



READABILITY LEVEL OF THE TEXTS IN OPEN EDUCATION SECONDARY SCHOOL TURKISH COURSEBOOKS

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Abstract

In Open Education System all the responsibility of teaching is on teaching material. Within the published materials, nearly all the responsibility is carried by coursebooks and lecture notes. In order to improve the quality in Open Education system, the reading texts in coursebooks should be analysed and their current situation should be unveiled. This study, which was designed with this necessity in mind, aims to evaluate the texts in Open Education Secondary School Turkish Coursebooks (5, 6, 7, and 8) in terms of their readability levels. Data were collected through document analysis technique, one of the qualitative research methods. Each of 74 texts found in Turkish coursebooks were meticulously analyzed, and findings are presented in frequency tables and then interpreted. At the end of the study, it was discovered that there were significant differences in word length and sentence length of the texts in 5, 6, 7, and 8th grade Turkish coursebooks; the difference among the sentence length was remarkable; readability level of the texts were centered mainly on moderate and easy levels; there were also few difficult and very difficult level reading texts.

Keywords: Open Education, secondary school, Turkish coursebooks, readability.

INTRODUCTION

Basic language skills are structured on four skills: speaking, writing, reading and listening. While speaking and writing can be generalized as expression skills; listening and reading can be generalized as comprehension skills.

Reading is the activity of inferencing from written symbols with the help of cognitive behaviours and psychomotor skills working together (Demirel, 2002, 77). It depends on words being perceived, comprehended, and interpreted (Sever, 2004, 12).

Reading is a highly complicated process and there are various definitions of it. In the broadest sense, reading is a process of inferencing, which is performed in a regular environment for an appropriate reason and in a proper manner, which is based on an efficient interaction between the writer and the reader, and in which background knowledge is utilized (Akyol, 2005, 1); it is perceiving written published words through sense organs, inferencing, comprehending and interpreting these words (Özdemir, 1997, 24); it is vocalizing and comprehending the words as a result of eyes scanning through the lines, seeing the word forms (Öz, 1999, 93). From the definitions it is seen that there are intensive mechanical and semantic emphasizes. In this respect, reading is a process of seeing a text with words, sentences, punctuation marks, and its other elements. And it is a process of perceiving and comprehending the text (Kavcar et al. 1997, 41).

With the developing technology, lots of materials have come to use in education. In spite of this diversity, course books keep their places in being basic material and reference source in the process of teaching and learning. One of the fundamental ways of reaching the objectives defined in curriculum is the coursebooks. The coursebooks prepared qualitatively play an important role in reaching the objectives shortly. The quality of a coursebook is defined by the texts in it. The texts prepared appropriately for student level have important role in helping the coursebook accomplish the mission it undertakes in teaching and learning process.



When we deal the word “text”, derived from “textus” wich means “fabric” in Latin, as a concept (Onursal, 2003, 121); we see that it is defined as an utterance occurred in conversation or it is a complete utterance related to non-linguistic factors (Aksan, 1999, 149), it is anything written having a cohesion and subject to reading (Özdemir, 1983, 22).

To fulfil the objectives of Turkish teaching is possible if the texts employed at teaching and learning process reflect the illocution, support the concept development to the age group they address to, and if they are the authentic examples of the genres (Sever, 2007, 229).

When general objectives of Turkish Teaching Program (1-5) are analysed, it is seen that more than half of the objectives, 8 of the total 13 objectives, are directly related to texts (MEB (Ministry of National Education), 2005, 16), that in secondary stage Turkish Teaching Program (6-8) also the situation is not different, 10 out of 11 general objectives in this stage, except for the one objective which is related to using media to reach the information, are directly related to quality texts (MEB (Ministry of National Education), 2006, 6).

In order to accomplish the mission they undertake, the texts in the coursebooks should be chosen meticulously, they should have language and expression features that ease reading and understanding, they should be appropriate for the target audience. Many studies are conducted with the aim of defining the texts suitability for the students’ age and education level. Determining the readability of the texts is one of the studies conducted for this purpose.

Readability is the situation of texts being easily or difficultly understandable for the reader (Ateşman, 1997, 71). Mostly, the difficulty of the text is determined by taking the quantitative features of the texts, sentence and word lengths, and number of unknown words into consideration (Zorbaz, 2007, 89). The main problem of readability is to determine the difficulty level of the texts and to confirm the suitability of the texts for the level accordingly (Köse, 2009, 142). The more readable a coursebook is the more easily understandable for the students it becomes (Yalın, 1996, 61).

The texts in a coursebook should be prepared in accordance with both curriculum and social structure in terms of content and also they should be appropriate for the reading level of the students in each class (Demir, 2008, 301).

Due to its positive features such as: dissemination of the education, reaching it to the masses, providing equality of opportunity for the students, standardization in curricula, creating rich learning environment, providing a learning freedom for students by eliminating the concepts of time and place, massifying and individualisation of the education concurrently, studies on open education continue at a great pace both in Turkey and in the world (Kaya, 2002). The curriculum of Open Education Secondary School is the same with the one in formal education and the curriculum is applied with the techniques of distance education.

First study on readability and classification of Turkish texts was done by Ateşman (1997). He created a formula for Turkish based on the sentence and word length and that can be applied to a 100-word passage extracted from the text.

In her study, Güneş (2000) applied readability formulas on MNE certified 52 children books published in Turkey and aimed to evaluate these books in terms of readability. She found that 40 of these books are not suitable for children’s level from the point of syllable means and word choice.

Temur (2002) compared the written compositions of 5th grade students and readability level of texts in their Turkish coursebooks. According to the results, there were not any significant differences between these variables.

Sonmez (2003) tested the reliability of Gunning Fog Index in Turkish and developed a mathematical formula for Turkish grounding on unknown items.

Budak (2005) in his study, stated that readability level could be determined by the known and unknown words in the text instead of word and sentence length. He also expressed that if the number of unknown words were high, the text would be difficult to understand.

In his study on word-sentence length and readability levels of fairy tales in 1st – 8th grade Turkish coursebooks, Zorbaz (2007) found that word-sentence length of the fairy tales did not show a regular increase in accordance with students' classroom levels, that the texts only differ in 6th grade coursebooks and there were not any significant changes in other grades.

Çiftçi, Çeçen and Melanlıoğlu (2007) conducted a study on readability levels of the texts in 6th grade Turkish coursebooks. They found that sentence-word lengths in narrative texts are shorter than expository texts and accordingly readability scores were higher.

In her study Demir (2008) assessed the readability levels of the texts in 7th grade Turkish coursebooks. At the end of the study, it was found that the coursebooks were compromised of very easy texts in terms of readability levels and sentence-word lengths were found to be easy level.

Solmaz,(2009) investigated the effects of overall word length, sentence length and the use of vocabulary on the readability of 4th and 5th grade texts. She found that use of vocabulary had a bigger and positive effect on readability level than word and syllable length.

Çetinkaya (2010) developed a formula to determine and classify the readability levels of Turkish texts grounding on overall word and sentence length.

Bezirci ve Yılmaz (2010) contributed to the field by creating a new readability value with the help of a software library they created in C programming language.

Temizyürek (2010), tried to determine the readability levels of 10 books chosen among 100 Fundamental Books by applying the Ateşman's formula. While there were not significant differences in terms of word lengths, there were significant differences in terms of sentence lengths. One of the books was found to be difficult, five of them were found to be moderate and four of them were found to be easy level of readability.

In their study Çeçen ve Aydemir (2011) investigated the readability levels of 50 storybooks aimed at pre-school education by using Ateşman's formula. 2 books were found to be very easy, 36 were found to be easy and 12 books were found to be moderate difficulty. The books had sentence lengths ranging from 3.64 to 8.91. In this regard, there were considerable differences in terms of sentence lengths.

Tosunoğlu ve Özlük (2011) investigated the readability levels of the texts in 1st grade Turkish coursebooks by using Ateşman's formula. According to the results, all the texts were found to be easily readable and appropriate for students' levels.

Erdem (2011) found out that readability scores of the texts in 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade language and expression coursebooks he analysed by using Ateşman's formula ranged from 59 to 73. According to the formula these scores indicate moderate and easy levels. This situation was interpreted in the manner that the principle of "from difficult to easy" in preparing coursebooks was ignored.

Akkurt (2011), evaluated 8th grade Turkish coursebooks according to readability formula which was adopted by Ateşman and teacher opinions are gathered via rating scale of text readability which was developed by herself. At the end of the research, it was found out that 6.66% of the texts are very difficult, 20% of the texts are difficult, 60% are of moderate difficulty and 13.3% are easy. It was also found out that, in terms of their readability level, 20% of the texts are difficult, 33.33% are of moderate difficulty and 46,66% are easy. There were no very easy texts in both rating scales.



145 texts from 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade coursebooks are evaluated by Kurnaz and Erdem (2012) based on the formula which was developed by Ateşman and they worked to find out whether gathered data differed from grade to grade and from book to book. T-test and variance analysis were used for the evaluations.

In a study by Karatay, Bolat and Güngör in 2013 which is named Readability and Comprehensibility of Texts in Turkish Coursebooks, the difficulty level of the texts in Turkish course books was determined as difficult, moderate difficulty and easy by asking questions to 12 Turkish teachers. The chosen texts were read by students. The data gathered at the end of the research was compared to teacher opinions and it was questioned whether there was a significant difference between teacher opinions and students' performance.

Okur and Arı (2013), examined the readability of texts from 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Turkish course books according to formulas which were developed by Ateşman and Çetinkaya-Uzun. According to formula, readability level of the coursebooks is centred on moderate level. According to readability level of books, there were uneven increases and decreases from low classes to high classes. It was found out that readability level of informative texts is more difficult than narrative texts.

In their research study which is named Readability Level of the Texts in Primary Education 8th Grade Turkish Coursebooks, Bağcı and Ünal (2013), evaluated 56 texts in 8th grade Turkish coursebooks based on Ateşman and Çetinkaya-Uzun formula. It was concluded that most of the texts are of moderate difficulty.

Studies on readability focus on coursebooks which are used in formal education and it was found out that there was no study devoted to open education secondary school course books. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to determine the readability level of texts in 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade Turkish course books at Open Education Secondary School. For this aim, answers were searched for the following questions in this research:

Aim of the Study

The main purpose of the research is to determine the readability level of texts in 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade Turkish course books at Open Education Secondary School.

For this aim, answer for the question "What is the readability level of texts in 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade Turkish course books at Open Education Secondary School?" was sought.

In accordance with this main problem, answers were sought for the following sub problems:

- What is average word length of texts in Open Education Secondary School Turkish coursebooks?
- What is the average sentence length of texts of in Open Education Secondary School Turkish coursebooks?
- What is the readability level of texts in Open Education Secondary School Turkish course books?
- What kind of difference exists among readability level of texts in Open Education Secondary School Turkish course books?

METHOD

Research Model

This research which aims at determining readability level of texts in Open Education Secondary School Turkish course books was carried out using survey model. The data of this descriptive research was gathered via document review, a method of qualitative research. Document review includes analysis of written materials about the subject to be searched (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). In the research studies whose focus is education, coursebooks, students' and teachers' books, course and unit plans, programme directions, formal documents about education can be used as data source (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Data Collection Tools and Analysis of the Data

74 texts were examined in the research and these texts are taken from Open Education Secondary School 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Turkish coursebooks of 2014-2015 school year which can be accessed on the website of Ministry of National Education Life Long Learning General Management. These texts also include extensive reading texts. Poems and listening texts are not included in the study.

In the study, readability formula, which was adapted to Turkish by Ateşman (1997) was used. The number of the syllables, words, and sentences was determined. Each element between two gaps (in terms of autography) was qualified as a word. Each phrase that was qualified as a sentence linguistically was evaluated as a sentence. Wordages that end with a dot (.), question mark (?), double dot (:), and triple dot (...) were accepted as separate sentences while dependent clauses were evaluated as single sentences. After this step, by dividing total syllable number to total number of the words, average word length (X1) was calculated and by dividing total number of the words to total number of the sentences, average sentence length (X2) was calculated. In the next step, data was placed in the formula and readability score was calculated.

Readability Formula:

Readability Score: $198,825 - 40,175X1 - 2,610X2$

X1: Average word length as a syllable

X2: Average sentence length as a word

Readability scale developed by Ateşman (1997:74) can be seen in Table 1:

Table1: Readability Scale by Ateşman

Readability Degree	Readability Score
Very Easy	90-100
Easy	70-89
Moderate	50-69
Difficult	30-49
Very Difficult	1-29

As can be seen in Table 1, readability intervals of the formula developed by Ateşman: 90-100 very easy; 70-89 easy; 50-69 moderate difficulty; 30-49 difficult; 1-29 very difficult.

FINDINGS

In this part, findings gathered at the end of the research and interpretations can be found. Findings are presented under the four different titles in compliance with the levels.

1. Readability Levels of the Texts in 5th Grade Turkish Coursebook

Readability Levels of the Texts in 5th Grade Turkish Coursebook are seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Readability Levels of the Texts in 5th Grade Turkish Coursebook

N	Unit	Title of The text	Average Word Length	Average sentence Length	Readability score	Readability level
1	1	Uçurtma	2.46	4.76	87,566	Easy
2	1	Pireyi Deve Yapmak	2.54	8.33	75,031	Easy
3	1	Şeker Dede	2.64	5.88	77,332	Easy
4	1	Semender Toplantısı	2.38	6.66	85,809	Easy
5	2	Merhaba Asker	2.91	9.09	58,188	Moderate
6	2	Atatürk'ün Çalışmaları	2.833	11.33	55,416	Moderate
7	2	Atatürk ve Türk Dili	2.88	14.71	44,576	Difficult
8	3	Çöp Ev	2.72	10.09	62,821	Moderate

9	3	Tırtıldan Kelebeğe	2.74	7.84	68,062	Moderate
10	3	Yeterli ve Dengeli Beslenme	2.80	13.25	51,677	Moderate
11	3	Kanatlı Bal Kutusu	2.54	14.28	59,495	Moderate
12	4	Dilim Dilim Güzel Dilim	2.88	8.5	60,841	Moderate
13	4	Hacı Bektaş Veli	2.48	7.21	80,155	Easy
14	4	Karagöz Baba İle Hacivat Usta	2.51	8.41	75,823	Easy
15	4	Tekerlemeci Dayı	2.69	6.8	72,762	Easy
16	5	Küçük Kar Tanesi	2.49	8.15	77,485	Easy
17	5	Uzayda Yaşam	3.01	8.83	54,487	Moderate
18	6	Burada Dur	2.87	10.1	57,110	Moderate
19	6	Dört Mevsimde Dört Güzellik: Abant	2.74	17.16	43,636	Difficult
20	6	Bin Pınarlı İda Dağının Etekleri: Zeytinli	2.68	8.071	70,033	Easy
21	7	Her Şey Bir Uçurtmayla Başladı	2.44	10.3	73,650	Easy
22	7	Bir Tıkla Elektronik Posat	3.02	11.33	47,538	Difficult
23	7	Güneşin Doğduğu Her Yer	2.46	5.42	85,604	Easy
24	8	Çocuk Doğru Söyledi	2.58	7.76	74,729	Easy
25	8	Küçük Ebru Ustası	2.76	6.93	69,475	Moderate
26	8	Sanat Eğitimi	2.49	10,5	71,174	Easy

As can be seen in Table 2, in 8 units a total of 26 texts in 5th grade Turkish coursebooks were analysed in terms of readability scores. Average word lengths of the texts range from 2.38 to 3.02; sentence lengths range from 4.76 to 17.16. There are not huge differences among word lengths but when sentence lengths are considered, it is seen that the difference is 4 times. The shortest sentences are in the text *Uçurtma* with 4.76 and the longest sentences are in the text *Dört Mevsimde Dört Güzellik: Abant*.

Readability levels of the texts are seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Readability Levels of 5th Grade Texts

Readability Level	Frequency
Very Easy	-
Easy	13
Moderate	10
Difficult	3
Very Difficult	-
Total	26

Readability Level of 5th Grade Texts

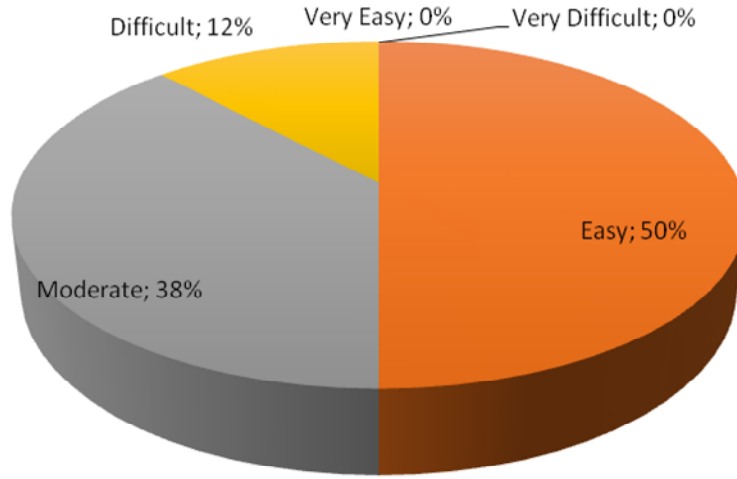


Figure1: Readability Level of 5th Grade Texts

As can be seen in Table2 and Figure1, there are not any very easy and very difficult level texts in Open Education Secondary School 5th Grade Turkish Coursebook. Out of 26 texts, 3 are difficult, 10 are moderate, and 13 are easy level texts. It can be said that in this grade most of the texts are in easy and moderate levels according to these results.

2. Readability Levels of the Texts in 6th Grade Turkish Coursebook

Readability Levels of the Texts in 6th Grade Turkish Coursebook are seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Readability Levels of the Texts in 6th Grade Turkish Coursebook

N	Unit	Title of the Text	Average Word Length	Average Sentence Length	Readability Score	Readability Level
1	1	Kedi	2.6	11.11	65,370	Moderate
2	1	Hırsız Taş	3.34	7.71	44,402	Difficult
3	2	Atatürk ve Tarih	2.69	12.5	58,129	Moderate
4	2	Atatürk'ün Hayatı	2.58	6.37	78,204	Easy
5	3	Sevgi Güzelliktir	2.7	7	71,867	Easy
6	3	Sevgi	2.67	6.05	75,358	Easy
7	4	Kurabiye Hırsızı	3.39	11.2	33,285	Difficult
8	4	İşitmek ve Dinlemek	2.87	11.44	53,501	Moderate
9	4	Teknolojik Bayram Kutlamaları	3.17	12.62	38,189	Difficult
10	4	Selimiye Efsaneleri	2.64	13	58,663	Moderate
11	5	Atatürk'ün Ağaç Sevgisi	2.72	6.31	72,962	Easy
12	5	Çevre Kirliliği	2.77	13	53,255	Moderate
13	5	Son Kuşlar	2.71	9.54	64,865	Moderate
14	6	Alışkanlık	2.50	13.37	63,291	Moderate

As can be seen in Table 4, in 6 units a total of 14 texts in 6th grade Turkish coursebook were analysed in terms of readability scores. Average word lengths of the texts range from 2.50 to 3.39; sentence lengths range from 6.05 to 13.37. There are differences among word and sentence lengths. The difference among sentence lengths is higher than the difference among word lengths. The difference among sentence lengths is about two times. The huge difference among the sentence lengths is remarkable as in 5th grade coursebooks. The shortest sentences are in the text *Atatürk'ün Ağaç Sevgisi* with 6.31 and the longest sentences are in the text *Alışkanlık* with 13.37.

Readability levels of the texts are seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Readability Levels of 6th Grade Texts

Readability Levels	Frequency
Very Easy	-
Easy	4
Moderate	7
Difficult	3
Very Difficult	-
Total	14

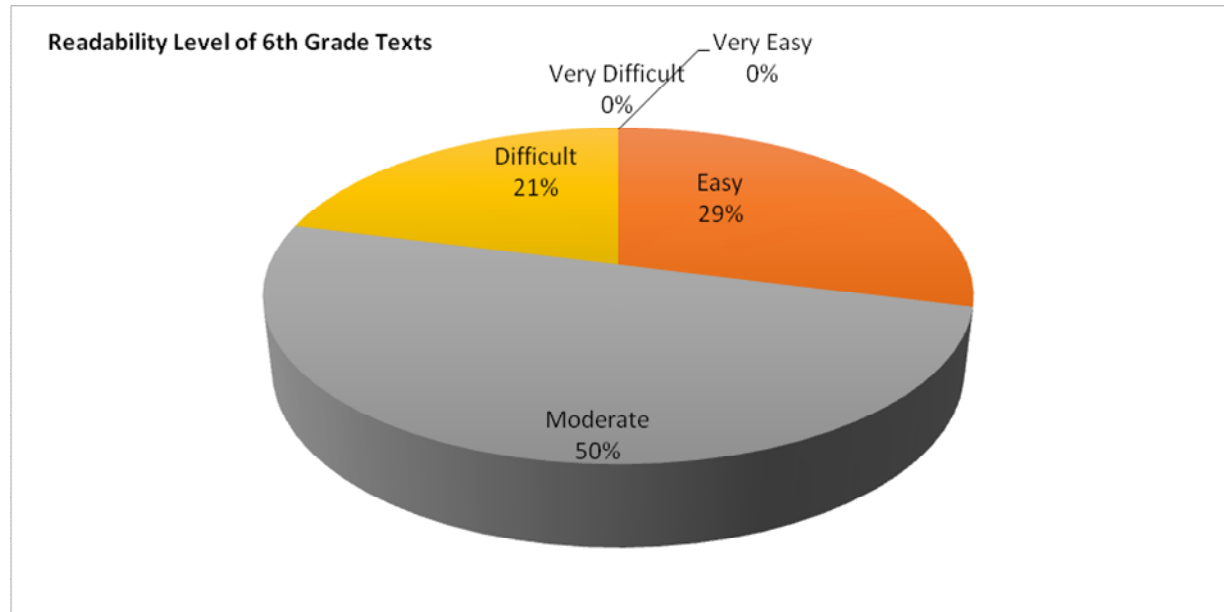


Figure 2. 6. Readability Level of 6th Grade Texts

As seen in Table 5 and Figure 2, texts at very easy and very difficult levels are available in Open Education Secondary School 6th grade Turkish coursebook. 4 of 14 texts are easy. Seven of them are at moderate level, and the other three texts are difficult. When these results are investigated, it can be easily stated that the readability level of the texts are moderate at this stage.

3. Readability Levels of the Texts in 7th Grade Turkish Coursebook

Readability Levels of the Texts in 7th Grade Turkish Coursebook are seen in Table 6

Table7. Readability Levels of the Texts in 7th Grade Turkish Coursebook

N	Unit	Title of the Text	Average Word Length	Average Sentence Length	Readability Score	Readability Level
1	1	Atatürk'ün Eğitim Üzerine Görüşleri	3.23	8.40	47,129	Difficult
2	2	Nasıl Konuşmalı	3.28	12.50	34,426	Difficult
3	2	Konuşma ve Biz	3.52	10.70	29,347	Very Difficult
4	2	Haberleri Veriyoruz	3.66	14.125	14,769	Very Difficult
5	2	Hastane	3.32	7.76	44,896	Difficult
6	2	Yaş Günüm	2.99	3.22	70,282	Easy
7	2	Malezya'da Köpek Balığı Ağı	3.22	18.00	22,392	Very Difficult
8	3	Canım Kitap	3.07	7.69	55,411	Moderate
9	3	Okumak	3.41	7.20	42,768	Difficult
10	3	İnce Memed 2	2.67	12.5	58,852	Moderate
11	3	Okuma Serüvenim	2.44	21.66	44,001	Difficult
12	3	Okuma Süreci	2.60	5.66	79,265	Easy
13	3	Haritada bir Nokta	2.77	8.50	65,174	Moderate
14	3	Başöğretmen	2.94	9.54	55,682	Moderate
15	4	Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar'la Bir Konuşma	2.78	5.94	71,545	Easy
16	4	Bodrumdaki Hazine	2.66	8.38	70,054	Easy
17	4	Kınalı'da Bir Ev	2.72	8.30	67,777	Moderate
18	4	Nutuk'tan	2.61	14.12	57,077	Moderate
19	4	Geldiği Gibi	2.62	11.88	62,289	Moderate
20	4	Söyleşiler	2.54	8.53	74,111	Easy
21	4	Küresel Çevre Kirliliği	2.94	14.85	41,841	Difficult
22	4	Kızlarıma Mektuplar	2.70	13.5	54,969	Moderate
23	4	Atatürk Sevgisi	2.84	11.66	53,972	Moderate

As seen in Table7, totally 23 texts in 4 units in 7th grade Turkish coursebook were investigated in terms of readability levels. According to the investigation results, average word lengths of the texts range between 2.44 and 3.66, and average sentence lengths range between 5.94 and 21.66. There are differences among word and sentence lengths. The difference among the sentence lengths is about triple. Similar to 5th and 6th Grade, the important difference among the sentence lengths attracts notice. The shortest sentences are in text *Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar'la Bir Konuşma* with 5,94, and the longest sentences are in the text *Okuma Serüvenim* with 21,66. Readability levels of the texts are seen in Table 8.

Table 8: Readability Levels of 7th Grade Texts

Readability Levels	Frequency
Very Easy	-
Easy	5
Moderate	9
Difficult	6
Very Difficult	3
Total	23

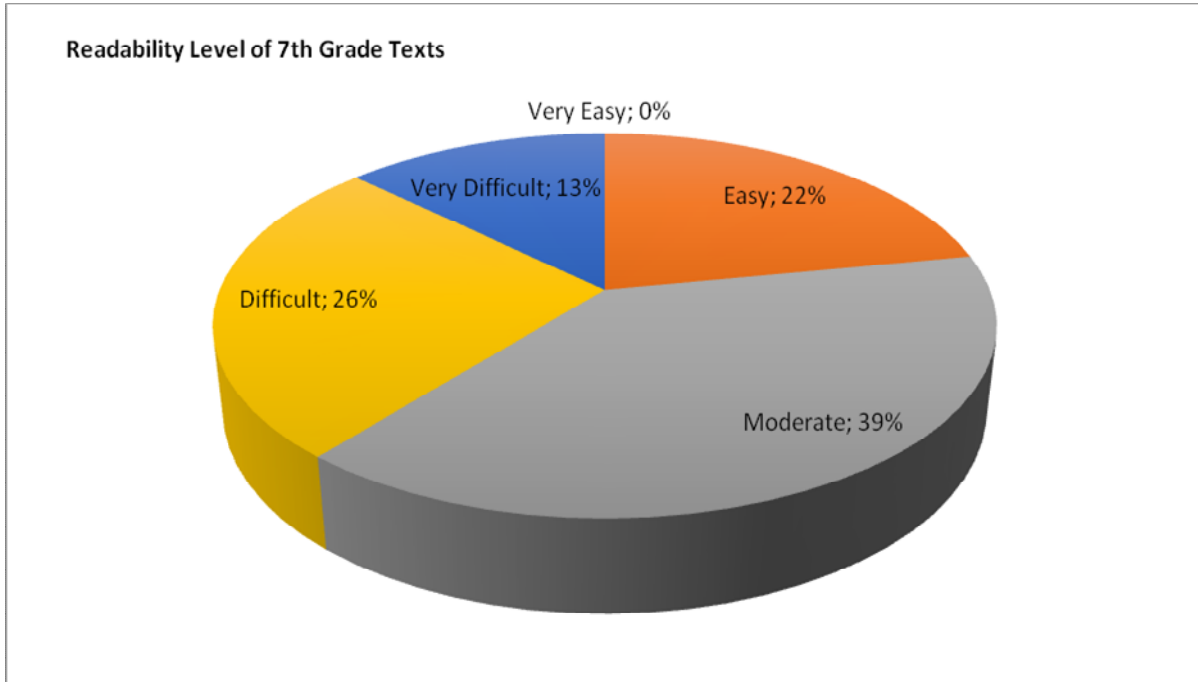


Figure 3: Readability Levels of 7th Grade Texts

As seen in Table 8 and Figure 3, there are not very easy level texts in 7th grade Open Education Secondary School Turkish coursebook. 5 of 23 texts are easy. 9 of them are moderate. 6 of the texts are difficult, and the other 3 texts are very difficult. When the results are observed, it can be easily stated that readability level is mostly moderate at this grade.

4. Readability Levels of the Texts in 8th Grade Turkish Coursebook

Readability Levels of the Texts in 8th Grade Turkish Coursebook are seen in Table 9.

Table 9: Readability Levels of the Texts in 8th Grade Turkish Coursebook

N	Unit	Name of the Text	Average Word Length	Average Sentence Length	Readability Score	Readability Level
1	1	Dede Korkut Hikayeleri	3.01	5.63	62,851	Moderate
2	1	Tarsuslu Kara Fatma	2.28	19.00	57,608	Moderate
3	2	Bir Aşk Masalı	2.65	7.76	71,944	Easy
4	3	Atatürk'ün İnsan Sevgisi	2.73	14.00	52,282	Moderate
5	3	Gazi'nin Heykeli	2.54	12.11	65,119	Moderate
6	4	Öğretmen Sevgisi	2.47	11.77	68,785	Moderate
7	5	Karanfiller ve Domates Suyu	3.37	8.92	40,118	Difficult
8	5	Çalığışu	3.16	7.76	51,260	Moderate
9	6	Bizim Akdeniz	2.40	12.50	64,156	Moderate
10	6	Dinlemek Üzerine	3.10	14.71	35,605	Difficult
11	6	Seyirci ve Tiyatro Anlayışı	3.21	18.00	22,764	Very Difficult

As seen in Table 9, a total of 11 texts in 6 units in 8th Grade Turkish coursebook were investigated. According to the results, the average word lengths of the texts are between 2.28 and 3.37, and the Average sentence lengths are between 5.63 and 19.00. Differences among word and sentence lengths are observed. Difference among the sentences is higher than the difference among the words. Difference among the sentences is almost

triple. Like 5th, 6th, and 7th grades, the important difference among the sentences was observed. The shortest sentences are in the text *Dede Korkut Hikayeleri* with 5.63, and the longest sentences are in the text *Tarsuslu Kara Fatma* with 19.00.

Readability levels of the texts are seen in Table10.

Table10: Readability Levels of The 8th Grade Texts

Readability Level	Frequency
Very Easy	-
Easy	1
Moderate	7
Difficult	2
Very Difficult	1
Total	11

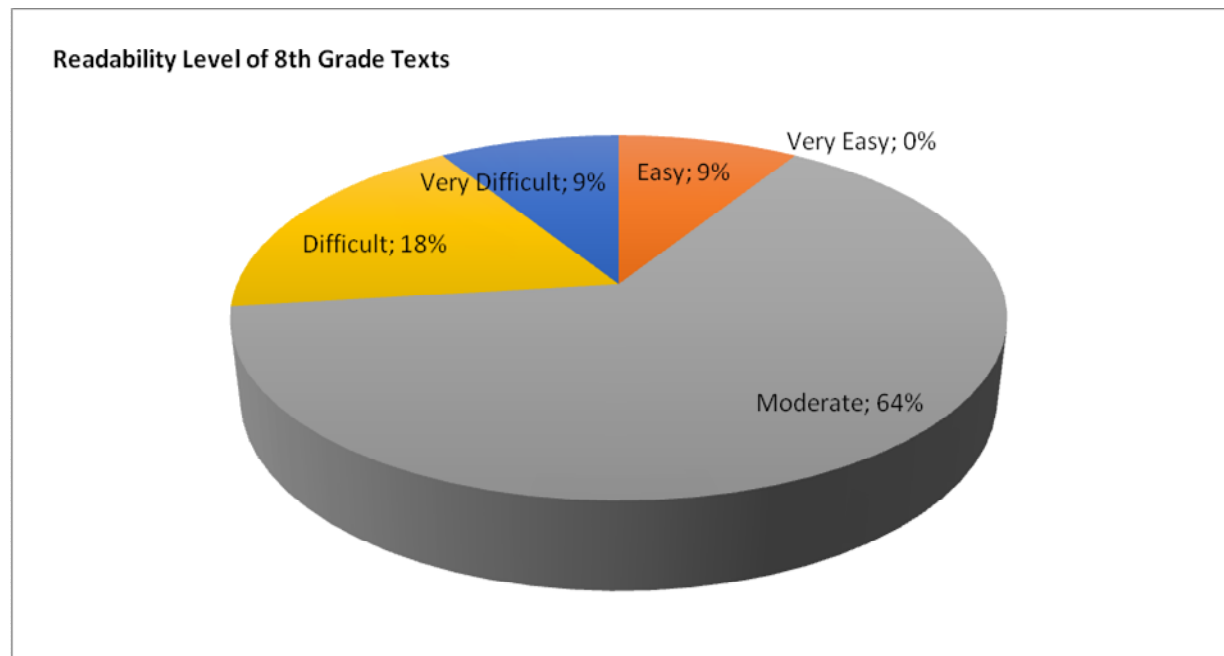


Figure 4: Readability Levels of 8th Grade Texts

As seen in Table10 and Figure4, there are not any very easy texts in 8th grade Open Education Secondary School Turkish coursebook. 1 of 11 texts is easy. 7 texts are moderate. 2 texts are difficult, and the other 1 text is very difficult. When the results are observed, it can be easily seen that readability level at this grade is mostly moderate.

Readability levels of the texts in 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Turkish coursebooks at Open Education Secondary School

Readability levels of the texts in Turkish coursebooks at Open Education Secondary School are seen in total in Table 11.

Table 11: Readability levels of the texts in Turkish coursebooks according to the grades

Grade	Very Easy	Easy	Moderate	Difficult	Very Difficult
5	-	13	10	3	-
6	-	4	7	3	-
7	-	5	9	6	3
8	-	1	7	2	1
Total	-	23	33	14	4

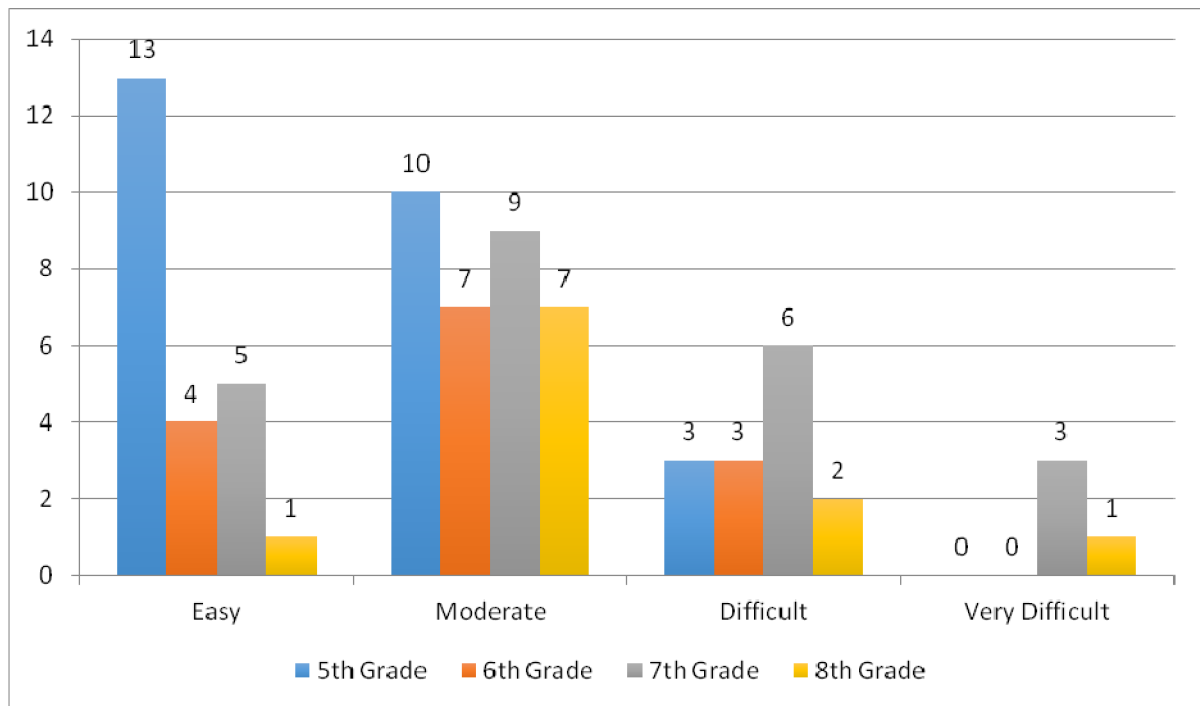


Figure 5: Readability levels of the texts in Turkish coursebooks according to the grades

As seen in Table 11 and Figure 5, when readability levels of the coursebooks according to the grade stages are observed, there are not any texts with very easy readability level in 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Turkish coursebooks.

In terms of *easy readability level*, 5th grade takes the first place with 13 texts. 7th grade follows up with 5 texts. 6th grade with 4 texts is on the 3rd rank, and the last rank is 8th grade with 1 text.

In terms of *moderate readability level*, 5th grade again gets the first rank 10 texts. 7th grade follows up with 9 texts. 7th and 8th grades share the last rank with 7 texts.

In terms of *difficult readability level*, while 7th grade is first with 6 texts, 5th and 6th grades come second with 3 texts. 8th grade gets the last rank with 2 texts. That there are difficult level texts in 6th grade and 5th grade follows the 6th grade can mean that these two grades do not differentiate in terms of readability level.

There are not any texts with *very difficult readability* in 5th and 6th grades. 7th grade is first with 3 texts. 8th grade follows up with 1 text. That there are very difficult texts in 7th grade can mean that there are not any differences between these two grades in terms of readability level.

When the results of the studies conducted on the language development are observed it is seen that as the individuals' language development levels go up, the sentences they understand and use become longer, and that there is a direct ratio between age and word and sentence length. (Acarlar & Dönmez, 1992,177; Acarlar, Ege & Turan, 2002, 70). However, in this study, the results did not show a ratio among grades and readability level of the texts. It is very difficult to talk about a direct relation rate between readability levels of the texts and grades.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study and solution suggestions for defined problems take place at this part.

The data related to the readability levels of the texts in 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Turkish coursebooks are shown in findings parts of this study aiming to define the readability levels of the texts in 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Open Education Secondary School Turkish coursebooks. The results based on these findings are below:

Whereas there is not a difference among the word lengths in the texts in 5th grade Turkish coursebook, there is an important difference among sentence lengths. This difference is almost 4 times.

Readability levels of the texts in 5th grade Turkish coursebooks are found to be mostly moderate and easy levels. Few texts with difficult readability level are seen in this coursebook. Very difficult and very easy texts are not seen.

Important differences are observed among word and sentence lengths in 6th grade Turkish coursebooks. Difference in sentence lengths is almost twice.

When the *readability levels* of the texts in 6th grade coursebook are observed, it can be seen that there are not any very easy and difficult texts. Readability level is generally easy and moderate. The number of very difficult texts is very few, and it is equal to the number in 5th grade.

Important differences were observed between word and sentence lengths in 7th grade Turkish coursebooks. Difference in sentence length was almost triple.

When the *readability levels* of the texts in 7th grade coursebook were observed; it can be seen that there were not any very easy texts. Readability level was generally easy and moderate.

When *word and sentence lengths* in 8th grade coursebooks were observed, it was seen difference in sentence lengths was more than the difference in word length. Difference in sentence length was almost triple.

When the *readability levels* of the texts in 8th grade coursebook were observed; it can be seen that there were not any very easy and difficult texts like other grades. Readability level is generally easy and moderate. There are few difficult and very difficult texts.

That the readability level is moderate is equal to the results of another study conducted by Okur and Arı, 2013; Bağcı and Ünal, 2013.

The difficulty levels of the texts are related to grade levels. However, instead of following a hierarchical order by applying the principles of "from easy to difficult", "from simple to complicated", difficult and very difficult level texts are seen in 7th grade Turkish coursebooks. Therefore, it can be interpreted that no reference and principle of progressivity have been followed in choosing the texts.

Suggestions

The texts in Open Education Secondary School Turkish coursebooks should be revised; these texts should be evaluated in terms of word and sentence lengths, and they should be arranged according to the grade levels.



The texts in observed coursebooks should be reorganized in accordance with “from easy to difficult principle” and grade levels.

WJEIS’s Note: This article was presented at 1st International Congress on Distance Education and Educational Technology - ICDET, 21-23 May, 2015, Istanbul- Turkey and was selected for publication for Volume 5 Number 4 of WJEIS 2015 by WJEIS Scientific Committee.

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