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Readability Levels of Texts in Primary School Turkish Textbooks

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ABSTRACT

In Turkish teaching, many materials are used to improve students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The most commonly used textbooks are provided by the ministry to teachers. Preparing the texts and activities in the textbooks in accordance with the students' developmental levels positively affects their attitudes toward Turkish lessons and increases their interest and enthusiasm. Texts prepared in accordance with the grade level are very significant in the development of students' reading and reading comprehension skills. This study aims to calculate the readability values and levels of reading and free reading texts in primary school Turkish textbooks, compare the values based on text type, and reveal their similarities and differences. The study material consists of the texts in the Turkish textbooks of all grades in primary schools in the 2022–2023 academic year. Descriptive analysis was used to evaluate the study data. The values related to the reading and free reading texts used in the document analysis and included in the Turkish textbooks were interpreted. The data obtained from the texts were evaluated using the readability formula developed by Ateşman (1997). The research results showed that the reading and free reading texts in the Turkish primary school textbook were at the easy and medium levels. Regarding text types, narrative and poetry texts were generally on the easy level, while informative texts were on the medium level. According to these results, the principle of from easy to difficult could be observed in texts prepared in new textbooks. The opinions of teachers about the texts in primary school Turkish textbooks could be considered.

Keywords: Free reading text, readability, reading, reading text, Turkish textbook

Introduction

The Turkish teaching program aims to develop basic language skills in students, to use Turkish effectively in accordance with the rules of speaking and writing, and to gain reading and writing habits (MONE 2019). Reading is defined as interpreting texts with the help of students' prior knowledge (Kavcar et al., 1998). In addition to the vocalization of words and sentences, they are required to be meaningful (Karatay, 2009). Therefore, reading comprehension skills are developed in the students. The development of reading comprehension skills enables students to develop skills such as interpretation, reasoning, analyzing, generating original ideas, research, evaluation, and questioning (Kardaş & Tunagür, 2020). Various materials support the development of students' reading skills. Textbooks are one of these materials used to gain reading skills and realize the objectives stated in the curriculum (Kılıç & Seven, 2006). Textbooks are organized according to specific themes, prepared according to students' developmental characteristics, and contain texts, visuals, and activities supporting students' different thinking methods. Text is writing with linguistic and structural rules that aim to stimulate the reader's mental aspect and convey a subject or event (Günay, 2013). The diversity of texts that support different skills and aspects of students should be emphasized (Sallabaş & Yılmaz, 2020). Different types of texts develop students' skills of description, inference, thinking, questioning, interpretation, definition, memorization and enable them to gain an expansive imagination (Şengül, 2005). Texts should attract students' attention and be appropriate to their developmental level (Ünalın, 2001). Thus, the student is going to be willing to read, understand, interpret the texts, and do the activities. Otherwise, these texts cause

students to get bored and develop negative attitudes towards reading and reduce their interest in Turkish lessons (Tan, 2007). Reading texts are appropriate for students' physical and mental competence regarding subject, visuals, writing font, font size, and spelling. In the texts, words and sentences that students can read and understand in accordance with their readiness levels should be used (Çiftçi et al., 2007). This is closely related to the concept of "readability." It is thought that the texts should be at the level students can read and understand, so the readability level should be high (Özbek & Ergül, 2018). Activities related to texts with high readability levels are expected to be more productive for students. Based on this idea, the readability levels of reading texts associated with activities and free reading texts were investigated. Ateşman (1997) defines readability as "the extent to which texts are easy or difficult to understand by the reader." Looking at the literature, it is seen that the first study on the concept of readability in Turkish texts was conducted by Ateşman in 1997. The results obtained by applying Ateşman's (1997) formula are ranked in a hierarchy from easy to difficult according to the relevant score range as "very easy" (90–100), "easy" (7080), "medium difficulty" (50–69), "difficult" (30–49), and "very difficult" (1–29). In addition to those who use Ateşman's (1997) formula for texts in secondary school textbooks, a considerable number of researchers use it for primary school textbooks. When the literature is examined, it is seen that readability studies have been conducted on the texts in the textbooks. However, there are no studies on the readability levels of the texts in primary school Turkish textbooks. The readability levels of the texts of Turkish textbooks, which are the main materials of the Turkish lesson, are essential. In this respect, it is thought that this study and its results will benefit the Turkish Teaching Program, teachers, students,

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and the literature. This study seeks the answer to the question, “What are the readability levels of reading and free reading texts in Turkish textbooks?”

Purpose of the Study

The study aimed to determine the readability levels of reading and free reading texts in primary school Turkish textbooks. In addition, these texts are categorized as narrative, informative, and poetry, and we have tried to unravel the readability levels of the text types.

- 1) What are the readability levels of the reading texts in primary school Turkish textbooks?
- 2) What are the readability levels of free reading texts in primary school Turkish textbooks?
- 3) Do the readability levels of reading and free reading texts in primary school Turkish textbooks differ in narrative, informative, and poetry?
- 4) What are the difficulty levels of text types in primary school Turkish textbooks according to grade levels?

Significance of the study

It is observed in the literature that studies have been conducted on the readability of reading texts in Turkish textbooks used at the secondary school level (fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades) (Bora & Arslan, 2021; Çıplak, 2022). In addition, different approaches to readability are also included in the study on free reading texts in Turkish textbooks used at the primary school level (first, second, third, and fourth grades) (Dağdeviren & Küçüktepe, 2022). This study examines the readability of reading and free reading texts in Turkish textbooks used in all grades at the primary school level, including type classification. This study offers the opportunity to compare reading and free reading texts in terms of readability as well as text types. The data on the texts in primary school Turkish textbooks are interpreted according to the “Readability in Textbooks” report of the Ministry of National Education. Therefore, this study is essential in filling a significant gap in the literature, seeing the suitability of the texts to the students’ levels, and being a guide for the textbooks to be published in the future.

Methods

Research Model

The qualitative study, aimed to determine the readability levels of reading and free reading texts in primary school Turkish textbooks, is conducted by document analysis method. In the document analysis method, the researcher does not influence the data obtained (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Descriptive analysis method is used to analyze the data. In the descriptive analysis method, the data obtained are analyzed in detail and given within predetermined themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). This study has calculated the readability levels of the texts in primary school Turkish textbooks with Ateşman’s (1997) formula.

Research Group

The sampling method of this study is criterion sampling. Criterion sampling is a method of sampling prepared by researchers and determined according to preprepared criteria (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The criteria has determined for the textbooks that constitute the sample of the study are that they are to be used in the 2022–2023 academic year, that they consist of special publications, and that they are included in the Education Informatics Network (EIN). Therefore, the sample consists of the texts in Bilim ve Kültür Publications first grade Turkish textbook (BOE, 2022a), Ada Matbaacılık Publications second grade Turkish textbook (BOE, 2022b), Gizem Publications third grade Turkish textbook (BOE, 2022c), and Özgün Publications fourth grade Turkish textbook (BOE, 2022d). The sample is selected from the textbooks included in the educational information network (EIN), taught in the 2022–2023 academic year and published by private publishing houses.

Data Collection Tools

All reading and free reading texts in Turkish textbooks at all grade levels in primary school were included in the sample, and none of them were excluded from the study. “Text Analysis Form” was developed by the researchers as a data collection tool. The form consists of theme names, text names, text types, word counts, and sentence and syllable counts. Expert opinion was sought for the “Text Analysis Form” developed by the researchers, and necessary arrangements were made according to the feedback of the experts. In addition, the “Readability Formula” developed by Ateşman (1997) was used to calculate the readability levels of the collected data.

Data Collection and Analysis

The study analyzed 112 texts in four books selected from the Turkish textbooks taught in primary schools in the 2022–2023 academic year. The researchers calculated the number of syllables, words, and sentences of the texts. The number of sentences, words, and syllables of the texts were calculated respectively. The calculated data were entered into the “Text Analysis Form” developed by the researchers. Then, the data of each text were placed separately in Ateşman’s (1997) formula, and calculations were made. Firstly, average word and average sentence lengths were determined. Then, readability values were determined as a result of the calculations. The study included the theme, number of syllables, number of words, number of sentences, average word length, sentence length, readability value, and readability level of reading and free reading texts. Word groups ending with a period, colon, question mark, and ellipsis were counted as sentences in the analyzed texts. The items between each gap are considered as words. In determining the average word and sentence lengths and the readability number, taking two digits after the comma was deemed appropriate.

The textbooks selected for the study were analyzed using the descriptive analysis method. In this study, the readability formula adapted from Flesch by Ateşman (1997) was used to analyze the data obtained from the texts.

Ateşman’s formula is as follows:

$$RC = 198.825 - 40.175 \times X1 - 2.610 \times X2$$

RC: readability count

X1: average word length

X2: average sentence length

Average word length (X1), total number of syllables divided by the total number of words.

Average sentence length (X2), total number of words divided by the total number of sentences.

According to Table 1, Ateşman categorized the values between 90 and 100 as “very easy,” between 70 and 89 as “easy,” between 50 and 69 as “medium,” between 30 and 49 as “difficult,” and between 1 and 29 as “very difficult.”

Table 1.
Classification According to Readability Score in Ateşman Formula

Level	Readability Score
Very easy	90–100
Easy	70–89
Medium	50–69
Difficult	30–49
Very difficult	1–29

Validity and Reliability

The textbooks constituting our study's sample were calculated according to Ateşman's (1997) readability formula. To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, the number of syllables, words, and sentences in the texts were calculated by all researchers separately, using an automatic counting program and manually. All researchers used the same program. The data on the results of the counts conducted by the researchers were compared. As a result of the comparison, it was seen that there was a difference in the data belonging to the texts in the poetry type. The common opinion is that this is the frequent use of inverted sentences spread over more than one continent. The sentences in the poetry type were transformed into regular sentences, and all researchers recalculated the data. As a result of the calculation, it was seen that the data obtained by all researchers were similar.

Results

Findings on the Readability Levels of the Texts in Primary School Turkish Textbooks

In the analysis made with Ateşman's (1997) readability formula, the data in Table 2 were obtained. According to Table 2, among the twelve reading texts in the first grade Turkish textbook, the texts titled Karınca ile Ağustos Böceği, Tilki ile Leylek, Eylül ve Diş Dostları, Mutlu Kedi Doktorunu Güldürüyor, Kahvaltı, Didi Enerji İstiyor, Demirci Kirpi are at the "easy" level. Çiftçiyle Çocukları, Riki'nin Robotu, Deniz Uçakları ve Yüzen Uçaklar, Boş Gazete, Saygı Nedir? are at the "medium" level.

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In the analysis made with Ateşman's (1997) readability formula, as seen in Table 3, among the 24 reading texts in the second grade Turkish textbook, the texts named Real Friends and Seasons are at the "very easy" level. Paylaş Dedi Babam, Ashı'nın Dönüşü, Nasreddin Hoca'nın Köyünde, Güzel Yurdum, Atatürk'ün Gül Tekin'e Armağanı, Seyit Onbaşı, Ben Her Gün Bir Şey Olacağım, Konuksever, Naz'ın Bilgisayar Sevdası, Bilgi Çağı, Bilge Hangi Sporu Yapacak? El ve Tırnaklar, Gülibik, Üç Güneş, Özgür Olmak ya da Olmamak, Işıltılı Reklamlar are at the "easy" level. Alçak Gönüllü Olmak, Sihirli

Sözcükler, Tekerleğin İcadı, Kahvaltının Önemi, Ufacık Vidacık, Korkusuz Kahramanlar are at the "medium" level.

Table 4 shows that there are no texts at the "very easy" level among the twenty-four reading texts in the third grade Turkish textbook. The texts titled Günaydın Size, Yalnız Köstebek, Mimar Sinan'ın Suları, Atatürk'ün Yaşamı, Cumhuriyet Bayramı, Mutluluk Pınarı, Okulda Seçim Deniz Kızı, Doğa Nedir?, Ufacık Tefeciktim, Düş Macunu, Top ve Komşu, Dünyayı Gezmek İsteyen Kirpi, Gemiler Nasıl Yüzer?, Bilgisayar texts are at the "easy" level. The texts titled Bayrağımıza Sesleniş, Kumbara İçi Dolu Para, Bayram Armağanları, Yurt Türküsü, Hoca'dan Mektup Var, Gökkuşağıyla Yolculuk, Arkadaşlarım, Geçmişten Günümüze Evler, Isınma Hareketleri are at the "medium" level. In addition, there are no texts at the "difficult" and "very difficult" level in the third grade Turkish textbook.

In the analysis made with Ateşman's (1997) readability formula, it is seen in Table 5 among 24 reading texts in the fourth grade Turkish textbook, the texts titled Arkadaş, Kirpi Masalı, Yavru Ahtapot Olmak Çok Zor, Babamızın Elleri, Dil Devrimi Yapılıyor, Dimyat'a Pirince Giderken Evdeki Bulgurdan Olmak, Yokuş, Padişahın Ebrusu, Kardan Adamın Evi, Kim Korkar Kırmızı Başlıklı Kızdan? Güneşin Gittiği Gün, Elimde Değil! and Haydi Spora are at the "easy" level. The poem Çiçeklere Maniler is at the "very easy" level. The texts titled Ye Kürküm Ye, Amerikalı Bir Çocuktan Mustafa Kemal'e Mektup Var, Büyük Gün, Kastamonulu Safiye, Masalıcı Dede Pertev Naili Boratav, Çanakkale Türküsü, Termit Kolonisi, Bütün Yollar Kalbe Çıkar are at the "medium" level. Hızlı Düşünmek ve Elektronik Beyinlerle Dolu Bir Dünya are the "difficult" texts in this textbook.

Findings on the Readability Levels of Free Reading Texts in Primary School Turkish Textbooks

In the analysis made with the same formula, the texts titled Ekmek, Sporun Faydaları Nelerdir? Biz Okuruz among the four free reading texts in the first grade Turkish textbook are at the "easy" level. Table 6 reveals that the text titled Zeynep ile Birlikte is at the "very easy" level.

In Table 7, Ateşman's (1997) readability formula, the texts titled Sevgi Bir Kuştur, Ülkemi Seviyorum, Tuhaf Köpek, Akıldaki İcatlar, Tarzan, and Bölüşmek Kolay Değil among the eight free reading texts in the second grade Turkish textbook are at the "easy" level. The texts titled Çocukluğumdaki Bayramlar and Futbolcu Efe are at the "medium" level.

According to Table 8, among the eight free reading texts in the third grade Turkish textbook, the poem titled Okul Türküsü is at the "very

Table 2.

Average Word Length, Average Sentence Length, Readability Number of Reading Texts in the First Grade Turkish Textbook

Reading Texts	Text Types	Average Word	Average Sentence	Readability Score	Readability Level
		Length	Length		
Karınca ile Ağustos Böceği (Ant and Cicada)	Narrative	2.51	7.6	78.15	Easy
Tilki ile Leylek (Fox and Stork)	Narrative	2.52	7.9	76.96	Easy
Çiftçiyle Çocukları (Farmer and his Children)	Narrative	2.89	5.6	68.10	Medium
Eylül ve Diş Dostları (Eylül and Tooth Friends)	Narrative	2.63	7.86	72.65	Easy
Mutlu Kedi Doktorunu Güldürüyor (Happy Cat Makes the Doctor Laugh)	Narrative	2.49	8	77.91	Easy
Breakfast	Poetry	2.50	7.5	78.81	Easy
Riki'nin Robotu (Riki's Robot)	Narrative	2.65	9.04	68.76	Medium
Didi Enerji İstiyor (Didi Wants Energy)	Narrative	2.73	5.5	74.79	Easy
Deniz Uçakları ve Yüzen Uçaklar (Seaplanes and Floatplanes)	Informative	2.79	7.6	66.90	Medium
Boş Gazete (Blank Newspaper)	Narrative	2.93	6.5	64.14	Medium
Saygı Nedir? (What is Respect?)	Informative	2.83	8.4	63.21	Medium
Demirci Kirpi (Blacksmith Hedgehog)	Narrative	2.39	6.1	86.88	Easy

Table 3.

Average Word Length, Average Sentence Length, Readability Number of Reading Texts in the Second Grade Turkish Textbook

Reading Texts	Text Types	Average Word Length	Average Sentence Length	Readability Score	Readability Level
Gerçek Arkadaş (True Friend)	Narrative	2.27	3.9	97.44	Very Easy
Alçak Gönlü Olmak (Being Humble)	Narrative	2.98	6.5	62.13	Medium
Paylaş Dedi Babam (Share, My Father Said)	Poetry	2.6	5	81.32	Easy
Aslı'nın Dönüşü (Aslı's Return)	Narrative	2.59	4.02	84.28	Easy
Nasreddin Hoca'nın Köyünde (Nasreddin Hodja's Village)	Narrative	2.7	7.13	71.74	Easy
Güzel Yurdum (Sweet Motherland)	Poetry	2.31	7.6	86.19	Easy
Atatürk'ün Gül Tekin'e Armağanı (Atatürk's Gift to Gül Tekin)	Narrative	2.62	6.02	77.85	Easy
Seyit Onbaşı (Seyit Corporal)	Informative	2.63	5.56	78.65	Easy
Korkusuz Kahramanlar (Fearless Heroes)	Poetry	2.83	13.25	50.55	Medium
Ben Her Gün Bir Şey Olacağım (I Will Be One Thing Every Day)	Narrative	2.56	5.66	81.20	Easy
Sihirli Sözcükler (Magical Words)	Informative	2.97	7.42	60.14	Medium
Konuksever (Hospitable)	Poetry	2.77	5.44	73.35	Easy
Naz'ın Bilgisayar Sevdası (Naz's Love for Computer)	Narrative	2.65	5.22	78.74	Easy
Tekerleğin İcadı (Invention of the Wheel)	Informative	2.73	8.60	66.70	Medium
Bilgi Çağı (Information Age)	Poetry	2.58	6.8	77.43	Easy
Bilge Hangi Sporu Yapacak? (Which sport will Bilge do?)	Narrative	2.66	6.06	76.15	Easy
Kahvaltının Önemi (Importance of Breakfast)	Informative	2.80	9.3	62.06	Medium
Gülibik	Narrative	2.71	5.59	75.37	Easy
Mevsimler (Seasons)	Informative	2.17	4.53	99.50	Very Easy
Üç Güneş (Three Suns)	Poetry	2.35	12.33	72.23	Easy
Ufacık Vidacık (Tiny Screwdriver)	Narrative	2.78	6.80	69.39	Medium
Özgür Olmak ya da Olmamak (To Be Free or Not to Be Free)	Informative	2.59	5.04	81.62	Easy
Işıltılı Reklamlar (Glittering Ads)	Poetry	2.68	5.42	77.01	Easy
El ve Tırnaklar (Hand and Nails)	Poetry	2.16	9	88.56	Easy

Table 4.

Average Word Length, Average Sentence Length, Readability Number of Reading Texts in the Third Grade Turkish Textbook

Reading Texts	Text Types	Average Word Length	Average Sentence Length	Readability Score	Readability Level
Günaydın Size (Goodmorning To You)	Poetry	2.45	9.50	75.71	Easy
Yalnız Köstebek (Lonely Mole)	Narrative	2.49	5.41	84.67	Easy
Mimar Sinan'ın Suları (Waters of Sinan the Architect)	Informative	2.70	7.63	70.58	Easy
Atatürk'ün Yaşamı (Life of Atatürk)	Informative	2.68	7.23	72.25	Easy
Bayrağıma Sesleniş (Call to My Flag)	Narrative	2.67	8.42	69.52	Medium
Cumhuriyet Bayramı (Republic Day)	Poetry	2.64	6.43	75.81	Easy
Kumbara, İçi Dolu Para (Penny Bank, Full Money)	Informative	2.74	8.07	67.87	Medium
Mutluluk Pınarı (Happiness Fountain)	Narrative	2.58	6.71	77.66	Easy
Okulda Seçim (Elections at School)	Poetry	2.53	5.08	83.92	Easy
Bayram Armağanları (Feast Gifts)	Narrative	2.79	7.48	67.39	Medium
Yurt Türküsü (Homeland Song)	Poetry	2.64	10.00	66.66	Medium
Hoca'dan Mektup Var (Letter from Hodja)	Informative	2.87	6.86	65.70	Medium
Deniz Kızı (Mermaid)	Narrative	2.60	6.24	77.99	Easy
Doğa Nedir? (What is Nature?)	Informative	2.56	7.20	77.08	Easy
Arkadaşlarım (My Friends)	Poetry	2.94	11.57	50.58	Medium
Gökkuşağıyla Yolculuk (Journey with the Rainbow)	Narrative	2.86	6.07	68.21	Medium
Geçmişten Günümüze Evler (Houses from Past to Present)	Informative	2.82	10.78	57.29	Medium
Ufacık Tefeciktim (I was so teeny tiny)	Poetry	2.46	6.17	83.92	Easy
Düş Macunu (Dream Paste)	Narrative	2.53	7.04	78.87	Easy
Isınma Hareketleri (Warm Up Movements)	Informative	2.91	10.85	53.54	Medium
Top ve Komşu (Ball and Neighbor)	Poetry	2.02	13.50	82.50	Easy
Dünyayı Gezme İsteyen Kirpi (Hedgehog Who Wants to Travel the World)	Narrative	2.64	4.70	80.34	Easy
Gemiler Nasıl Yüzer? (How Ships Float?)	Informative	2.58	6.51	78.03	Easy
Bilgisayar (Computer)	Poetry	2.51	6.71	80.44	Easy

Table 5.

Average Word Length, Average Sentence Length, Readability Number of Reading Texts in the Fourth Grade Turkish Textbook

Reading Texts	Text Types	Average Word Length	Average Sentence Length	Readability Score	Readability Level
Arkadaş (Friend)	Poetry	2.69	7.25	71.85	Easy
Kirpi Masalı (Hedgehog Story)	Narrative	2.53	7.38	77.86	Easy
Yavru Ahtapot Olmak Çok Zor (Being a baby octopus is very hard)	Poetry	2.78	6.11	71.04	Easy
Babamızın Elleri (Hands of Our Father)	Poetry	2.42	7.14	82.96	Easy
Ye Kürküm Ye (Eat Up My Robe)	Narrative	2.68	9.75	65.73	Medium
Dil Devrimi Yapılıyor (Language Revolution Underway)	Informative	2.56	6.68	78.63	Easy
Çanakkale Türküsü (Gallipoli Song)	Poetry	2.51	12.25	66.01	Medium
Amerikalı Bir Çocuktan Mustafa Kemal'e Mektup Var (Letter to Mustafa Kemal from an American Child)	Informative	2.82	11.93	54.42	Medium
Kastamonulu Safiye (Safiye from Kastamonu)	Informative	3.08	8.23	53.70	Medium
Çiçeklere Maniler (Songs for Flowers)	Poetry	2.10	6.00	98.91	Very Easy
Büyük Gün (The Big Day)	Informative	2.75	7.89	67.79	Medium
Dimyat'a Pirince Giderken Evdeki Bulgurdan Olmak	Narrative	2.68	7.84	70.74	Easy
Yokuş (The Hill)	Poetry	2.71	6.60	72.64	Easy
Padişahın Ebrusu (Sultan's Marbling)	Narrative	2.56	6.98	77.78	Easy
Masalıcı Dede Pertev Naili Boratav (Storyteller Grandfather Pertev Naili Boratav)	Informative	2.74	11.85	57.88	Medium
Kardan Adamın Evi (Snowman's House)	Poetry	2.41	6.94	83.72	Easy
Termit Kolonisi (White Ant Colony)	Informative	2.66	9.53	67.18	Medium
Kim Korkar Kırmızı Başlıklı Kızdan? (Who is afraid of Little Red Riding Hood?)	Narrative	2.47	4.86	87.03	Easy
Hızlı Düşünmek (Thinking Fast)	Informative	2.91	15.71	40.94	Difficult
Elektronik Beyinlerle Dolu Bir Dünya (A World Full of Electronic Brains)	Informative	3.04	12.80	43.32	Difficult
Güneş'in Gittiği Gün (The Day the Sun Gone)	Narrative	2.48	6.66	81.96	Easy
Elimde Değil! (I can't help it!)	Narrative	2.54	7.67	76.58	Easy
Bütün Yollar Kalbe Çıkar (All Roads Lead to the Heart)	Informative	2.53	12.03	65.60	Medium
Haydi Spora (Let's Go Sport)	Narrative	2.38	6.05	87.23	Easy

easy" level. Kırk Haramiler, Atatürk'ün Doğa Sevgisi, Trafik İşları, Güneş, Kırmızı Yaprak, Televizyoncu Ali are at the "easy" level. The text titled Halk oyunları is a "medium" level text.

In the analysis made according to Ateşman's (1997) readability formula, it is seen in Table 9 that there is no text at the "very easy" level among the eight free reading texts in the fourth grade Turkish textbook. The texts titled Kaşığı, Yakutistan Masalı: Cesur Vay'ın Deniz Macerası, Taş Çorbası are at the "easy" level. The texts titled Kütü'l Amare, Mozart'ın Yaşamından, Deniz Masalı are at the "medium" level. Kar Taneleri Bilimin Tarihi and Türkiye'de Futbolun Çocukluğu are the "difficult" texts in this textbook.

Findings on the Readability Levels of the Texts in Primary School Turkish Textbooks According to Their Types

According to the readability levels of the reading texts in the first grade Turkish textbook according to text types, it is seen in Table 10 that narrative texts are at an easy level, informative texts are at the medium level, and poetry texts are at an easy level. According to the readability levels of free reading texts on text types, there are no narrative texts in free reading texts. It is seen that informative and poetry texts are easy.

According to the text types in the second grade Turkish textbook, the texts in the narrative, informative, and poetry types are at an easy level. According to the readability levels of free reading texts on text types, it is observed from the data in Table 11 that narrative and poetry texts in free reading texts are at an easy level, and informative texts are at the medium level.

According to the data from the third grade Turkish textbook in Table 12, narrative texts are at an easy level, and informative texts are at the medium level, and poetry texts are at an easy level. According to the readability levels of free reading texts on text types, narrative, and poetry texts in free reading texts are at an easy level, while informative texts are at the medium level.

According to the readability levels of reading texts in the fourth grade Turkish textbook text types, it is observed from Table 13 that narrative texts are at an easy level, informative texts are at the medium level, and poetry texts are at an easy level. According to the readability levels of free reading texts on text types, it is observed that narrative texts in free reading texts are at an easy level, and informative texts are

Table 6.

Average Word Length, Average Sentence Length, Readability Number of Free Reading Texts in the First Grade Turkish Textbook

Free Reading Texts	Text Types	Average Word Length	Average Sentence Length	Readability Score	Readability Level
Ekmek (The Bread)	Poetry	2.36	7.3	84.95	Easy
Sporun Faydaları Nelerdir? (What are the Benefits of Sport?)	Informative	2.58	9.25	71.03	Easy
Zeynep'e Birlikte (Together with Zeynep)	Poetry	2.5	3.14	90.19	Very Easy
Biz Okuruz (We Read)	Poetry	2.6	8.5	72.18	Easy

Table 7.

Average Word Length, Average Sentence Length, Readability Number of Free Reading Texts in the Second Grade Turkish Textbook

Free Reading Texts	Text Types	Average Word Length	Average Sentence Length	Readability Score	Readability Level
Sevgi Bir Kuştur (Love is a Bird)	Poetry	2.48	7.25	80.27	Easy
Çocukluğumdaki Bayramlar (Feasts in my childhood)	Informative	2.89	5.17	69.23	Medium
Ülkemi Seviyorum (I Love My Country)	Poetry	2.58	6.94	85.53	Easy
Tuhaf Köpek (Strange Dog)	Poetry	2.35	5.85	89.15	Easy
Aklımdaki İcatlar (Inventions on My Mind)	Poetry	2.44	6.02	85.08	Easy
Futbolcu Efe (Football player Efe)	Narrative	2.85	6.10	68.40	Medium
Tarzan	Narrative	2.45	7.1	81.86	Easy
Bölüşmek Kolay Değil (Not Easy to Share)	Narrative	2.44	16.14	79.49	Easy

Table 8.

Average Word Length, Average Sentence Length, Readability Number of Free Reading Texts in the Third Grade Turkish Textbook

Free Reading Texts	Text Types	Average Word Length	Average Sentence Length	Readability Score	Readability Level
Kırk Haramiler (The Forty Thieves)	Narrative	2.46	5.11	86.45	Easy
Atatürk'ün Doğa Sevgisi (Atatürk's Love for Nature)	Informative	2.57	7.29	76.42	Easy
Trafik Işıkları (Traffic Lights)	Poetry	2.54	6.50	79.88	Easy
Halk Oyunları (Folk Dances)	Informative	2.74	12.67	55.55	Medium
Güneş (The Sun)	Informative	2.56	8.36	74.00	Easy
Okul Türküsü (School Song)	Poetry	2.17	7.67	91.48	Very Easy
Kırmızı Yaprak (Red Leaf)	Narrative	2.47	6.93	81.58	Easy
Televizyoncu Ali (Couch Potato Ali)	Narrative	2.68	5.77	76.15	Easy

Table 9.

Average Word Length, Average Sentence Length, Readability Number of Free Reading Texts in the Fourth Grade Turkish Textbook

Free Reading Texts	Text Types	Average Word Length	Average Sentence Length	Readability Score	Readability Level
Kaşığı (Kashagi)	Narrative	2.57	5.01	82.41	Easy
Yakutistan Masalı: (Yakutia Tale:) Cesur Vay'ın Deniz Macerası (Brave Vay's Sea Adventure)	Narrative	2.39	6.72	85.41	Easy
Kütü'l Amare (Kudu'l Amarah)	Informative	2.53	13.73	61.36	Medium
Taş Çorbası (Stone Soup)	Narrative	2.44	7.10	82.19	Easy
Mozart'ın Yaşamından (From the Life of Mozart)	Informative	2.66	10.79	63.69	Medium
Deniz Masalı (Sea Tale)	Narrative	2.98	5.38	65.15	Medium
Kar Taneleri Bilimin Tarihi (Snowflakes History of Science)	Informative	2.74	16.04	46.97	Difficult
Türkiye'de Futbolun Çocukluğu (Childhood of Football in Türkiye)	Narrative	2.69	19.94	38.89	Difficult

at the medium level. Among the fourth grade free reading texts, there is no text in the type of poetry.

Findings on the Readability Levels of Texts and Free Reading Texts in Primary School Turkish Textbooks According to Grade Levels

According to the difficulty level of the narrative text types in the analyzed Turkish textbooks at grade level, it is observed that six of the narrative texts in the first grade Turkish textbook are at the easy level,

and five of them are at the medium level. There are no narrative texts at very easy, difficult, and very difficult levels in the first grade Turkish textbook. It is observed that one of the narrative texts in the first grade Turkish textbook is at a very easy level, nine of them are at the easy level, and three of them are at the medium level. There are no narrative texts at the difficult and very difficult level in the second grade Turkish textbook. It is observed that eight of the narrative texts in the third grade Turkish textbook are at the easy level, and three of them are at the medium level. There are no narrative texts at the very easy, difficult,

Table 10.

Average Scores According to Text Types in First Grade Turkish Textbook

Text Types	Average Readability Score of Reading Texts	Readability Levels of Reading Texts	Average Readability Score of Free Reading Texts	Readability Levels of Free Reading Texts
Narrative	74.26	Easy	-	-
Informative	65.05	Medium	71.03	Easy
Poetry	78.81	Easy	82.44	Easy

Table 11.

Average Scores According to Text Types in Second Grade Turkish Textbook

Text Types	Average Readability Score of Reading Texts	Readability Levels of Reading Texts	Average Readability Score of Free Reading Texts	Readability Levels of Free Reading Texts
Narrative	85.00	Easy	76.23	Easy
Informative	74.77	Easy	69.23	Medium
Poetry	75.83	Easy	85	Easy

Table 12.
Average Scores According to Text Types in Third Grade Turkish Textbook

Text Types	Average Readability Score of Reading Texts	Readability Levels of Reading Texts	Average Readability Score of Free Reading Texts	Readability Levels of Free Reading Texts
Narrative	75.58	Easy	81.39	Easy
Informative	67.75	Medium	68.65	Medium
Poetry	74.94	Easy	85.68	Easy

Table 13.
Average Scores According to Text Types in Fourth Grade Turkish Textbook

Text Types	Average Readability Score of Reading Texts	Readability Levels of Reading Texts	Average Readability Score of Free Reading Texts	Readability Levels of Free Reading Texts
Narrative	78.11	Easy	70.81	Easy
Informative	58.82	Medium	57.34	Medium
Poetry	78.16	Easy	-	-

and very difficult levels in this textbook. It is observed that 10 of the narrative texts in the fourth grade Turkish textbook are at an easy level, two of them are at the medium level, and one of them is at the difficult level. There are no very easy and very difficult texts in the narrative type in the fourth grade Turkish textbook.

According to the difficulty level of the informative text types in the analyzed Turkish textbooks at grade levels, it is observed that the texts are generally at easy and medium difficulty levels. It is observed that one of the informative texts in the first-grade textbook is very easy, and three of them are easy; one of the informative texts in the second-grade textbook is very easy, two of them are easy, and four of them are at the medium level; six of the informative texts in the third-grade textbook are easy, and five of them are at the medium level; one of the informative texts in the fourth-grade textbook is easy, eight of them are at the medium level, and three of them are at the difficult level.

According to the difficulty level of the poetry types in the Turkish textbooks at grade level, it is observed that the poems are generally at easy and medium difficulty levels. It is observed that one of the poems in the first-grade textbook is at the easy level, and two of them are at the medium difficulty level; 11 of the poems in the second-grade textbook are at the easy level, and one of them is at the medium level; one of the poems in the third-grade Turkish textbook is very easy, seven of them are easy, and two of them are at the medium level; one of the poems in the fourth-grade Turkish textbook is very easy, five of them are easy, and one of them is at the medium difficulty level.

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

According to Ateşman's (1997) readability formula, the readability level of the twelve reading texts related to the activities in the first-grade textbook is between 63.21 and 86.88, and the texts are of "easy" and "medium" difficulty. Also, there are no reading texts at the "very easy," "difficult," and "very difficult" levels. The readability level of 24 reading texts related to the activities in the second-grade textbook is between 50.55 and 97.44, and the texts are at "very easy," "easy," and "medium" difficulty levels. There are no reading texts at the "difficult" and "very difficult" level. Similarly, according to Ateşman's (1997) readability formula, the readability level of 24 reading texts related to the activities in the third-grade textbook is between 50.58 and 84.67 and the texts are at "easy" and "medium" difficulty levels. There are no reading texts at the "very easy," "difficult" and "very difficult" levels.

The readability level of the 24 reading texts related to the activities in the fourth-grade textbook is between 40.94 and 98.91, and the texts have "very easy," "easy," "medium," and "difficult" difficulty levels. There are no reading texts at the "very difficult" level. Easy readability of the texts does not mean that they are comprehensible simultaneously. The calculation of readability levels ignores students' developmental characteristics and prior knowledge (Ateşman, 1997). Difficult texts could lead to students not being able to understand the text, and easy texts could lead to boring texts. Thus, the readability levels of texts should not be too easy or too difficult (BOE, 2021). Based on that, it is thought that the readability of the study texts is appropriate.

According to Ateşman's (1997) readability formula, the readability level of the four free reading texts in the first-grade textbook is between 71.03 and 90.19, and the texts are "easy" and "very easy." There are no free reading texts at the "medium," "difficult," and "very difficult" levels. The readability level of the eight free reading texts in the second-grade textbook is between 68.40 and 89.15, and the texts are at "easy" and "medium" difficulty levels. There are no free reading texts at the "very easy," "difficult," and "very difficult" levels. The readability level of the eight free reading texts in the third-grade textbook is between 55.55 and 91.48, and the texts are "very easy," "easy," and "medium" difficulty. There are no free reading texts at the "difficult" and "very difficult" level. The readability level of the eight free reading texts in the fourth-grade textbook is between 38.89 and 85.41 and that the texts have "easy," "medium," and "difficult" difficulty levels. There are no free reading texts at the "very easy" and "very difficult" levels. Within the free reading texts, it is determined that there are mostly easy and very easy texts in the first and second grades, easy and medium level texts in the third grades, and easy, medium, and difficult level texts in the fourth grades. The readability difficulty level of free reading texts increases with grade level. The previous study conducted by Demir and Çeçen (2013) revealed similar results. Although the books have changed, the level of readability difficulty remains similar even after years.

According to Ateşman (1997)'s readability formula in terms of the types of reading texts in the textbooks, the average readability score of the narrative texts in the first grade Turkish textbook is 74.26 at the easy level, the average readability score of the informative texts is 65.05 at the medium level, and the average readability score of the poetry texts is 78.81 at the easy level. The average readability score of the narrative texts in the second grade Turkish textbook is 85.00 at an easy level, the average readability score of the informative texts is 74.77 at an easy level, and the average readability score of the poetry texts is 75.83 at an easy level. The average readability score of the narrative texts in the third grade Turkish textbook is 75.58 at the easy level, the average readability score of the informative texts is 67.75 at the medium level, and the average readability score of the poetry texts is 74.94 at the easy level. The average readability score of the narrative texts in the fourth grade Turkish textbook is 78.11 at the easy level, the average readability score of the informative texts is 58.82 at the medium level, and the average readability score of the poetry texts is 78.16 at the easy level. In terms of text types, there are no narrative texts within the free reading texts in the first grade Turkish textbook. The average readability score of the texts in the informative type is 72.03 at an easy level, while the average readability score of the texts in the poetry type is 82.44 at an easy level. Based on the free reading texts of the second grade Turkish textbook, narrative texts in free reading texts are at an easy level with an average readability score of 76.23, informative texts are at the medium level with an average readability score of 69.23, and poetry texts are at an easy level with an average readability score of 85.00. Based on the free reading texts of the third grade Turkish textbook, narrative texts are at an easy level with an average readability score of 81.39, informative texts are at the medium level with an

average readability score of 68.65, and poetry texts are at an easy level with an average readability score of 85.68. Based on the text types in the fourth grade Turkish textbook, narrative texts are at an easy level with a readability score of 70.81, while informative texts are at the medium level with an average readability score of 57.34. Additionally, poetry text is not a text type in free reading texts. According to the findings obtained with Ateşman's (1997) formula, the average readability level of narrative and poetry texts in primary school Turkish textbooks is at an easy level, and the readability level of informative texts is at the medium level. These findings have been revealed in many previous studies (Okur & Arı, 2013; Mirzaoglu & Akin, 2015).

According to Ateşman's (1997) formula, most of the narrative texts in the Turkish textbooks are at an easy level, and the rest are at a medium difficulty level. One of the texts in the second grade Turkish textbook is very easy, and one of the texts in the fourth grade Turkish textbook is at the difficult level. Hence, it can be said that texts in narrative type do not differ depending on the grade level. Informative texts, in the first grade, there is one very easy and three easy level texts. In the second grade, there are one very easy, two easy, and four medium level texts. In third grade, six of the informative texts are at an easy level, and five of them are at the medium level. In the fourth grade, one of them is at the easy level, eight of them are at the medium level, and three of them are at the difficult level. It can be said that informative texts' difficulty levels increase as the grade level increases. Based on the difficulty levels of poetry types according to grade levels, they are mostly at an easy level. Two poems from the first and third grade Turkish textbooks and one poem from each of the second and fourth grade Turkish textbooks are at the medium level. One poem each from the third and fourth grade Turkish textbooks is at a very easy level. This means poetry reading texts do not differ much depending on the grade level.

In Turkish lessons, various materials are used to increase students' interest and improve their language skills (Tenekeci & Dursun, 2019). Textbooks are one of these materials that aim to provide target behaviors (Batur, 2010). Textbooks have to be appropriate for the readiness, interests, and needs of students at different grade levels (Bağcı & Ünal, 2013). The textbooks should have a progressive structure in their readability levels, ranging from easy to difficult. Teachers' opinions regarding their experience with using textbooks with students can be gathered while developing activities, visuals, and reading materials from the textbooks. Fluent reading is an important factor that affects students' reading comprehension skills (Çıplak, 2022). Fluent reading is defined as reading the text at an appropriate speed to ensure comprehension (Kuhn & Stahl, 2000). Low reading speed negatively affects fluency (Allinder, Fuchs and Fuchs, Marston, 1998). Hence, students find it difficult to understand the content they read. The texts for the textbooks can be determined according to the grade level, and the difficulty can be progressively increased. The difficulty level of the texts may increase depending on the grade level. For instance, the difficulty level of the texts of the first two themes could be very easy, the difficulty level of the texts of the next two themes could be easy, the difficulty level of the texts of the next two themes could be medium, and the difficulty level of the texts of the last two themes could be difficult. Besides, future studies can be conducted on the relationship between the readability level of texts and reading comprehension. Formulas or scales can be developed to calculate readability.

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