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Students' Views on an Innovative Drama Approach to Language Learning and Its Effect on Writing Skills*

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is two-fold: First, it aims to report on the students' views on an innovative task-based lesson procedure that combines collaborative writing and process drama, and secondly, it investigates the students' gains from this procedure by comparing their writing products before and after the implementation of the procedure. The procedure is called "Tales by Teens", and it was developed via a design experiment study with 30 high school students. The quantitative data was obtained from writing tasks as pre- and post-tests, and qualitative data was obtained from the semi-structured exit interviews. As a result of the study, it can be said that the Tales by Teens procedure statistically contributes to the development of the participants' writing skills, is favoured by students, and consolidates their learning process in many ways. Within the scope of this study, the Tales by Teens procedure has been put forward as a useful and applicable English teaching method.

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This study aims to report the effectiveness of the Tales by Teens procedure (TbyT hereafter), which was developed as part of a funded project. It aims to investigate how effective the procedure was perceived by the students, and whether the project made any significant changes in the students' writings before and after participating in the project.

TbyT is an English teaching procedure that can be used with secondary school students, consisting of process drama and collaborative writing activities, adopting the principles of task-based language teaching. It can be utilized as an extracurricular activity as well as within the scope of English lessons. In TbyT, the group handles the writing product as a task while working collaboratively on it. In this way, it is aimed at helping students gain language awareness. In order to create the story to be written with the group, the conventions of process drama are used.

As in all learning environments, the place of drama in language teaching has attracted the attention of researchers (Stinson & Winston, 2011). Drama is considered particularly important for language teaching because it is in line with the communicative approach, which is one of the current language teaching approaches. Among the important principles of the communicative approach where drama offers wide possibilities are points such as (1) learning the language by using it rather than with explanations, (2) presenting the language in context rather than in an abstract way, and (3) giving priority to comprehension rather than language structures when learning a language (Sam, 1990).

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Writing activities require students to draw from their own lives and knowledge. In this respect, it can be said that writing and drama are fed from a common source (Crumpler and Schneider, 2002). By encouraging students to use their own stories and insights in their writing, teachers can facilitate a more meaningful and authentic learning experience. Similarly, by engaging in activities through drama, students go through complex processes using their own experiences as a foundation for their writings and performances. Therefore, it could be suggested that both writing and drama offer opportunities for students to express themselves creatively and make sense of the world around them.

Combining drama and collaborative writing in a communicative framework, TbyT follows a five-step procedure. In the preparation step (i), students engage in warm-up exercises and are introduced to the context, followed by a pre-text with a question or problem. The creation step (ii) involves investigating the characters, main events, and points of the story, using the conventions and structures of process drama to stimulate creativity. In the dramatization step (iii), scenes from the story are played out, during which students can make observations and take notes. The production step (iv) involves collaborative writing activities and corrective feedback, with students given sufficient time to think and plan their writing. Finally, in the negotiation step (v), the group agrees on the final form of the story in light of criticisms, corrections, and suggestions.

There are three principles to consider when applying the TbyT procedure in the classroom. The first principle is the priority of participation, where the teacher should ensure that all students participate in the processes. The second principle is the priority of communication, emphasizing fluency over accuracy and allowing students to express themselves through various communication strategies. The third principle is the priority of the task, where the teacher should make the group think about the goal of transcribing a story they created together, and provide frequent feedback and opportunities for students to revise their work.

2. Background Information on the TbyT Project

The main study, which we can position as qualitative research in terms of data types and data analysis methods, utilized a research method called design experiment. Design experiments were born out of the need to seek answers to questions about the nature of learning within their own context rather than in controlled laboratory settings (Collins, Joseph, & Bielaczyc, 2004). Contrary to traditional experimental research, where the training methods to be designed are tried to be isolated from other factors as much as possible, in the design experiment, it is argued that the environment should have real chaotic features. The main focus of the design experiment was not measuring the effects of the TbyT procedure. Rather, it focused on the design features of the procedure itself. Namely, how well the procedure could work within the real classroom. Within the scope of the project, the TbyT procedure was first piloted in an equivalent high school. In design experiments, the contextual factors should be understood thoroughly, therefore extensive observations and interviews were carried out and put to a test drive in two iterations, collecting observations and data in each step, and feeding the findings back into the design. As a result of the design experiment, the design features of the TbyT procedure were finalized. In addition to the design experiment, a small scale quasi-experimental study was planned by including a pre- and post-test stage in the beginning and the end of the design experiment. Also, a small-scale qualitative study investigating the views of the students on the TbyT procedure was planned. Figure 1 shows the implementation steps of the project.

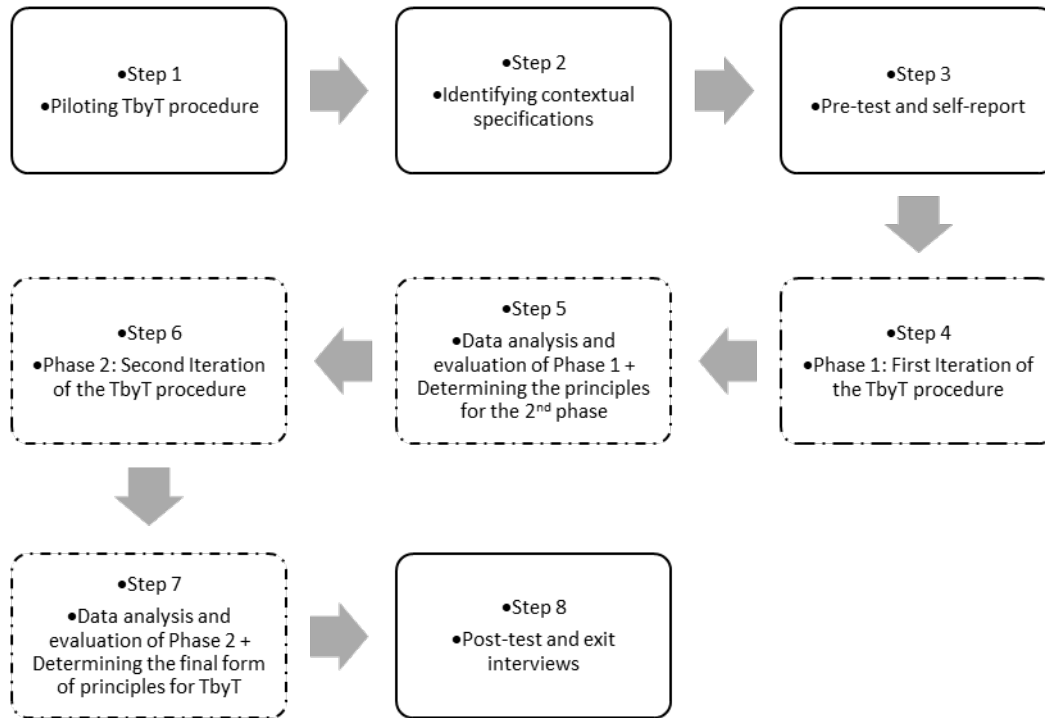


Figure 1. The Implementation Stages of the TbyT Project

3. Literature Review

Theory wise, TbyT stands on three distinct fields: task-based language teaching, collaborative writing, and process drama. Although each field has an extensive literature on its own, few studies which draw from all three of them at the same time.

Drama has been successfully used for various purposes in language teaching (Stinson & Winston, 2011). It benefits not only language proficiency but also in social and emotional terms (Piazzoli, 2010). Drama has been shown to reduce foreign language anxiety (Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013) and increasing intercultural awareness (Schewe, 1998). It also aids in grammar teaching (Even, 2011; Lapaire, 2011), vocabulary teaching (Brouillette, 2012; Demircioğlu, 2010), listening (Reed & Seong, 2013), and reading (Medina et al., 2021).

Due to their suitability for speaking, drama structures have been extensively researched, particularly in developing speaking skills. Both small-scale studies (e.g., Göktürk, Çalışkan, & Öztürk, 2020; Türkel & Öz, 2020), and large-scale studies (e.g., Stinson & Freebody, 2006) found that students' in-class speaking time was longer, they participated in the lesson more willingly, and their general speaking skills improved in terms of fluency, appropriateness, and accuracy when the drama method was used.

Although speaking and comprehension are often the first things that come to mind when thinking about language proficiency, writing skills also play an important role in language development. Writing requires more time to complete than speaking (Pinto & Rezende, 2019), and it requires more accuracy and precision (Kellogg, 2016). Writing activities encourage students to think more about language structures (Williams, 2012). Zalbidea (2021) compared oral and written tasks assigned to students and discovered that grammar elements were more likely to be noticed and learned in tasks requiring a written response.

According to Ellis (2013), the primary goal of task-based methodology is to foster language acquisition and skill development by promoting collaborative knowledge construction (p. 276). This approach might be regarded as compatible with drama since it highlights the value of interactive learning, in which students participate in meaningful tasks that promote collaboration and active engagement. Task based language teaching also enhances student interaction and fosters active participation when implemented for writing skills (Azizah et al., 2021). Task-based approach not only

improves academic skills but also prepares students for real-world challenges by focusing on practical, need-based tasks that integrate into their daily lives.

Writing activities involve students in using their own experiences and understanding. Consequently, it can be argued that both writing and drama share a common source of inspiration. In the studies where drama is used to develop writing skills in a foreign language, students gained self-confidence (Babayiğit, 2019; Göçen, 2019; Nurhayati, 2016), positive attitudes, and motivation (Bağçeci, 2015; Kadan, 2021). In similar studies, the motivating power of drama, increasing language awareness and the emergence of more complex and comprehensive writings have been underlined (Cremin et al., 2006; Erdogan, 2013; Kara, 2013; Sulak & Erdogan, 2019; Uyar, 1995).

The studies where story writing was undertaken through drama were mostly realized in the context of the mother tongue. As an exception in this regard, Çalışkan (2007) based his work on the premises that creating stories provides a context for foreign language teaching and that it has the power to motivate students and develop imagination. Thus, it aimed to present both an exemplary application and to reveal the opinions of teachers and students about this application. As a result of the experiment, it was observed that the creativity and critical thinking skills of the students who worked on writing stories with drama developed. At the end of the study, both students and teachers stated that they found this process useful.

In a collective inquiry on how drama could be most useful in the current educational system, Cremin et al. (2006), in their pilot study, investigated whether it was more effective for a teacher to determine the genre in advance when preparing a drama for writing or if it was better to prepare a drama and write in a genre that fits the context. It was concluded that drama and writing studies were more successful when they were melted in one pot. In the main study, Cremin et al. (2006) used drama and story creation activities in their own classes for eight weeks and found that better stories emerge if there is an element of curiosity and tension in the drama study, if it involves children emotionally, and if it gives a strong reason to write.

Another study which explores innovative approaches to engaging children in the creation of literature is by Dobson et al. (2019), emphasizing the importance of child-led storytelling. They initiated a short story writing workshop at a school, aiming to address the issue of "aetonormativity," or the imposition of adult perspectives in children's literature. Over two months, students used drama to develop and transform a story into a children's picture book titled *The Nightmare Catcher*, which was accompanied by a parent/teacher guide. This project actively involved students in every step, from story creation to publication, allowing them to infuse their own experiences and perspectives into the narrative. As a result, the children's story about a gamer presented a unique character distinct from those typically depicted by adult authors, showcasing a qualitatively different approach to children's literature.

Although many studies highlight the usefulness of drama in foreign language development, only few focus on the specific effects of writing and story creation in a foreign language. Positive results from studies monitoring mother tongue development suggest that students can reflect their own world and develop positive relationships with the language similarly in a foreign language. However, due to challenges in foreign language writing (Hyland, 2019), writing processes in the mother tongue and a second language may not be the same and generalizations from these studies should be made cautiously. Considering these differences, it is essential to investigate to what extent the benefits of drama and story creation in mother tongue development apply to foreign language development. The TbyT procedure was created with this in mind, and its outcomes were examined in terms of students' perceptions and its potential for developing writing skills.

Students' perceptions towards both drama and collaborative writing have been found positive in previous studies. For example, Storch (2005) reports that college students have positive views on collaborative writing. In Limbu and Markauskaite (2015), students conceived of collaborative writing useful because it divides the work, combines the expertise, provides deeper understanding of the content, and helps develop new skills and attitudes for collaboration. Tseng (2018) gathered student feedback to investigate the development of communicative competence through drama-based projects

in an EFL classroom. Student views showed that an engaging learning process motivates students and encourages them to take initiative, whether working individually or collaboratively in groups. Masoumi-Moghaddam (2018) also relied on student interviews as well as direct and indirect participant observation to examine the effects of drama and drama techniques to teach EFL and acquire student insights such as increased awareness about the contexts.

Unraveling the students' experiences on TbyT procedure and their perceptions of it would provide insights for improving the design. Furthermore, comparison of the pre- and post-writing products of the students may imply the success of the TbyT procedure in terms of language learning. Therefore, the specific research questions for this paper are as follows:

1. What are the students' views on the Tales by Teens procedure in terms of pre-, while-, and post-implementation experiences and its effectiveness on the whole?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference between the writing scores of the students before and after the Tales by Teens procedure?

4. Method

In this study, we aimed to evaluate the effects of the TbyT procedure on students' writing skills and perceptions of the process. To achieve this, we administered pre- and post-writing assessments (Steps 3 and 8 in Figure 1) to a sample of 30 students who participated in the TbyT project.

4.1 Research Design

This paper reports on two studies, one qualitative and one pre-test, post-test experimental study. The qualitative part aims to collect students' opinions regarding the Tales by Teens procedure. A semi-structured exit interview was performed with the participant students at the end of the design experiment to collect data for this part. In addition to collecting students' views, the students' writing products before and after the design experiment were collected to compare them in a small scale quasi-experimental study. Creswell (2015) asserts that using both qualitative and quantitative data will result in a fresh understanding of your data and provide deeper insights (p. 536). It also enables making use of the strengths of both types, as quantitative data can be statistically analyzed and yield numbers, while qualitative data provides the actual words of the subjects and gives an authentic picture of the situation (p. 537). The research design can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Research design

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test	Exit Interviews
30 students	Writing	Design Experiment: TbyT	Writing	Semi-structured exit interviews

4.2 Procedure

A pilot study was carried out before the present study regarding the TbyT procedure with 20 students from an equivalent secondary school, and the research design has been finalized. A writing assignment was applied to the students as a pre-test. Along with the writing assignment, the participants also filled out the ALTE can-do statements to self-reflect on their position in English proficiency. Then, students went through the treatment involving the two iterations of the design experiment during the English lessons as a part of the students' normal school schedule. The lessons were carried out by one of the researchers while the other researcher remained as a non-participant observer, taking videos and field notes. The regular teacher of the class was present throughout the implementations. In the first iteration of the TbyT procedure, which was implemented as two lesson

hours (80 mins) per week for two weeks, the students created a story based on Anna Kendrick's Cup Song video clip. According to this story, a group of young musicians enter a music competition and win a big money prize after which one of the group members vanishes without any trace. Years later, the group members unite, and the mystery disappearance of the group member is resolved. The second iteration of the project, refined according to the findings from the first iteration, also was carried out as two lesson hours (80 mins) per week for two weeks. This time, the students created a story of foreigners in a fictional city. The foreigners were wrongly accused of engaging in terrorist activities and had to flee the city by boarding a ship. Unfortunately, the ship sank on the way and only a few children were able to survive to tell the tragic story. After the two iterations of the design experiment as described above, the same writing assignment was applied to the students to see whether there was a significant difference in the writing scores of the participants. Following the writing assignment, the researchers also benefited from semi-structured exit interviews to collect students' opinions on the TbyT procedure.

4.3 Participants

The participants of this study were 9th grade high school students in the same class at a high school in Muğla. Therefore, the average age was fourteen. The study was conducted with 30 students (15 males and 15 females). The level of the students was determined based on their grade level, and self-reported assessments according to ALTE can-do statements as presented in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages document. When the distribution of the marked ALTE can do statements was examined, the majority of the students were found to be at A2-B1 levels. These were shown to the class teacher to confirm the students' perceived level.

Out of 30 participants, 29 students participated in the pre-test, while 23 students participated in the post-test. For the quantitative part, only the participants with both pre- and post-tests were used. However, all 30 of the students participated in the semi-structured exit interview.

The participants were informed about the aims and procedures of the study and informed consent was collected from both the participants and their parents in line with the permission from the ethical boards of the university and the Ministry of Education.

4.4 Data Collection Tools

4.4.1 Writings

A creative story writing prompt from the book *Discussions That Work* (Ur, 1981) that is evaluated as appropriate for the age and language level of the students was prepared to be used before and after the procedure begins (see Appendix I). The eight drawings, arranged on A4 paper, follow each other to suggest a story. Students were asked to make up and write a story by looking at these pictures. The researchers looked at the pertinent literature in order to evaluate the stories that the students had written in response to the prompts, and they created an evaluation key that was in line with the subject. The purpose of this data is to compare the stories written before and after the procedure.

The evaluation key consists of four parts: content, vocabulary, grammar, and spelling criteria (see Appendix II). The evaluation key was first used in a pilot study. Inter-coder reliability (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was calculated at 0.93. In order to obtain this, the students' writings were evaluated separately by the researchers. Then, for the non-compliant scores, the researchers re-evaluated, reached the same score, and reconciled. In addition, the statistical data obtained as a result of the examination of the writing products of the students with the help of the evaluation key showed that the writing practice, which serves as a pre-test and post-test, shows high reliability ($\alpha=.92$) because the reliability of the tests increases as it approaches the value of 1.00.

4.4.2 Semi-structured exit interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with the participating students (see Appendix III). During these interviews, participants were expected to evaluate the TbyT procedure. The purpose of this data is to provide a detailed picture of students' views for the evaluation of the design. The interview questions were determined by the researcher following the objectives of the study. A pilot study was carried out with 20 students in an equivalent high school to see whether these interview questions provided sufficient and appropriate data. The researchers asked the questions they identified as the starting points and supported them with exploratory questions when necessary.

4.5 Data Analysis

4.5.1 Writings

The study utilized a story writing prompt administered before and after the intervention. The data was analyzed by comparing the scores of students who participated in both the pre-test and post-test. The tests were graded based on the evaluation key developed for the stories they wrote. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS 22 statistical analysis software.

4.5.2 Semi-structured exit interviews

Semi-structured interviews were examined by thematic analysis from general qualitative data analysis methods. Thematic analysis is a method of explaining the phenomenon under investigation by finding and analyzing specific and important patterns in a qualitative data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For this purpose, the interview records were examined by the researchers, codes were first created, and then the themes covering these codes were searched. After the themes were reviewed, they were named and given their final form. While presenting the findings, the themes, explanations, and examples of what the students said were included.

5. Findings

5.1 Qualitative Findings Obtained from Semi-structured Exit Interviews

The students' views were analyzed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and the results are presented in this section with example student comments. Students' views were grouped under four main themes of motivational aspects, expected teacher roles, expected student roles, and areas for development related to the TbyT procedure. Qualitative findings also include students' in- and out-of-class experiences as well as their perceived learning outcomes from the procedure. A mind map showing all the themes and sub-themes is presented in Figure 2. Each theme is explained and supported by examples from the data.

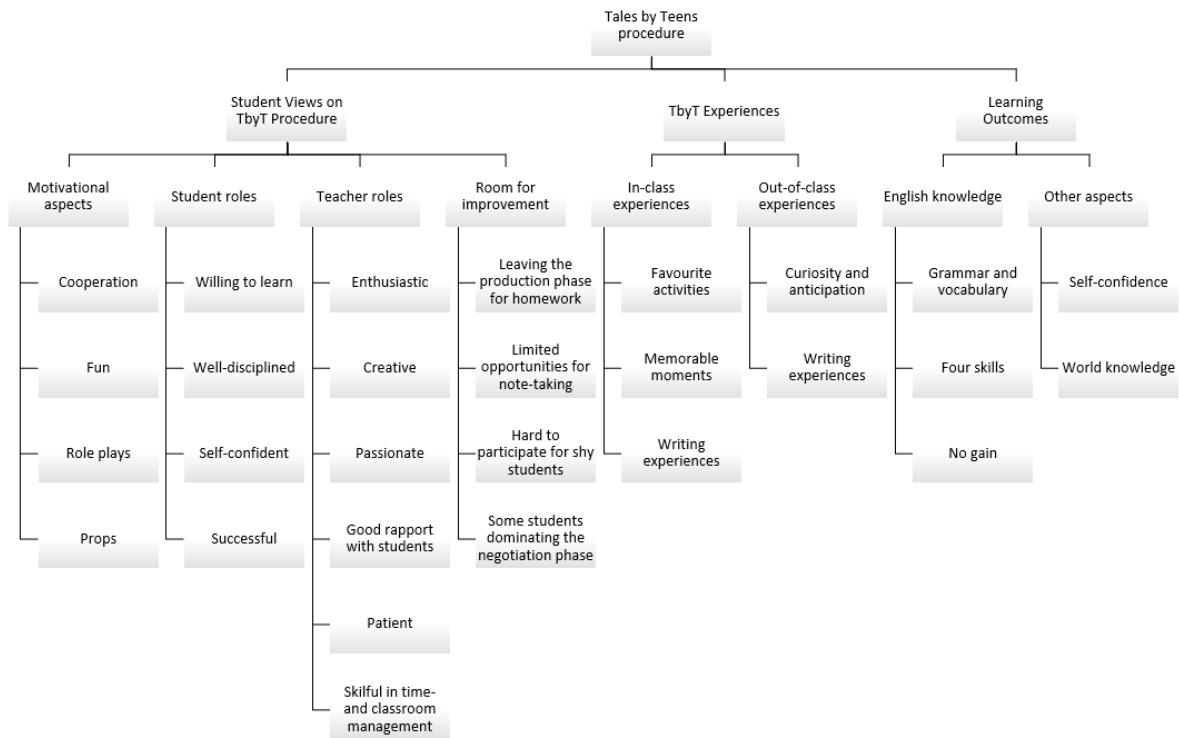


Figure 2. Mind map for themes and sub-themes

5.1.1 Student Views on TbyT Procedure

Motivational aspects. In the semi-structured interviews with the students, all the students expressed positive opinions about TbyT procedures and reported that they were always willing and motivated to work. One of the most important factors that provide this motivation is that the practices are *fun*, as is understood from the answers of the students. For example, S6 expressed his views as follows:

S6: *We already like the English lessons. When you come to our lessons, we do drama, and it is more fun. That's why we get happy.*

In addition to being fun, factors such as the *collaborative* nature of TbyT procedures, *role-playing*, and the use of *props* brought to the class were expressed by the students.

Expected student roles. When asked for what kind of students the TbyT procedures are suitable, students emphasized that individuals should be *willing* and have *high academic achievement*. They also judged that these practices would be more successful with *disciplined* and *confident* students. An example of this is S3's answer:

S3: *Our school is good in terms of discipline. There are 5-6 schools in Muğla where you wouldn't be able to do it because not all students come to school to learn something, for example, we took drama seriously, but it wouldn't be like this in any other school. We laughed but we didn't make fun of the activities. The students in some schools would have made fun of it. They would not understand.*

Expected teacher roles. In parallel with the roles expected from the students, the students stated that TbyT procedures can be done by more *enthusiastic*, *passionate*, *creative*, and *successful* teachers in terms of classroom and time management. They also stated that the teacher should *get along well with the students* and be *patient*. They think that teachers who do not have these characteristics will not be successful in such practices. To take S28 and 30 as examples:

S28: *I don't think every teacher can do it. It's important to be able to maintain the atmosphere of the classroom. He needs to be a patient and willing teacher.*

S30: *Not all teachers have the same patience; chaos breaks out in the classroom, and then they can't silence, they get angry, and so on. If there are more creative, new teachers who want to try something new, they can. Our own teacher is such a person, for example, so she can.*

Areas for improvement. Students also talked about the shortcomings of the procedure and the aspects that could be improved. First, it is stated that it would be better for the students to *do the writing process immediately after the application and not to give it as homework* if possible. In this regard, S7 said:

S7: *It would be better if we wrote a little more in class. I think it is not a good idea to leave it for home because I am more motivated to write during the class, in the heat of the moment.*

Second, the students suggested that it would be better to *increase note-taking opportunities* in TbyT practices. For example, S11 wanted the board to be used for note-taking, while S8 wanted the dramatizations to be annotated in more detail, like theatrical texts.

S11: *Sometimes you would write down the words you used on the board, but it would be better if you also wrote down their meanings.*

S8: *I love writing everyday things, but transcribing in English is different; I'd love to learn it. For example, I would like to write the dialogues we played in my notebook like a script.*

Students also pointed out two topics that need to be addressed in TbyT practices: the first is that the shier students cannot participate in the process, and the second is that *the more assertive students dominate the process* during the negotiation. In this regard, S25 said:

S25: *We focused on certain ideas a lot. Only a few ideas were put forward. A few people said it was going to be like this, and we did it accordingly. The rest probably hesitated. Those who were already shy could not contribute much. Perhaps you should do something to bring out the ideas of non-dominant students.*

5.1.2 TbyT Experiences

How the students experienced the TbyT applications also emerged from what was discussed in the interviews. We can group them based on their experiences during and outside the class.

In-class experiences. When students talked about the lessons where TbyT applications were made, there were students who liked the first application more (35%) and students who stated that they liked the second application more (65%). Specifically, the favourite activities were learning cup song moves with cups, the three-stage drawing activity used in character building, and the construction of the ship. It is noteworthy that in all three of these activities, a tangible and visible product emerges; all depend on collaboration, and all of them are non-linguistic activities. Here's how S1 explains why he liked the shipbuilding event the most:

S1: *I liked the shipbuilding part. Everyone had sticks in their hands; everyone was communicating with each other and combining the sticks.*

When they were asked to recount a memory from the lessons, all the students recalled a moment they had fun with or found funny. It has been observed that no student has ever put a finger on a point where they were afraid, challenged, or discomfited. S28, for example, recounted this memory:

S28: *I remember that moment in the cup game when we couldn't do it as a group. Because it went so funny. It was me who taught my friends the cup game. And then it was funny that I couldn't do it myself during the presentation.*

In addition, while the students talked about their experiences with writing in the course, they similarly highlighted the parts that were done together and were fun. For example, S5 said:

S5: *For example, we talked a lot as we wrote. We were helping each other. I forget the easiest word, even if I know it very well, even the word speaking. Then, when I ask the person next to me and get the answer, I say "Oh, right!". This happens a lot.*

S14 said he referred to the dramas in his writing activities:

S14: *I always think about the role plays we did. I remember what I said on the stage and used it in my writing.*

Out-of-class experiences. Outside of class, some students did not think much about the TbyT lessons. Some others stated that they talked about it with their friends before and after the lessons. Among them, S14, who expresses that he was curious about the stories and was waiting for the next chapter, states as follows:

S14: *The project was comforting to us after challenging lessons. We have difficult and boring lessons on Monday mornings. Since we see something different in the project every week, I think we were all curious and expectant. It affected all of us. We were talking before and after the lesson.*

When the students evaluated the writing activities outside the school, it was understood that some of the students did not take home the homework given to them and wrote in the breaks, and the students who took them home received help from the translation program or family elders. None of the students mentioned that they concentrated on writing at length at home. Examples include S20, S18, and S16.

S20: *I did the writing in between classes. I didn't want to take it home; I made time for my other homework.*

S18: *I did the writing by translating at home.*

S16: *I got help from my mother.*

5.1.3 Learning Outcomes

In the interviews, the students were asked whether they had any benefit from the project. Most of the students reported having improved in terms of their English knowledge. In addition, some students reported gains in terms of self-confidence and general culture.

English knowledge. In terms of English knowledge, students stated that they improved their grammar and vocabulary knowledge (14%), listening skills (14%), speaking skills (28%), and writing skills (33%). In addition, there were students (11%) who said that the project did not provide any significant benefit in terms of English knowledge.

Self-confidence. Students also stated that they gained self-confidence thanks to TbyT practices (19%). Some sample excerpts are listed below.

S3: *At the beginning of the semester, I couldn't form sentences properly, or rather, I was afraid. The feeling of shame and hesitation has decreased, and I am more comfortable forming sentences. We also speak English while doing drama; somehow, we learn new words, we speak more, and our writing improves.*

S5: *It helped my self-confidence.*

S13: *I spend less time when I am forming sentences. I've seen more examples. I can find where to use -ing etc. more accurately in writing studies. It affected my speech a little. My shyness has decreased because of the drama.*

S14: *Not my English, but my confidence has increased. We had more participation during the classes. Everyone had a say, for sure. I've started to feel brave enough to talk about something, which I couldn't do before.*

World knowledge. Apart from their knowledge of English, the students expressed that they obtained information about general culture due to the content of the stories created in the drama. For instance, S8 and S18 said that their horizons expanded, S15 learned about the sodium explosion, and S27 played cups wherever he went and tried to teach others:

S8: *It has helped me develop my imagination and horizons. My expectation was more academic study. I was shocked when we did the cup song. The drama was so nice, and it was fun.*

S18: *We were doing research because we were writing stories, and it was good.*

S15: *I can't forget the sodium explosion. I never knew.*

S27: *The cup game was also good. I started teaching my friends. I did it in the places I went.*

5.2 Quantitative Findings Obtained from Pre-test and Post-test Writings

The pre-test and post-test results were converted to quantitative data, and a paired t-test was performed to examine whether the difference between the group's pre-test and post-test was significant. Since the number of participants in the study group was fewer than fifty, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test was chosen. Mishra et al. (2019) state that the Shapiro-Wilk test is more appropriate for sample sizes smaller than 50. In Table 2, the data results maintain the null hypothesis (H0) and show a normal distribution ($p > .05$).

Table 2.
Shapiro-Wilk normality test

Test	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Pre-test	,940	22	,196
Post-test	,915	22	,059

Therefore, paired groups were t-tested, and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3.
Paired groups t-test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Pre-test – Post-test	10,45	11,70	2,49	-15,64	-5,26	-4,19	21	,000

When the effect of the application on the writing achievement scores of the students was evaluated, a statistically significant increase was observed in the writing scores from the pre-test ($M = 63.13$, $SD = 24.14$) to the post test ($M = 73.58$, $SD = 21.06$); $t(21) = -4.19$, $p < .001$ (two-tailed). The average increase in writing scores is 10.45, with a 95% confidence interval between -15.64 and -5.27. When the effect size of the result is calculated, the Eta square statistic (.45) shows a large effect size (Cohen 1988, pp. 284–7). Based on these findings, it can be argued that the writing practice carried out within the scope of the project statistically contributes positively to the development of students' writing skills.

6. Discussion

This study reports on the students' views on an innovative language teaching procedure called Tales by Teens (TbyT). The first research question was about the students' views on the TbyT procedure in terms of pre-, while- and post-implementation experiences and its effectiveness on the whole. As a result of the analysis of semi-structured interviews, it was found that the students perceived the procedure as motivating since it allowed for cooperative, fun, role-play activities where different materials and props increased the interest factor. These views could have stemmed from the drama component of the TbyT procedure, supported by the students' description of in- and out-of-class experiences during the project. The students mentioned the dramas as the most favorable parts of the TbyT procedure. The students mentioned that they were anticipating the next project day with curiosity. In literature, there are other studies that also present results that the use of drama has a significant positive effect in terms of language learning; for example, it increases the attitudes and motivations of the students (Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013), which, in turn, makes the language learning process more fruitful.

The roles that the TbyT procedure poses for students and teachers are perceived as positive by the participating students. The students found the procedure fit for students who are willing to learn, well-disciplined, self-confident, and successful and teachers who are enthusiastic, creative, passionate, patient, and skillful. According to the students, the classroom management and time management should be handled effectively to open room for participation of shyer students and more class time for the collaborative writing aspect of the TbyT procedure. According to these findings, it can be argued that the design promotes positive relations and rapport between the teachers and students. According to Pishghadam et al. (2021), developing and sustaining a strong rapport between teachers and students is vital for second language learning. This importance stems from the social and interactive nature of language classes.

According to a study about task-based language teaching by Akdoğan (2020), when students were provided with an educational task that extend beyond the curriculum involving innovative approaches, they reported higher motivation and greater enthusiasm in participating in the tasks, especially when they were decision-makers about the outcome of the teaching task. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Ellis (2013), which concludes that student autonomy and involvement in decision-making significantly enhance engagement and learning outcomes. The present study also advocates for the positive influence of teachers' innovative approaches in instruction, which, in turn, fosters students' active participation and motivation. Employing a method such as TbyT has proven useful in developing students' positive attitudes towards the teaching and learning process.

Vocabulary and grammar are two essential components of language that play a crucial role in effective communication. According to student views, the TbyT procedure improved their grammar and vocabulary, as they needed a rich understanding of vocabulary and grammar to express themselves clearly and precisely. In their studies, Even (2011) and Lapaire (2011) also stressed the importance of the use of drama for enhancing grammar knowledge, while Brouillette (2012) and Demircioğlu (2010) indicated the enrichment of vocabulary through drama. This improvement may also be attributed to the collaborative writing component of the TbyT procedure. During collaborative writing, the students explicitly reflect on language features, helping them enhance their knowledge about meta-discourse, grammar, and vocabulary (Mirzaei & Eslami, 2015).

The students perceived the TbyT procedure as a beneficial tool to develop not only their writing skills but also their listening, speaking skills, verifying the success of the design. The present study did not report any improvements in students' reading skills; however, there are studies that emphasize that the use of drama contributes to all four skills of English, including reading skills (Göktürk et al., 2020; Türkel & Öz, 2020). This could be rooted in different drama procedures focusing on different aspects of the language.

The students pointed out self-confidence and world knowledge as additional gains thanks to the TbyT procedure. Both the drama component and the collaborative writing component of the TbyT procedure helped learners to work in collaboration with others more confidently and to combine different learning areas which can be considered as critical skills for the 21st century. There are numerous studies in the literature that focus on the significance of integrating skills beyond the traditional practices in EFL settings. For instance, Pardede (2020) argues that communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity, collectively known as the 4Cs, are crucial for students' success in the 21st century. These skills should be integrated into the teaching and learning process alongside literacy and life skills to help students achieve success (p. 81). Additionally, Fandino (2013) discusses the integration of 21st century skills in EFL education and highlights the need for such skills to promote innovation and adaptability in our changing world, to improve language learning and prepare students for global challenges.

The second research question asked if there was a statistically significant difference between the writing scores of the students before and after the TbyT procedure. The pre- and post-test results indicated that the design has a positive effect on the students' writing products. It has been observed that the creative writing aspect of this project has a particularly positive effect on writing ability and attitude. Other empirical data on the connection between creative writing and writing abilities, creative writing and attitude found in the literature can explain this finding. Reportedly, attitudes and success increase significantly in groups where creative writing work is carried out (Babayiğit, 2019; Göçen, 2019). In this study, creative writing studies with process drama were found useful by the students and it was reflected on their writing performances. In these respects, it can be argued that the use of the TbyT procedure in English lessons is a valid method for writing skill purposes.

7. Conclusion

The research found that students were receptive the TbyT procedure, which went beyond traditional methods and motivated them to participate. TbyT, as a procedure that appeals to different learning

styles, had a positive impact on student engagement in the course. Based on student views, the TbyT procedure was found to have a positive impact on foreign language learning. It was also concluded that it equipped students with the necessary knowledge and skills for the 21st century. Moreover, there was a statistically significant difference in favor of students' writing skills. Such language procedures can be utilized to engage more students and promote active participation in language classes beyond only a few enthusiastic students. Therefore, it is proposed that the TbyT method be introduced to teachers and disseminated.

This particular study was carried out in a typical high school unique to the province of Muğla, which may not be representative of other provinces. Schools should compare their own conditions with those described in the study before applying the procedure. As the present study was based on a design experiment with two iterations, the impact on writing ability were only indicative. Within the scope of the main project, only one group of participants were used. To determine the effects of the TbyT procedure more accurately and objectively, future studies should design true experimental studies. Longitudinal studies would provide more detailed information on the impact of the TbyT procedure. It is possible that the longer the procedure is implemented, the better the results. Additionally, the TbyT procedure was primarily designed for secondary school students; therefore, adaptation studies should be conducted for its use in other contexts such as primary and tertiary levels. While the present study focused on the writing achievement of the students, further research could investigate the impact of the TbyT procedure on other core English skills.

To conclude, while the study is limited in terms of generalizability, it provides valuable insights into the student perspectives regarding the TbyT procedure and its effectiveness in terms of writing ability.

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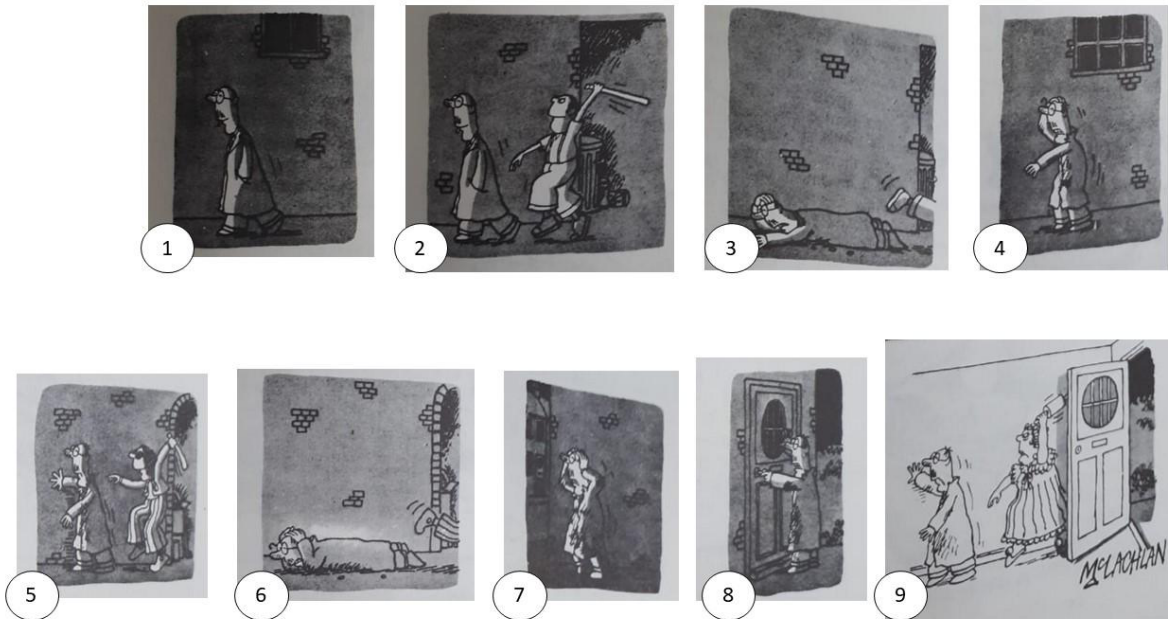
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Appendix A-Story Writing Prompt



Appendix B-The Evaluation Key for Written Stories

Tales by Teens – Scoring Rubric for Writing

Components of Writing	Score	Level	Indicators	Weighting
Content	4/35	Excellent	Present the information with well chosen details across the writing	%35
	3/27	Good	Present the information with details in parts of the writing	
	2/18	Fair	Present the information with some details	
	1/9	Poor	Present no clear information	
Vocabulary	4/25	Excellent	Good in vocabulary choice	%25
	3/18	Good	Few errors in vocabulary choice but they do not interfere with understanding	
	2/12	Fair	Some errors in vocabulary choice and they sometimes interfere with understanding	
	1/6	Poor	Many errors in vocabulary choice and they severely interfere with understanding	
Grammar	4/25	Excellent	Good in grammar	%25
	3/18	Good	Few errors in grammar but they do not interfere with understanding	
	2/12	Fair	Some errors in grammar and they sometimes interfere with understanding	
	1/6	Poor	Many errors in grammar and they severely interfere with understanding	
Mechanics	4/15	Excellent	Good in spelling, punctuation and capitalization	%15
	3/12	Good	Few errors in spelling, punctuation and capitalization	
	2/8	Fair	Some errors in spelling, punctuation and capitalization	
	1/4	Poor	Many errors in spelling, punctuation and capitalization	

Appendix C-Semi-structured Interview Questions

Semi-structured interview questions

1. You filled out the AELTE can do statements before the project. Since then, of course, you've also taken English lessons, and you've done other things to improve your English outside, but have there been any changes in your English that you think were caused by the project? Can you look back at the form you filled out now and tell us if there is a development that we can attribute specifically to the project? Did the project contribute anything to you?
2. You know the project, we did it on Mondays. I know what's going on with the project from my point of view, but I also want to hear from your point of view. Can you tell me about a typical Monday when we did projects? What were you thinking about when you came to school that day, what was going on in the lessons before the practice and in the lessons after the practice? For example, what were you talking to your friends about the project? When and how did you do your writing work?
3. Which of the stories we put out in the project do you like? Why do you like it? Was there a story you didn't like? Can you explain?
4. What would you say if I asked you to tell me about a memorable moment from the project? Why is this memory stuck in your mind? Why did you choose it?
5. What do you think would happen if we wanted to spread this project? Could it be done by every student, in every school, by every teacher? Do you think it should be done? Can you explain your thoughts?
6. What were the working and not-working parts of the procedure we made in this project? What advice would you like to give us? Is there anything you'd like to add?