

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Analysing instructors' view regarding the efficiency of the Turkish history subjects presented in Turkey social studies textbooks

Mustafa ŞEKER\* and Genç Osman İLHAN

Yildiz Technical University, Faculty of Education, Department of Social Studies Education, 34210, Istanbul-Turkey.

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Just like it is the reflex of each nation to teach its own history to the next generations, it is essential that our country is also able to identify the sufficiency level of the Turkish history within the framework of developing a programme. Through this study, the parallelism between the social studies teaching programme within the education process and the textbooks and the instructors' views regarding the way the Turkish history subjects are presented and the discussion of solution suggestions about these issues is aimed. Towards this end, the opinions of the instructors of Social Studies have been taken. In the study, questionnaire technique is used, and it has been established that the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is 0,89 ( $\alpha = 0,89$ ), and the results obtained from the scale have been analysed and interpreted through SPSS 15. The Social Studies teachers make up the universe of the study, and the instructors who teach 6th and 7th grade social studies in some towns of the city of Istanbul comprise the sample of the study, who were chosen by means of random method. According to the results of the study upon the views of the Social Studies teachers, it is realized that the textbooks of the Turkish history subjects and the way they are presented in the education programme and the methods and techniques employed in this issue are insufficient, and that the teachers fail to pay enough attention to benefiting from films, documentaries and various literary products throughout the education-teaching process. In the research, it is emphasized that students are particularly more interested in the history of the Ottoman Empire and the recent history, that the instructors are inadequate in terms of making use of the additional materials in the education-training processes, and that the textbooks fail to provide sufficient suggestions about the use of various teaching strategies in the education-teaching processes. In the textbooks, which are indispensable for the education-teaching processes, the materials that address the learning styles of students are not included sufficiently.

**Key words:** Social studies, textbook, teacher, Turkish History.

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of Social Studies, accepted by Committee on the Social Studies under National Education

Association's Commission of Ten on Secondary School Studies in the USA for the first time in 1916, is defined as

\*Corresponding author. E-mail: [mseker@yildiz.edu.tr](mailto:mseker@yildiz.edu.tr). Tel: 05052597427.

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“Studies directly related to organization and customs of human community as well as studies about humans as members of social unions are social studies” (Koken, 1995).

Social studies education was included in various courses such as history, geography and citizenship in accordance with unidisciplinary program pattern in 1926, 1930, 1936 and 1948 education programs during the Republican Period (Ozturk and Dilek, 2005). According to the Directive for Analysing and Evaluating Education Tools issued in Official Bulletin of Ministry of National Education with the date of 2006 and number of 2589; textbooks encourage efficient and effective use of information technologies. They include various approaches regarding the course subject beyond any prejudgements and normative statements. They consider students as the central point for activities of any kind under the guidance of the instructor. Interests, skills and needs of students are taken into consideration for preparation and organization of course subjects.

The vision of Social Studies Training Programme is defined as: “To grow up modern citizens of Republic of Turkey in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, who have adopted Atatürk’s principles and revolutions, comprehended Turkish history and culture, equipped with fundamental democratic values; who are respectful for civil rights, mindful of their environment; who evaluate the information with their experiences, and create, use and organize it within social and cultural context (critical thinking, creative, accurate decision making); with developed social participation skills; who have acquired methods, used for creating scientific knowledge by social scientists; who are active in social life, productive, aware of their rights and responsibilities”(MNE, 2005).

Several amendments were made to Social Studies Training Programme in 2004. Particularly, it is seen that the program was established on the constructivism understanding. As mentioned by Kabapinar (2007), when examining the subject scopes of Social Studies Training Programmes in 1998 and 2004, it is noticeable that the most significant difference is the scope and content of historical subjects. Social Studies Training Programme in 2004 was constructed on the basis of themes. Particularly, historical subjects were not presented under a chronological approach; presentation of Turkish history in a chronological and holistic approach was not present in textbooks of Social Studies of 2005 (Kabapinar, 2007).

Education of History and Social Studies has undergone a significant change in Turkey in recent years. The new Social Studies Curriculum and Syllabus prepared by the Turkish Education Board has been put in practice since the year 2005, and the new History Curriculum has been implemented from the year 2008 on. And in accordance with these programmes new text books have been prepared (Aktekin and Ozturk, 2009).

The concept of History as a disciplinary within Social Studies points out two major facts. Those are defined as scientific researches built on the reality experienced by a

society or humanity as well as realities experienced in the course of time by an existing society or social group, a nation or the entire humanity, and integrity of information presented as a result of such researches (Yucel and Yediyildiz, 1990).

Teaching history subjects has two individual points for creating national consciousness. Considering problems related to history education, new teaching methods are essential for making history subjects more educational and pleasurable for students. Method for teaching via historical places is a student-based method, which guides students to researching and thinking (Yesilbursa, 2008).

When the general objectives of education of History in our country are examined closely, the goals can be categorized in two chief groups: transmission of history knowledge and culture, and skills related to arranging, using and producing the knowledge. When we compare the general goals of education of History in our country with those general purposes of education of History in the United Kingdom, Holland, Austria and France, it can be observed that in the goals of our country, transmission of culture and knowledge of history is attached more importance (Demircioglu, 2006).

### **Purpose of the study**

This study examines new and up-to-date opinions regarding the manner subjects relevant to Turkish History are presented in textbooks and their efficiency levels in line with the instructors’ views. Furthermore, this study aims at discussion of the parallelism between the social studies teaching program within the education process and textbooks as well as the instructors’ views regarding the way the Turkish history subjects together with solution suggestions about such issues. To this end, opinions of the instructors of Social Studies were taken. Results presented in this study will be a guiding light for the future researches.

### **STUDY METHODOLOGY**

The screening model used in this study determines and describes existing or past situation (Karasar, 1999). This research aims to analyze the way the Social Studies textbooks used in Turkey is used and provide information about the Turkish History, and the current situation regarding this has been ascertained.

The study is initiated with a scale of 28 questions and a preliminary study has been carried out. In this context, a preliminary study has been conducted with 16 instructors of social studies; 11 questions out of 28 questions in the scale have been removed from the scale as found irrelevant to the scope of this study; then the cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the scale has been calculated.

It has been established that the cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the scale of 17 questions is 0.89 ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ). Thereafter, recent version of the scale has been applied to sample group of 76 participants. The results obtained from the scale employed in the study were analysed and findings interpreted through SPSS 15.

**Table 1.** Gender distribution of teachers.

Gender	F	%
Female	34	44,7
Male	42	55,3
Total	76	100

**Table 2.** Distribution of teachers by educational background.

Educational Background	F	%
High school	0	0
Graduate School	0	0
Bachelor's Degree	58	76,3
Master Degree	17	22,4
PhD	1	1,3
Total	76	100

**Table 3.** Distribution of teachers by their fields of bachelor's degree.

Fields of Bachelor's Degree	F	%
Social Studies Teaching	44	57,9
History (Science and Letters)	23	30,3
Geography (Science and Letters)	9	11,8
History Teaching	0	0
Geography Teaching	0	0
Total	76	100

### Assumptions

This study has been prepared in consideration of the assumptions below:

1. Tools used for collecting data is appropriate for the purpose and subject of this study,
2. The instructors of social studies participating in the study give sincere and frank answers to the questionnaire of the scale,
3. The instructors participating in this study have the characteristics to represent the universe.

### Limitations of the study

The Social Studies teachers make up the universe of the study, and the instructors chosen by means of random method, who lecture social studies courses for 6th and 7th grades in some towns of Istanbul (Bagcilar, Kadikoy, Uskudar, Sile, Esenler, Avcilar, Gungoren, Eyup, Zeytinburnu, Beykoz, Umraniye, Bahcelievler) compromise the sample of the study.

### FINDINGS

Considering Table 1, it is seen that ratio of female

**Table 4.** Teachers' views regarding at which level Turkish History subjects should be presented in textbooks.

Teachers' views	F	%
They should be presented at high level	51	67,1
They should be presented at medium level	25	32,9
They should be presented at low level	0	0
They should not be presented	0	0
I do not have an opinion	0	0
Total	76	100

**Table 5.** Teachers' views regarding Social Studies training programme.

I have reviewed the textbook	F	%
Yes	57	75
No	19	25
Total	76	100

teachers of social studies participating in the study is 44.7%, while ratio of male teachers is 55.3%.

Table 2 presents data about educational background of teachers participating in the study. Based upon this study, it is seen that the largest share in this distribution is composed of teachers graduated with bachelor's degree (76.3%). It is also visible that the second place is composed of teachers with master degree (22.4%) and third place is occupied by teachers with PhD (1.3%).

As seen in Table 3, when we look at distribution chart of social studies teachers participating in the study by the fields of bachelor's degree; it has been established that the largest share belongs to the graduates from "social studies teaching" (57.9%). It is also understood that the second largest field in the table is History (30.3 %) and Geography (11.8 %).

When we look at Table 4: Teachers' views regarding at which level "Turkish History" subjects should be presented in social studies textbooks; it is seen that the answer "Turkish History subjects should be presented at high level" (67.1%) is placed on the top while the answer "they should be presented at medium level" (32.9%) has the least share in the distribution chart.

As stated in Table 5, social studies teachers participating in the study have been asked whether they have reviewed training programme and it is understood that the rate of teachers having reviewed the study is the highest (75%) in the distribution chart.

Table 6 presents the values showing the efficiency levels of Turkish History subjects in social studies textbooks. Accordingly, it is seen that the highest share in the distribution chart belongs to the ones stating that "Turkish History" subjects are very efficient in textbooks (47.4 %), while the lowest share is composed of the ones saying that (3.9%) they do not have an opinion.

**Table 6.** Teachers' views regarding efficiency of Turkish History subjects.

Efficiency Level	F	%
Very Efficient	36	47,4
Efficient	11	14,5
Inefficient	21	27,6
Very Inefficient	5	6,6
I do not have an opinion	3	3,9
Total	76	100

**Table 7.** Teachers' views regarding the way Turkish History subjects is presented.

Presentation Levels	F	%
Very Efficient	1	1,3
Efficient	4	5,3
Inefficient	60	78,9
Very Inefficient	11	14,5
I do not have an opinion	0	0
Total	76	100

**Table 8.** Compatibility of the programmes with textbooks in terms of presenting Turkish History subjects.

Compatibility Level	F	%
Completely compatible	15	19,7
Moderately compatible	40	52,6
Completely incompatible	10	13,2
Moderately incompatible	6	7,9
I do not have an opinion	5	6,6
Total	76	100

As seen in Table 7, when teachers are asked about the way Turkish History subjects are presented in social studies textbooks, the highest share belongs to the ones stating that the way Turkish History subjects are presented in textbooks is at "inefficient" level (78.9 %).

According to the answers given to the questions about the compatibility level between training programmes and textbooks in terms of presentation of Turkish History subjects in Table 8, the highest share in the distribution chart is the ones with the answer of "moderately compatible" (52.6%), the lowest share is the ones expressing that they do not have an opinion (6.6%).

When we look at Table 9 which is about teachers' view regarding "which period of Turkish History should be presented more" in social studies textbooks, it is understood that the highest share in the distribution chart belongs to the ones with the answer of "Ottoman History" (31.6%) while the lowest rate is composed of "First

**Table 9.** Teachers' views regarding Turkish history periods.

Turkish History Periods	F	%
Ancient Turkish History	9	11,8
First Islamic Turkish States	7	9,2
Seljuk History	15	19,7
Ottoman History	24	31,6
Republican History	21	27,6
Total	76	100

**Table 10.** Teachers' views regarding the levels Turkish History subjects attract students' attention.

Levels Turkish History subjects attract students' attention	F	%
At high level	33	43,4
At medium level	21	27,6
At low level	16	21,1
At the lowest level	2	2,6
I do not have an opinion	4	5,3
Total	76	100

**Table 11.** Teachers' views regarding the levels historical periods attract students' attention.

Turkish History Periods	F	%
Ancient Turkish History	11	14,5
First Islamic Turkish States	5	6,6
Seljuk History	9	11,8
Ottoman History	24	31,6
Republican History	27	35,5
Total	76	100

Islamic Turkish States" (9.2%).

Teachers are asked about the levels Turkish History subjects in textbooks attract students' attention in Table 10 and it is seen that the largest share belongs to the ones answering "at high level" (43.4%), while the ones answering "at the lowest level" constitute the lowest rate (2.6 %).

As seen in Table 11, teachers have stated that "Republican History" among Turkish History subjects in textbooks attracts much more attention of students (35.5%), while it is expressed that "First Islamic Turkish States' History" (6.6%) attracts students' attention at the least.

As stated in Table 12, according to the answers given to the question about the level of utilization from oral and written literature is utilized for Turkish History subjects in social studies textbooks, it has been established that the

**Table 12.** Teachers' views regarding at which level oral and written literature is utilized.

Level of utilization from oral and written literature	F	%
Very Sufficient	12	15,8
Sufficient	8	10,5
Insufficient	38	50
Very Insufficient	15	19,7
I do not have an opinion	3	3,9
Total	76	100

**Table 13.** Teachers' views regarding which oral and written literary works are mostly.

Story	F	%
Biography	52	68,4
Memoirs	1	1,3
Sayings	5	6,6
Speech	0	0
Diary	0	0
Poem	0	0
Idiom	8	10,5
Passages	4	5,3
Travel Writing	3	3,9
Columns	0	0
Mani (Turkish Folk Poetry)	1	1,3
Total	2	2,6
Story	76	100

**Table 14.** Teachers' views regarding the use of visual images in textbooks.

Efficiency level of visual images	F	%
Very Efficient	14	18,4
Efficient	10	13,2
Inefficient	31	40,8
Very Inefficient	19	25
I do not have an opinion	2	2,6
Total	76	100

highest share belongs to the answer "insufficient".

While teachers of social studies are asked for their opinion about which oral and written literary works should be utilized for Turkish History subjects, the answers given have been presented in Table 13. According to the answers given by teachers, it has been understood that the most commonly answered literature type is "story" (68.4%).

Teachers of social studies are asked for their opinion

**Table 15.** Teachers' views regarding the level of utilization from movies and documentaries.

Views regarding efficiency level	F	%
Very Efficient	8	10,5
Efficient	12	15,8
Inefficient	41	54
Very Inefficient	14	18,4
I do not have an opinion	1	1,3
Total	76	100

**Table 16.** Efficiency level of exercise questions about the use of movies and documentaries.

Efficiency Levels of Exercise Questions	F	%
Very Efficient	18	23,7
Efficient	10	13,2
Inefficient	39	51,3
Very Inefficient	8	10,5
I do not have an opinion	1	1,3
Total	76	100

about efficiency level of use of visual images in textbooks; the distribution chart based upon the answers given has been presented in Table 14. Accordingly, it is understood that the most common answer regarding the efficiency level of visual images in textbooks (maps, photos, images etc.) is "inefficient" (40.8%).

Teachers of social studies are asked for their opinion about efficiency level of recommendations for utilizing from movies and documentaries during presentation of Turkish History subjects in textbooks; the distribution chart based upon the answers given is presented in Table 15. Based upon the answers given, the most common opinion is understood to be "inefficient" (54%).

Teachers of social studies are asked for their opinion about Efficiency level of exercise questions given in textbooks about the use of movies and documentaries; based upon the answers given it has been established that the most common answer is "inefficient" (51.3%). Distribution chart for the answers given is presented in Table 16.

Teachers of social studies are asked for their opinion about efficiency level of recommendations given in textbooks for implementing different teaching strategies other than lecture method during presentation of Turkish History subjects in the class; based upon the answers given it has been established that the most common answer is "inefficient" (56.6%). Distribution chart for the answers given is presented in Table 17.

Teachers of social studies are asked for their opinion about level of utilization from additional sources together with the textbooks for Turkish History related subjects; based upon the answers given it has been established

**Table 17.** Efficiency level of recommendations given in textbooks for implementation of different teaching strategies.

Implementation of Different Teaching Strategies	F	%
Very Efficient	14	18,4
Efficient	10	13,2
Inefficient	43	56,6
Very Inefficient	8	10,5
I do not have an opinion	1	1,3
Total	76	100

**Table 18.** Level of utilization from additional sources during presentation of Turkish History subjects.

Efficiency of Utilization from Additional Sources	F	%
Very Efficient	37	48,7
Efficient	20	26,3
Inefficient	5	6,6
Very Inefficient	11	14,5
I do not have an opinion	3	3,9
Total	76	100

that the most common answer is “very efficient” (48.7%). Distribution chart for the answers given is presented in Table 18.

Teachers participating in the study are asked for their opinion about to what extent the principles of neutralism and objectiveness are followed during the presentation of Turkish History subjects in textbooks; based upon the answers given it has been established that the most common answer is “partially neutral and objective” (40,8%). Distribution chart for the answers given is presented in Table 19.

## DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Every country may act with the idea of transmitting their own national culture and history to later generations. Bearing this thought in mind, just as it can be possible for the current education-training programmes to be arranged according to the interests and needs of next generations, it can also be necessary to develop this as a concept. As in all other countries, in Turkey the Social Studies syllabus-curriculum programme and the textbooks/materials prepared in accordance with that program may need to be prepared again within the process of education and training in a way that will meet the students' interest and needs.

Consequently, when we look at the teachers' views regarding the 6th and 7th grade Social Studies textbooks

**Table 19.** Teachers' views regarding the manner Turkish History subjects are presented in textbooks.

Views regarding the manner of presenting subjects	F	%
Completely neutral and objective	26	34,2
Partially neutral and objective	31	40,8
Hardly neutral and objective	11	14,5
Not neutral and objective	7	9,2
I do not have an opinion	1	1,3
Total	76	100

prepared in parallel with the Turkish Social Studies Curriculum and Syllabus program we can see that;

It is seen that teachers lecturing social studies courses have agreed that Turkish History subjects should be presented at a higher level in social studies textbooks. When social studies education-teaching programmes of various countries are examined, it has been established that each country (USA, Germany, Czech Republic, Finland, South Africa, United Kingdom, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Ireland, Sweden, Jamaica, Japan, Canada, Egypt, Norway, Pakistan, Singapore, New Zealand, Greece) gives place to its own national history within its programmes (Ozturk, 2011).

It is understood that most of the teachers participating in the study have reviewed social studies teaching programme and they have emphasized that Turkish History subjects are “very efficient” in terms of efficiency.

Upon examining social studies education-training programmes in Turkey, it is possible to state that Turkish History subjects are included in the “Chapter: Turks on Silk Road” for the 6<sup>th</sup> Grades, and “in the “Chapter: Journey into Turkish History” and partly in “Chapter: Economic and social life” for the 7<sup>th</sup> grades (MNE, 2005); while they are also included within other subjects in other chapters.

It has been emphasized that compatibility between the presentation of Turkish History subjects and textbooks is at medium level. Furthermore, teachers have pointed out that Turkish History subjects in textbooks prepared in parallel with teaching programme are “insufficient”. Today, the Council of Education and Morality (COEM) has defined some criteria for preparing textbooks. Upon review and evaluation of the textbooks approved by the Council of Education and Morality; it is seen that the council takes decisions to approve or disapprove textbooks based upon the principles such as scientific efficiency of content, efficiency of content for achieving training and education acquisitions (COEM, 2013).

Again, when teachers of social studies are asked about which period of Turkish History should be presented more in social studies textbooks; it is seen that the most

common answer is “Ottoman History”; and teachers have also stated that Turkish History subjects included in textbooks attract students’ attention at “high level”. On the other hand, it is seen that teachers have expressed that students are much more interested in “Republican period” among other Turkish History subjects. When teaching programmes are reviewed, it has been established that the “Chapter: Turks on Silk Road” in textbooks prepared in parallel with the 6<sup>th</sup> grade social studies programme as well as this training programme give place particularly to Pre-Islamic Turkish States and First Islamic Turkish States; the history subjects are presented in a manner to cover Seljukian Period. Upon review of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade social studies teaching programme and textbooks, it is seen that the “Chapter: Journey into Turkish History” mainly focuses on Seljukian and Ottoman History in a manner that such subjects will also cover and include political, cultural and social issues. Additionally, it is understood that Seljukian and Ottoman History are presented with their social and cultural dimensions mainly in the “Chapter: Economy and Social Life” prepared for the same grade. It is particularly remarkable that subjects of Republican History are presented within some geographical subjects. While Republican History subjects are presented in the “Chapter: Global Links” of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade training programme and the relevant textbook together with today’s world problems, acquiring a democracy awareness and actual subjects, it is possible to state that it is not efficient to raise a sufficient level of democratic awareness among students in terms of Republican History. It is also possible to say that the “Chapters: Living Democracy” and “Bridge Among Countries” for the 7<sup>th</sup> grades include much more history subjects about the Republican Period compared to the level of presentation in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

The study shows that other chapters of both the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade partly include history subjects; but the above-mentioned chapters mostly address to Turkish History subjects.

When social studies teachers are asked whether oral and written literary works relevant to Turkish History are utilized sufficiently in textbooks, it has been established that they emphasized that there is not sufficient recommendation for utilization from such literary works in textbooks and the recommendations having been already made are “ineffective”; it is seen that teachers mostly suggest utilizing from “stories” among other oral and written literary works relevant to Turkish History in the textbooks. It has been established that only within the “Chapter: Turks on Silk Road” for the Social Studies of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, some recommendations are made for teachers to utilize from oral and written literary works while lecturing the course with acquisition no 1 and 5: “utilizing from sagas, inscriptions and other documents, teachers makes inferences regarding political, economic and cultural characteristics of First Central Asian Turkish States” and “Utilizing from visual and written materials,

teachers review emergence and expansion of Islam” (MNE, 2005); and, similar recommendations are seen in the “Chapter: Journey into Turkish History” for the 7<sup>th</sup> Grades, within acquisition no 7 “Teachers give examples of Turkish cultural elements from Seyahatname (Travelogue)”.

According to the comments on implementation of social studies teaching programme, while teaching and lecturing this course; “Teachers must provide students with national, moral, humanistic, ethic, cultural values and guide them to fulfil their responsibilities and duties towards the Republic of Turkey, which is a democratic, secular and social state of law. Furthermore, teachers must encourage literary works such as novels, historical novels, stories, memoirs, travel books, poems and columns which will increase interest of students in course subjects (MNE, 2005).

On the other hand, it is seen that teachers emphasise insufficient level of visual elements (maps, photos, images, etc.) in textbooks during presentation of Turkish History subjects. It is seen that some recommendations are made in this regard in the acquisition no 5 “Utilizing from visual and written materials, teachers review emergence and expansion of Islam” under the “Chapter: Turks on Silk Road” of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade social studies teaching programme. However, it has been established that there are no explicit expressions and comments for encouraging use of visual elements (maps, photos, images, etc.) in terms of acquisitions within the 7<sup>th</sup> grade programme; there are only some emphasis such as the one in the activity part called “Dream of Osman Bey” (Utilizing from first hand sources and history maps, teachers review development period of Ottoman Empire with cooperative learning method)” (MNE, 2005). It is possible to say that acquisitions in particular are supported by activity examples within the programme.

One of the characteristics of visual evidences used in textbooks published in 2005 is their variety. Newspaper reports, comics, student diaries, letters, historical documents and photos, posters, tables, graphics and schemes used as visual evidences in visual cases textbooks appear to be meaningful patterns which contribute to teaching as much as written materials (Kabapinar, 2007).

Teachers have stated that level of recommendations for utilizing from movies and documentaries during presentation of Turkish History subjects in textbooks is ineffective. Furthermore, they have emphasized that level of exercise questions about the use of movies and documentaries in the textbooks is again “ineffective”.

In the section of sample effectives related to the achievements of 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum, it was observed that emphasis of “Turks” (Documentaries regarding first Central Asian Turkish States and first Turkish-Islamic States are watched) was made. By pointing out the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> achievements of 7<sup>th</sup> grades’ “Journey to Turkish History” unit, it can be seen that “Foundation” was

emphasized (The movie “Foundation” is watched and foundation period of the Ottoman Empire is examined) and at the same grade level, it can be observed that statements such as “We are Watching Documentary” (training films explaining governing structure of the Republic of Turkey and the importance of assembly) are used as well as pointing out 3rd achievement in the section related to History of the Republic in “Living Democracy” unit. It has been encountered with very few studies regarding use of films and documentaries in the processes of history training in our country, as well. According to one of these studies (Safran, 2002), it was found that 97, 5% of history teachers never used films and documentaries in their classes while 2, 5% of them sometimes used the mentioned materials (Safran, 2002). According to Demircioglu (2007), when the history training is examined in our country, it is seen that some part of our teachers do not benefit from films in their classes and some of those history teachers who use films in their classes cannot use these materials efficiently (Demircioglu, 2007).

We have been witnessing from past to the present that effort for changing curriculum in the level of primary school is ongoing. It was seen that the subjects of Turkish history were included in the curriculum with the purpose of training efficient and qualified citizens; in this framework, various suggestions were made for teachers through emphasizing on the importance of benefiting from material culture elements and materials (MNE, 2005).

The EU countries ( Edel and Stotzka, 2003; Yilmaz and Yigit, 2010) and the USA (Haas and Inuwa, 1992) are seen to employ the same methods in teaching students their own history.

Benefiting from additional sources along with textbook for social studies teachers regarding particularly Turkish history was stated to be “very sufficient”. In addition to textbooks, there are some studies (Yildiz, 2003; Karabag, 2010; Ata, 2002) which emphasize the importance of benefiting from additional sources in order to provide variety and create an effective training and education in the processes education and training. While the subjects of Turkish History in textbooks are given, it has been seen that social studies teachers generally give the answer of “Partially impartial and objective” in terms of consistency with impartiality and objectiveness principle.

The following statements were specified regarding this issue in the skills given directly in 7th grade (MNE, 2005):

“The following suggested steps can be used in order to be able to determine the difference between cases and comments in a written text:

1. The difference between cases and comments should always be taken into consideration while reading or listening to materials containing information.
2. Praising, approval or criticizing statements in the text

should be examined. For example; “good, bad, poor, satisfactory, etc.”

3. It should be sensitive to exaggerated qualification statements. For example; “the best, the worst, the biggest, gorgeous, horrible, etc.”

4. It should be sought for extremely negative statements. For example; “miserable, poor, dishonorable, etc.”

5. Generalizations within the sentences should be scrutinized. For example; “never, none, always, etc.”

6. At the end, it should be determined if the information is a fact or a view.

With the latest changes in our country in 2005 in terms of education and training curriculum, it can be said that social studies educational curriculum has been built upon student-centered perception and the same perceptive has been maintained in history training, as well.

The idea to employ in Turkey the methods and the techniques used in the education of history in Europe and the USA can be beneficial to provide a solution for the problems faced in teaching history in our country.

The use of methods and techniques, which are used in history training of Europe and the USA, in Turkey may be beneficial for offering solutions to the problems encountered in our country regarding history teaching. These methods to be used are the suggested techniques both economically and in terms of saving of time. When all of these techniques are taken into consideration, the attention grabbing point is the fact that establishing a connection among actual topics in teaching history is important (Stahl, 1994). It was suggested by Kabapinar (2007) that it was quite difficult to reach the desired purpose if the teaching material, technique or material was not prepared in a qualified way whatever the techniques or materials were (Kabapinar, 2007).

As in the Social Studies Education Programme, it is seen that there are some differences between the general goals of the secondary education History syllabuses of the European Union members and those of our country. (Demircioglu, 2006). According to this, it can be argued that every nation’s action to teach its own history to next generations is a fact that is accepted all over the world. And on this action, it can be said that the idea that especially the generations who receive power from their past will be able to take firmer steps towards the future may have been influential.

### Suggestions

More attention should be paid to the necessity of parallelism between social studies textbooks and curriculum. As in the reflex of each country being shown to their national history teaching, more sensitiveness in teaching Turkish history in our country may be significant in terms of our national solidarity and unity.

It should not be ignored that historical personages in



the social studies textbooks are role model for students; more attention should be paid to use different learning-teaching strategies on this topic and use materials which address learning styles of the students in order to maintain an effective and permanent learning.

It should be given importance to variety in teaching methods and it should be taken into account that there may be students possessing different learning styles within the class. In this context, Kabapınar (2007), who mentions the importance of pursuing the principles such as from simple to difficult, from tangible to intangible, from near to distant within the process of teaching children in the level of primary school, states that teaching activities to be performed in accordance with the interests and needs of students may be more efficient in their learning processes.

It should be paid attention to regulate Turkish history topics in textbooks in a way that will enable to make connection with today and especially those scientists who contributed to the development of Turkish-Islamic Civilization and World Science History should be included.

In addition to the subjects included in textbooks, more films and documentaries should be included regarding Turkish history; it should be benefited more from the materials addressing visual, aural and kinesthetic learning styles of the students in learning-teaching processes and technological elements which may attract attention of students should be used more frequently.

It should be benefited more from stories and similar verbal and written literary works regarding especially Turkish history; students should be guided in a way that they can take advantage of books and magazines which may attract their attentions; students should be given the opportunities to configure their knowledge and teachers should have more vision through in-service and similar trainings for enabling students to gain spirit of doing research.

## Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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