting is higher. While seeing, one looks at stimulants related to the field of sight, the act of seeing as a sense does not contain understanding what the seen objects are. In the same way, the words meanings of which one does not know are only heard but not understood. Encountering an unknown taste, we compare it to other tastes which we know. The same is valid for new smells. And in realm of touch, our perception about hardness, temperature and dryness of what we touch supply us information about that object. However this information alone cannot lead to any idea.” (Özcan, 2000). And all these senses affect our act of writing.

“In every learning event, we can expect that our understanding of teaching and education improve when we are aware of significance of attention during this process.” (Özcan, 2000) Perception, thought, feeling, consciousness, adaptation power of students and their willingness to write have to be kept alive and to be improved. Own motives, reasoning and rationale of students for writing influence the level of willingness and create an automatic self-control

mechanism for writing. In adolescence, students want to make mark of his/her personality on writing. So, they do handwriting experiments. These behaviors of students has to be supported and encouraged by teachers.

Acts of the first reading-writing and artistic handwriting are different things. Writing is lifelong one the most important elements in life. A widespread belief is that respect of people for writing decreases year by year beginning from first classes. The first and second class students take really care when writing. After students comprehend the reading and writing mechanisms, they get less attentive when writing, and make more spelling errors. To give students an effective, practical and lasting habit of writing, student have to be maintain writing in a funny way without getting bored. Especially beginning from adolescence period, students try to change figures of letters and invent their own writing styles. Another sign of this fact is their tendency to do signature exercises in the same period. Features of the writing style encoded in this period will be easily added up to personality.

“Child mind learns by rote impressions coming from senses as if they make copies of them. After that, it interprets these impressions according to their experiences, knowledge, acquisitions, needs, desires, plans and projects about future. It makes decisions, selects, shortens, unites and internalizes. Mind transform the content in memory related to the first reading and writing with the help of all these processes into something else very different from sensual impressions.

Child memory encodes sentences, words and letters according to conditions, environment, needs, purposes, interests, delights and desires. Impressions obtained from these are not stored as exact copies. It gets impressions not in a passive way; it interprets them and gives meaning to them. While doing this, some of knowledge needed for the first reading and writing gets forgotten and disappears. These should be learned and encoded again.” (Özcan, 1999) In case of that writing in memory and encoded knowledge are correct, a more qualified writing style can develop. If knowledge internalized by mind can be kept always alive, the writing style and system will remain harmonious. Knowledge which is correctly encoded can be kept alive with the help of “repetition principle”, so it helps that connotation continues. Therefore, teacher has to be careful about that letters are encoded correctly in terms of meaning network in all classes and ages, and to correct mistakes.

Some examples for causes of spelling errors are as follows:

- Lack of care in anatomic structures of letters,
- Very short of long extensions on shape of letters,
- Disproportional shapes of letters,
- Unnecessary ornaments and additions on shape of letters,
- Forgetting punctuation of letters,
- Writing letters very close,
- Disproportional spaces between letters and words,
- Lack of care in page setup,
- Lack of care in spelling,
- Lack of care in alignment of lines,
- Holding the pen and gripping the pen in a wrong way.

One of the purposes of writing education is to ensure that all people who writes or is interested in writing can write in accordance with rules, fluent, careful, attentive, creative, beautiful and esthetic. The esthetic of writing has a certain impact on one who reads. It makes the content more powerful and lasting. It builds a special bridge of sympathy between reader and one who writes. People represent themselves through their writing styles, therefore they expect that this representation is beautiful. “Sorry for my ugly handwriting” sentence is one of the best signs of this.

Writing lessons aim mainly to teach writing. Therefore acquisition of good manners related to writing can be seen as secondary. However, beside eye and hand practice acquired through repetition, teachers always have to care about that children are clean and orderly.

A beautiful handwriting is only possible after a harmony between all elements; page is a space, and letters are close and one within the other in this space. Another important factor is the pressure of the pen on paper. Pen has not to be pressed unnecessarily hard, and paper has not be damaged. Page setup has to be imagined at the beginning. Proportions of letters in this space are a part of relationship between parts and the whole. Page setup has also significance in terms of effect on reader, easy reading, perception, feeling and thinking. The integrity of the composition of visual expression consisting of letters has to attract the reader. Writing is at the same time a practice of care and willpower.

The proportion between letters and the whole page, that is to say harmony between parts and the whole has to be understood by students as the basic principle. A readable handwriting means that groups of signs which form the writing can be read easily and fast. The condition of writing block, thin or thick letters, letter and line spacing, style of letter combinations, unnecessary ornaments etc. affect the writing secondarily.

Our single wish is to maintain an ideal education of writing in every area of life by laying the foundation of the understanding about act of writing properly. Our purpose is that every individual of our nation has a beautiful handwriting.

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