



Evaluation of the 2018 Turkish Curriculum *

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Abstract

Turkish education in schools is of great importance not only in terms of Turkish lessons, but also in terms of success in other lessons. Many reforms have been made to establish a better education system. One aspect of new educational reforms that has implications for educators is curriculum development studies that require teacher to adopt and implement the changes properly. The fact that the curricula are changing rapidly in Turkey obviously requires the ability to accommodate these changes effectively. However, to check whether the changes are implemented accordingly and what the failing parts are, both the curriculum and the in-classroom activities should be evaluated consistently. In this regard, the aim of this research is to evaluate the 2018 Turkish curriculum. The study has been conducted with mixed-method research design. Firstly, the researchers have analyzed the Turkish curriculum for 1st- 8th grades as a document. Then, teachers' views regarding the 1st and 5th grade Turkish curricula that have been implemented were taken through online survey and face-to-face interviews. In addition, in-class observations were made to see how the official curriculum was reflected in practice. The findings obtained from the descriptive analysis of the data were categorized and integrated according to the components of the curriculum consisting of (1) learning outcomes, (2) content, (3) teaching-learning process, (4) measurement and evaluation, and the general characteristics and the use of the curriculum. Results have showed that there is an obvious conflict between the official and operational curriculum. Although the vast majority of teachers responded positively in a high rate to the online survey, their answers in focus group interviews have revealed that they don't have sufficient knowledge about the innovations in the curriculum

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and tend not to benefit from the guidance of the curriculum in the teaching process. At the end of the study, some suggestions have been provided to satisfy the needs of both the curriculum and the teachers as curriculum implementers.

Introduction

Language, as the basic element of culture, is the most powerful tool that enables people to communicate, to get closer to each other, and to share their feelings and thoughts (Aksan, 2007; Bilgin, 2006; Kavcar, 1999). Based on this definition, it can be stated that language creates thought and helps to establish intimacy between people. Correspondingly, the main purpose of language and literature education is defined as raising creative and sensitive individuals who have developed comprehension (listening, reading), narration (speaking, writing) and thinking skills in the literature. Thus, through structured Turkish language teaching, people are expected to gain reading habit, love and awareness of their own language (Aslan, 2016, 2017; Kavcar, Oğuzkan, & Sever, 2005; Sever, 2002, 2004a, 2006, 2008).

With the knowledge that the individual thinks in his/her mother tongue and structures the conceptualization process, the importance of mother tongue acquisition becomes apparent. (Akarsu, 1998; Kocaman, 2009; Özdemir, 2004; Sever, 2004c). While there are numerous factors affecting the quality of education, it is also stated that mother tongue is the most basic means of interaction and understanding in the classroom. For instance, using a common language in reading and writing skills teaching facilitates the understanding of voice-symbol or meaning-symbol systems (Benson, 2005). While it is emphasized in the literature that the mother tongue teaching process should be maintained in a qualified manner, it is also known that the competence in the language skills acquired in this process will affect all areas of life (Aslan, 2017; Göğüş, 1993; Özbay, 2002; Sever, 2004c). In this context, the importance of Turkish lesson in terms of providing students with skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, which they will need to use in every aspect of their life, and to create a national identity and cultural self, highlights it as a lesson. However, the teaching-learning process of these skills should be structured by considering teaching principles such as teaching from easy to difficult, hands-on training and relating skills to each other (Bağcı-Ayrancı & Mutlu, 2017).

Curricula are created by organizing four main components of the curriculum, which are learning outcomes, content, teaching-learning process, and measurement and evaluation, while designing curriculum. However, before the curriculum draft is prepared, many variables such as the basic characteristics of the society, subject areas and students, their existing knowledge, needs and expectations are taken into consideration. Decisions to be taken at this stage are mostly shaped by the social, political and economic preferences and plans of the society. In line with the findings obtained from these determinations, learning outcomes, content, teaching-learning process and measurement and evaluation components of the curriculum are organized (Erden, 1998).

Curriculum development is defined as the development of the regulated curriculum through research in practice. While developing the curriculum, the existing curriculum is applied on the one hand, and on the other hand, existing research is used to solve the problems that arise in practice or action researches are carried out (Varış, 1978). However, while developing the curriculum, it is not enough to know the subject area of the relevant curriculum. There is also need to benefit from the fundamentals of the curriculum in many areas such as philosophical, historical, psychological, economic, sociological and technological. Another important issue regarding the curriculum development process is the characteristics of the learning outcomes, content, teaching-learning process, measurement and evaluation elements that make up the curriculum and their relationship with each other (Berkant, 2020). These components that make up the curriculum are in a systematic whole. Therefore, as a result of the problem occurring in one of the elements affecting other elements, the curriculum may lose its functionality. Accordingly, the purpose of curriculum development is to make the necessary changes in the curriculum by monitoring the operability of components and the coordination between them (Gültekin, 2017).

Based on the reality that curriculum development is an endless process, the designed curriculum should be monitored and evaluated continuously after it has started to be implemented. The evaluation study conducted at this process includes defining, explaining and applying of verifiable criteria to be used for deciding whether the curriculum is expedient or not (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2012). As a neglected area of curriculum development, evaluation may require the analysis of every aspect to determine whether the course is sufficient or there are some parts to be improved (Nation & Macalister, 2010). As stated in the curriculum studies, evaluation is an indispensable component for the development and implementation of a curriculum. At the end of the evaluation, systematic data collection and analysis for deciding whether it is necessary to improve the curriculum in use and what the problematical issues are become possible (Oliva, 2001; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2014). In other words, the analysis and correction of unsuccessful components of education in the macro and micro level are enabled (Koç, Işıksal, & Bulut, 2007). In addition, it helps stakeholders to discover how the curriculum works considering the targeted learning outcomes and determine whether the curriculum is worthy of adoption, continuation, or expansion (Fitzpatrick et al., 2012).

The curriculum is qualified as the heart of education. The tendency to discuss education without addressing curricula is an important obstacle. If teachers, curriculum experts, and indeed the general public hope to have good schools, they should prioritize curricula first (Null, 2017). Curricula, which are very important for increasing the quality of education, should be examined after they have been developed and the new ones should be developed in the light of the data obtained from these studies (Ünal, Çoştu, & Karataş, 2014). The examination and evaluation of an applied curriculum provides feedback on its efficiency and quality. Especially since mother tongue curricula should develop knowledge, skills, habits and attitudes that are qualified as an introduction to individual and social life for students, evaluation of them is of great importance (Duman, 2004).

In Turkey, national curricula for different grades and school types have been changed frequently in recent times and this states the need for a nationwide change. Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has declared in the press announcement of curriculum update that the sociocultural, scientific and technological developments in the world and in Turkey have changed the qualifications required for students to be productive members of the society in the future" (MoNE, 2017, p. 4). In addition, major changes related with the updated curricula are presented as "defining qualifications and skills based on the 21st century skills, introduction of values education as a common component, and reducing the content". The updated curricula have been implemented gradually and started in 2017-2018 school year in the first and fifth grades. Before the implementation phase, curriculum-updating studies were completed in the 2015-2016 school year and published for collecting the views of the stakeholders on 13th of January in 2017. And after the implementation, they have been updated again in 2018.

There are many studies in the literature that examine the frequently changing Turkish curricula. Examining the studies about the current primary education Turkish curriculum, it is seen that generally the teachers' opinions about the curriculum and textbooks are taken, and curricula are investigated in terms of major variables such as high-level and critical thinking skills (Avcı, 2018; Bıçak & Alver, 2018; Direkçi, Akbulut, & Şimşek, 2019; Söylemez, 2018; Susar-Kırmızı & Yurdakul, 2019; Şahin, 2019; Ünveren-Kapanadze, 2019). However, although the same curriculum was handled, some of these studies produced different results from each other. For example, Ünveren-Kapanadze (2019), who examined the learning outcomes in the 2018 Turkish curriculum in terms of higher-order thinking skills, stated that the learning outcomes were aimed at high-level thinking skills and they included explanations on how to gain these skills. However, Söylemez (2018) revealed that although there is a rich content in terms of critical thinking and reflective thinking in the 2018 Turkish curriculum, the

learning outcomes related to creative thinking are few and the ones related to problem solving are very few. Esemen (2020), who examined the primary school Turkish curriculum updated in 2019 and Turkish textbooks in terms of critical reading skills, also found that the learning outcomes in the curriculum and the reading texts in the books meet less than half of the critical reading criteria, and that the number of learning outcomes for critical reading skills is insufficient.

While the Turkish curriculum was being updated in 2018, MoNE conducted monitoring and evaluation studies. In this context, relevant academic studies in the national and international literature were screened and the curricula of different countries updated for similar reasons and reports prepared by related teachers' board and education faculties were examined (MoNE, 2019). In the Curriculum Evaluation Report prepared by the MoNE (2020), it is seen that teachers' opinions about the curriculum are generally positive, but there are also negative opinions such as the principle of sequencing is not taken into consideration in ordering the learning outcomes; psychomotor and affective learning outcomes are not given adequate importance; and the texts are too long and not suitable for the age levels of the students. However, all these studies were carried out with a limited study group and generally teachers' opinions were consulted and classroom practices were ignored. And this study aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the updated 2018 Turkish curriculum as both official and operational curriculum and to contribute to the curriculum development studies. In this regard, following questions were searched for answer within this comprehensive curriculum evaluation research:

- What are the general characteristics of the 2018 Turkish curriculum and teachers' views on these characteristics?
- What are the learning outcomes of the 2018 Turkish curriculum, teachers' views on this component and its reflection on practice?
- What is the content of the 2018 Turkish curriculum, teachers' views on this component and its reflection on practice?
- What is the teaching-learning process of the 2018 Turkish curriculum, teachers' views on this component and its reflection on practice?
- What is the measurement and evaluation of the 2018 Turkish curriculum, teachers' views on this component and its reflection on practice?
- What is the use of the 2018 Turkish curriculum by teachers?

Method

Research Design

In this research, mixed methods defined as research including quantitative and qualitative data collection, data analysis and interpretation in a single study or a series of studies dealing with a common subject (Leech & Onwuegbuzie 2009), and convergent parallel design which is a type of this method were used. Mixed methods research is a process of data collection and analysis combining both quantitative and qualitative methods so as to comprehend a research question in a single study or a series of studies. In convergent parallel design, on the other hand, quantitative and qualitative research aspects are conducted simultaneously; the results are integrated and then evaluated to support each other (Creswell, 2012). In addition, having various viewpoints of both qualitative and quantitative data allows to have more data and to investigate the research problem more holistically (Creswell, 2017).

The reason for preferring convergent parallel design in the evaluation of the 2018 Turkish curriculum was to make out a conclusion by identifying, comparing and integrating both the curriculum experts' and implementers' views using various methods and focusing on both the official and operational curriculum. Regarding this, the researchers evaluated the 2018 Turkish curriculum for 1st-8th grades in terms of curriculum evaluation criteria; and survey was applied to identify the teachers' general views and dispositions of the first and fifth grade Turkish curriculum that have been implemented at the time of the data collection of the study. Findings of these methods were integrated with the personal views of the teachers reflected in the focus group interviews and the classroom observations of the teaching-learning process; and then interpreted with holistic approach and presented with the support of direct quotations.

Study Group

In order to answer the research questions, data was collected from the curriculum document and teachers. In this regard, the document as the first data source of this research is the 2018 Turkish curriculum for 1st-8th grades, which is approved by MoNE in 2018 and started to be implemented gradually in the first grades of primary and secondary schools. To mention briefly, we can say that it consists of 66 pages, and MoNE's general aims for and the perspective, values, qualifications, personal development and measurement and evaluation approach of the curricula are explained at the beginning. And then, the structure of the Turkish curriculum and suggestions to be considered in the implementation are detailed. In this regard, teaching-learning approach, measurement and evaluation approach, points to consider in implementation, coursebook dimensions, learning outcomes of the Turkish curriculum and their explanations are given.

As the second data source, teachers participated in the study took part in different study groups of different data collection methods. In terms of quantitative data collection, 609 teachers participated in the survey and they were chosen with purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling is one of the non-random sampling methods and it is based on the selection of the most suitable and sufficient sample with particular criteria in accordance with research aims (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). In this context, in the selection of the teachers in the research sample, firstly, a province was defined to represent 12 statistical territories based on NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) Level 1, and then a specific number of teachers as much as possible were reached from each province. The number of teachers participated in the survey based on provinces is given in Table 1.

Table 1. The Number of Teachers Participated in The Survey Based on Provinces

Provinces	The Number of Teachers
Ankara	74
Çanakkale	16
Erzurum	35
Eskişehir	33
Gaziantep	42
Hatay	59
İstanbul	105
İzmir	94
Malatya	57
Samsun	21
Sivas	44
Trabzon	28
Unspecified	1
Total	609

Table 2 shows information about these teachers in terms of school type, professional experience, educational level and gender.

Table 2. Information about the Teachers Participated in the Survey

Variables		f
Grade	Primary	163
	Secondary	446
Professional Experience	Less than 1 year	17
	1-10 years	247
	11-20 years	239
	More than 20 years	106
Educational Level	Graduate	557
	Postgraduate	52
Gender	Female	401
	Male	208

Teachers who participated in focus group interviews were selected from 12 provinces in which online survey was applied by using maximum variation sampling, which is one of the purposive sampling methods (Patton, 2002). In order to ensure maximum diversity, different school types and professional experience are taken into account. In total, 20 interviews were conducted with 108 teachers from 12 different provinces to collect their views about the 1st and 5th grade Turkish curriculum. For the 1st grade Turkish curriculum, 10 focus group interviews were conducted with 73 primary school teachers. And for the 5th grade Turkish curriculum eight focus group and two personal interviews were conducted with 35 Turkish teachers. Duration of the interviews ranges between 13 and 96 minutes, and they lasted totally for 1141 minutes. Table 3 shows the number of the teachers interviewed in each province and information about the interviews.

Table 3. Information about the Interviews

Interview Session	The Number of Teachers	The Curriculum being Evaluated	Duration (Minute)
Ankara Focus Group 1	7	1 st Grade Turkish	96
Ankara Focus Group 2	7	1 st Grade Turkish	93
İstanbul Focus Group 1	14	1 st Grade Turkish	74
İstanbul Focus Group 2	2	5 th Grade Turkish	46
Çanakkale Focus Group 2	6	1 st Grade Turkish	88
İzmir Focus Group 1	7	1 st Grade Turkish	68
İzmir Focus Group 2	2	5 th Grade Turkish	94
Eskişehir Focus Group 1	6	1 st Grade Turkish	51
Trabzon Focus Group 1	6	1 st Grade Turkish	67
Trabzon Focus Group 2	4	5 th Grade Turkish	39
Samsun Focus Group 2	5	5 th Grade Turkish	30
Sivas Focus Group 2	2	5 th Grade Turkish	56
Sivas Focus Group 3	8	5 th Grade Turkish	44
Erzurum Focus Group 3	10	1 st Grade Turkish	49
Malatya Focus Group 1	3	1 st Grade Turkish	55
Malatya Focus Group 2	5	5 th Grade Turkish	62
Gaziantep Focus Group 1	7	1 st Grade Turkish	44
Gaziantep Focus Group 2	5	5 th Grade Turkish	57
Hatay Personal 1	1	5 th Grade Turkish	15
Hatay Personal 2	1	5 th Grade Turkish	13
Total	108		1.141

In the in-class observations, six teachers took part in the study. In order to determine the reflections of the curriculum on implementation, 12 hours of observations were made in the pre-determined schools in the 2018-2019 school year. Data were collected in schools that were close and easy to access using the convenience sampling method (Patton, 2002). In this context, observations were made only in Ankara, in six schools consisting of three primary and three secondary schools. It is seen in table 4 that these schools are in Altındağ, Çankaya and Mamak districts; and the number of the students in each class ranges between 18 and 34. The observed Turkish teachers have 21 or more years experience and they have been graduated from Primary School Teaching and Turkish Language and Literature departments.

Table 4. Information about the Observed Schools, Grades and Teachers

District	Grade	Number of Students	Bachelor's Degree	Experience (Year)
Altındağ	Primary	18	Primary School Teaching	23
	Secondary	22	Turkish Language and Literature	30
Çankaya	Primary	18	Primary School Teaching	28
	Secondary	30	Turkish Language and Literature	27
Mamak	Primary	29	Primary School Teaching	21
	Secondary	34	Turkish Language and Literature	24
	Secondary	33		

Development of Data Collection Tools

The curriculum evaluation form, online Survey, focus group interview form, and in-class observation form used in the collection of this study's data were developed by the project team. The development processes of data collection tools are given below.

Curriculum Evaluation Form: This form was developed to be used in the evaluation of curricula. The evaluation criteria were determined on the basis of the curriculum development process components put forward by Oliva (1997) and considering the culture / context. So as to take expert opinion on the curriculum evaluation form developed, a three-session workshop was conducted in the Faculty of Educational Sciences of Ankara University on 29 September 2017 with the participation of 9 faculty members from the departments of curriculum and instruction of different universities. After the workshop, items were written in question form. Final version of the form consists of 26 items in eight parts which are needs assessment, justification of the curriculum, philosophy of the curriculum, aims, learning outcomes, content, teaching-learning process, and measurement and evaluation.

Survey: The form was created to take opinions of teachers on the first and fifth grade Turkish curricula. In order to reach more teachers, the survey was prepared to be applied online. The online survey was prepared with the support of Ankara University Distance Education Center (ANKUZEM). Ten curriculum development experts' opinions were gathered about the items in the survey. Also, pilot survey was conducted with 219 teachers from 25 May to 10 July 2018. The stated ideas and suggestions were reflected on the items and the survey took its final form.

The survey form consists of two parts including personal information and opinions on the dimensions of the curriculum. In the first part for personal information, there is information about gender, age, faculty and study programme in which bachelor's degree is received, the province in which the teacher works, level of school and class, years of professional experience and branch. The second part of the Survey consists of 45 items and it was prepared with Likert Scale from 0 (I do not know) to 7 (totally appropriate). In the survey, there are also links that lead teachers to information on the related curriculum when necessary while replying the items.

Focus Group Interview Form: A semi-structured focus group interview form was prepared to take opinions of the teachers on the 1st and 5th grade Turkish curricula. The interview form included questions

about all the components of the curriculum, general characteristics, preparation/development process implementation process and suggestions. The draft of the focus group interview form was also presented to the experts' opinion in the workshop, and it was corrected in line with the opinions received and finalized. Final version of the interview form consisted of 13 main questions and their sub-questions.

Observation Form: A semi-structured observation form was prepared to analyze the reflection of the 1st and 5th grade Turkish curricula into practice. Draft of the observation form was prepared including the parts in which researchers can write the teaching-learning process and measurement and evaluation components of the curriculum and also descriptive notes and comments on these components during the observations. And it was put into final form based on the opinions of the ten curriculum development experts. Final version of the observation form consisted of 12 items about teaching-learning process such as including appropriateness of the activities to the learning outcomes and variety of methods and techniques; and three items as the appropriateness of the measurement and evaluation methods and techniques to the learning outcomes and to the level of students and their variety in the measurement and evaluation dimension.

Data Collection

Research data were simultaneously collected in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school year after getting ethics committee approval of Ankara University and research approval of MoNE. Firstly, in the data collection process, the 2018 primary and secondary school Turkish curriculum was analyzed by the researchers according to the curriculum evaluation form. At the same time, the Ministry of National Education Directorate sent the online survey to the teachers for Basic Education. Also, provincial directorates of national education announced the survey and volunteer teachers participated in the study. The application was carried out between 8 September 2018 and 20 June 2019.

While the survey implementation and document analysis were continuing, focus group discussions were held during the district council heads meetings held in the provinces between 11-14 September 2018. Since a sufficient number of volunteers could not be reached in Hatay, one-to-one interviews were also held. Teachers were informed about the aim of the study and their consent forms were obtained before the interviews.

After the interviews, between 12 December 2018 - 11 January 2019, 3 primary schools and 3 secondary schools were observed in Altındağ, Çankaya and Mamak districts of Ankara province for 2 hours in each school. Teachers were informed about the aim of the study and their consent forms were obtained before the observations. Researchers took detailed descriptive notes in the observations in order to avoid data loss and they paid attention to conduct non-destructive observations.

In the qualitative data collection process, researchers had nonparticipant role. Supporting the verbatim reflection of the photograph based on the collected data is important in terms of the reliability of the research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016), researchers did not reflect their own idea, perception or interpretation to the data collected, and they promoted teachers to share their opinions and behaviors intimately during interviews and observations. Also, as the researchers are expert in Turkish language and curriculum development areas, they conducted data collection.

Data Analysis

In mixed methods research, different approaches can be used to integrate the data collected in quantitative and qualitative ways (Creswell, Plano-Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). In this research, we adopted an approach in which the findings obtained in the result of data analysis processes conducted separately in quantitative and qualitative ways were integrated in the stage of interpretation and discussion phase.

Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis of quantitative data obtained with online survey. In the analysis of the survey items, degrees were combined into three categories: 1-3 degrees as negative, 4 as neutral, 5-7 as positive opinion. Percentages of the teachers' agreement level to each item were calculated. Items and the teachers' agreement level to each item were presented in tables.

Qualitative data obtained through document analysis, focus group interviews and classroom observation were analyzed thematically with a deductive approach. The criteria in the curriculum evaluation form were also reflected in the qualitative data collection tools and thus formed the basis of the data analysis process. Thus, codings were made under the six themes: general characteristics of the curriculum, learning outcomes, content, teaching-learning process, measurement and evaluation and the use of the curriculum. Criteria of needs assessment, justification of the curriculum, philosophy of the curriculum and aims were coded under the theme of general characteristics. "The use of the curriculum" theme was not determined before and it came forward from the interviews. Within the framework of ethical principles, codes were given to the schools and teachers participated in the study. These codes were used to make direct quotations from the interview and observation processes.

In qualitative research, it is known that transferability, credibility and dependability terms are used for presenting processes about validity and reliability (Merriam, 2013). Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016) states that purposive sampling and detailed description techniques are important for transferability. And it is possible to say that the study groups of this research were determined using purposive sampling method. Thus, the process of collecting detailed data appropriate to the purpose of the study was supported. Also, processes of the development of data collection tools, data collection and analysis are explained in detail. Credibility in qualitative research explains internal validity (Merriam, 2013). And to ensure credibility of this research, different data collection methods have been used and the supportive aspects of the findings of these methods have been explained in detail. Besides, all the processes of data collection and analysis have been conducted under the control of expert review. Lastly, it is also known that dependability is suggested for reliability in qualitative research and it refers to the consistency of findings and results of the research (Merriam, 2013; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In this regard, findings of this research have been presented in detail and supported with direct quotations; and results have been supported with literature under the discussion heading.

Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011/2015) suggest some strategies for possible threats to be encountered while combining data in mixed methods research. Making use of these strategies, data of this research were collected by questionnaire and interview from a number of teachers as much as possible from 12 provinces representing 12 statistical territories based on NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) Level 1 although the aim is not to make generalization. Thus, same sampling method has been used in two different data collection methods. Moreover, both data sources and collection methods were varied by collecting data from the curriculum document and teachers using document analysis, questionnaire, interview and observation methods. The data collection process was conducted concurrently to prevent possible bias effect. In order to present data consistently, detailed conceptual framework were prepared beforehand and adhered to in both data collection tools and data analysis process. Findings from different data sources and methods were presented and interpreted comparatively. Moreover, participation of all researchers into the data analysis process and maintenance of agreement and confirmation were taken great care.

Results

Findings obtained from document analysis, questionnaire, interview and observation methods about the evaluation of the general characteristics, learning outcomes, content, teaching-learning process and measurement and evaluation dimensions of the 2018 Turkish curriculum have been integrated and presented in this section. Under each heading, firstly the researchers' and then the teachers' views have been explained. Later, findings of the observations related with these views have been presented. Under each dimension of the curriculum qualitative and quantitative data of the research have been presented consecutively and then how these data confirm or negate each other have been explained in accordance with commonly adopted approach in the literature (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011/2015). This approach is thought to be important as it allows for comparing supporting and opposed findings under the same heading holistically. Additionally, in the last heading of this section, findings about the theme of "the use of the curriculum" which was not determined but came forward from interviews have been presented.

Evaluation of General Characteristics of the Turkish Curriculum

Within the general characteristics of the 2018 Turkish curriculum, questions about whether need analysis have been done; and what the development justifications, philosophy and aims of the curriculum are have been answered. In this regard, it has been seen that stages of the updating process were explained after general information in the introduction part of the curriculum. It is stated that the need for updating curriculum was put forward by analyzing academic studies conducted in Turkey and abroad, views of the implementers of the curriculum collected by various methods and several reports. As for the philosophy of the curriculum, there is not any information, but it is stated under the perspective of the curricula developed by MoNE that: "Main objective of our education system is to educate individuals who have knowledge, skills and behaviors integrated with our values and competences. While knowledge, skills and behaviors are acquired by curricula, our values and competences act as connection and horizon that integrate these knowledge, skills and behaviors" (MoNE, 2018, p. 4).

Values stated in the curriculum are "justice, friendship, honesty, self-control, patience, respect, love, responsibility, patriotism, helpfulness"; and competences are stated as "communication in mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, competency in Maths and basic competencies in science/technology, digital competency, learning to learn, competencies about social and citizenship, taking initiative and entrepreneurship and cultural awareness and expression". Additionally, it is seen from the explanations under the "Special Purposes" that the Turkish curriculum aims to

- develop students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills,
- maintain conscious, correct and attentive use of Turkish appropriate to speaking and writing rules,
- get students acquire language pleasure and awareness by developing vocabulary from what they read, listen/watch; and develop their imaginary world,
- get students adopt the love and habit of reading-writing,
- get students express their feelings, ideas and views or thesis about a subject orally and in written form effectively and clearly.
- develop students' competencies about searching, discovering, constructing in mind and interpreting information,
- develop students' competencies about finding information from written materials and multi-media resources, organizing, questioning, using and generating information,
- get students understand what they read; and evaluate and question them critically,

- get students care about national, spiritual, moral, historical, cultural values and to support their national feelings and ideas,
- get students realize and adopt aesthetical and artistic values via Turkish and World culture and art Works (MoNE, 2018, p. 6).

Within the research, teachers' responses to survey items on the general characteristics of the 2018 Turkish curriculum are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Teachers' Views on the General Characteristics of the 1st and 5th Grade Turkish Curriculum

Participation Levels		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Items	Grade	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Eligibility of general characteristics and understanding of curriculum to the aims of Turkish National Education	1	2.5	1.2	6.1	9.8	18.4	17.8	19.0	25.2
	5	0.7	1.1	3.6	9.0	10.8	20.4	24.6	29.8
Eligibility of general characteristics and understanding of curriculum to the principles of Turkish National Education	1	3.1	0.6	6.1	7.4	19.6	20.2	19.1	23.9
	5	0.2	1.3	3.6	8.3	10.1	19.3	27.4	29.8
Eligibility of the branch to the perspective adopted in the curriculum	1	0.6	1.2	6.1	9.2	11.0	17.2	26.5	28.2
	5	0.0	1.1	2.9	10.5	12.6	21.3	26.9	24.7
Eligibility of proposed values to the students' characteristics	1	0.6	2.5	6.7	14.7	12.3	23.3	22.1	17.8
	5	0.0	2.7	4.9	13.9	15.7	24.0	20.8	17.9
Cohesion of proposed values with the subject area	1	0.5	1.2	3.7	15.3	16.0	23.9	22.1	17.2
	5	0.0	1.8	3.8	11.7	13.9	22.9	26.8	19.1
Eligibility of proposed skills to the students' characteristics	1	0.6	3.1	8.6	12.8	17.2	22.1	17.8	17.8
	5	0.0	3.4	7.0	14.1	18.2	19.1	21.4	16.8
Cohesion of proposed skills with the subject area	1	0.6	1.8	6.1	12.9	17.8	21.5	20.3	19.0
	5	0.0	2.0	4.9	12.1	15.2	22.4	24.6	18.8

Examining Table 5, it can be seen that the majority of teachers have expressed positive opinions of general characteristics of the Turkish curriculum. Similarly, there are comments of teachers about the appropriateness of the general characteristics of the curriculum in the findings of the focus group interviews.

"Values education is good for Turkish lesson. Yes, leading to the daily life by videos or visuals and stating this is good. Having this in the curriculum is somewhat challenging. It encourages us." (Eskişehir-T1)

"For example, there are four basic skills such as listening and writing- their explanations are written in detail. This is really very useful. I like this. Also, 2005 Turkish curriculum was too thick and detailed. Here, simplification is made, very nice, thin and expressive for teachers." (Gaziantep-T2)

"Yes, they overlap. They are overlapping for years. As the curriculum is developed after long-term experience, there is not much problem in general aims. In fact, specifying those general aims is important." (Sivas-T3)

It is remarkable that teachers present positive opinions about the general characteristics of the 2018 Turkish curriculum, but they also express inadequacy of reflecting these characteristics to the students especially in practice. In addition, teachers views about the curriculum's not having any

important changes about general characteristics, but being simplified compared to the former ones; and also values need to be implicated via texts and thus the particular importance of quality of the texts in the coursebooks are given below.

"I haven't seen a big change...I downloaded the curriculum, read again. I saw that there is not much but only in subjects, place of the subjects have been changed, too much summarized, integrated. Sentences may be changed but if the main idea is the same, I don't accept this as a change. ...Values. They were there already. Content is the same.... there is nothing about values education. We can do this via only texts, discussing, asking students' ideas. Again, texts become critical. We need updated texts. It is written there that renowned names in Turkish and World literature... Yes but we also need authentic, writers appealing to our children." (Malatya-T3)

"For example, value of patriotism, this is based on two texts for all secondary schools. Forsa and Eskici. This value is given with these two texts. But I don't think that it can be given with two texts. Always the same. Is there only two texts reflecting this value? Children can't internalize. Should children go and fight somewhere as Forsa? Or should they miss their hometown when they go another country as Eskici? It is better to be internalizable for children. I think texts in the coursebooks should be like this." (Trabzon-T1)

When findings about the general characteristics of the Turkish curriculum are taken together, teachers' positive opinions come forward. However, it is seen that the teachers have stated the difficulty in implementing general aims, explanations, basic skills and values in the curriculum even if they founded these explanations appropriate. Regarding this, it is also seen that texts in the coursebooks and general expressions in the explanations have also been mentioned by teachers and they have criticized the curriculum for not differentiating from the former ones.

Evaluation of the Learning Outcomes of the Turkish Curriculum

Turkish curriculum has been structured that students can use for life in an integrity that includes knowledge, skills and values including acquiring language and cognitive skills related to listening/observing, speaking, reading and writing, using these skills to develop themselves individually and socially, to communicate effectively, so as to enable them to have a habit of reading and writing with the love of Turkish (MoNE, 2018). The learning outcomes determined to achieve these goals are grouped according to listening / observing, speaking, reading and writing skills. When the learning outcomes have been examined in terms of four basic language skills, it is seen that (Table 6) the curriculum focuses more on reading and writing skills. In addition, it is determined that speaking skill is the least emphasized skill among the four basic skills.

Table 6. Distribution of Learning Outcomes of 1st-8th Grade Turkish Curriculum According to Basic Language Skills

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total	
Basic Language Skills									f	%
Listening	11	9	13	13	12	12	14	14	98	18.7
Speaking	4	4	6	6	7	7	7	7	48	9.2
Reading	19	19	28	37	34	35	38	35	245	46.8
Writing	13	14	17	22	16	14	17	20	133	25.4
Total	f	47	46	64	78	69	68	76	76	524
	%	9.0	8.8	12.2	14.9	13.1	13.0	14.5	14.5	100.0

In addition to language skills, learning outcomes of the 1st-8th grade Turkish curriculum were analysed according to updated Bloom taxonomy. Looking at the expression of the learning outcomes, researchers coded them under relevant cognitive level. Coding process was conducted by all the researchers and determined by making consensus. Also, codings were asked to three curriculum development experts to be analysed in order to maintain reliability. In this regard, when Table 7 is examined, it is seen that there are 494 cognitive learning outcomes in the curriculum, and the majority of these outcomes (73.9%) are in the stages of understanding and applying and only 26.1% are in the stages of analysis, evaluation and creation. In this context, although it is stated in the curriculum that “reading and writing acquisitions are arranged in a way that will provide meaning through in-text, non-text and intertextual reading, and the structure and hierarchy of the learning outcomes from the first grade to the eighth grade will contribute to the development of students' high level cognitive skills” (MoNE, 2018), it is possible to say that the availability of high-level learning outcomes is limited. On the other hand, as the grade levels progress, the relative increase in the number of learning outcomes for the steps of analysis, evaluation and creation is a positive finding to be stressed.

Table 7. Distribution of Learning Outcomes of 1st-8th Grade Turkish Curriculum According to Cognitive Level

Grade	Cognitive Level						Total (f)	
	Remembering (f)	Understanding (f)	Applying (f)	Analysing (f)	Evaluating (f)	Creating (f)		
1	0	18	27	0	1	1	47	
2	0	14	16	4	1	6	41	
3	0	28	20	5	1	8	62	
4	0	22	14	7	3	9	55	
5	0	27	24	4	5	9	69	
6	0	28	19	7	5	9	68	
7	0	32	22	6	5	11	76	
8	0	32	22	7	5	10	76	
Total	f	0	201	164	40	26	63	494
	%	0.0	40.7	33.2	8.1	5.3	12.7	100.0

In the curriculum, it is emphasized that “taking into account that a student's acquisition will affect another field in development” and “the learning outcomes related to grammar and spelling rules are structured in an increasing density and gradually considering the students' developmental characteristics” (MoNE, 2018). Based on these explanations, it is possible to say that the students' developmental characteristics and suitability to the students' learning level criteria are taken into consideration. On the other hand, there is no explanation for the time allocated to learning outcomes for each grade level.

When the teachers' responses to survey items on the appropriateness of the first and fifth grade Turkish curriculum learning outcomes to the criteria (Table 8.) are examined, it is founded that more than 50% of all the teachers have positive opinions and the rate of those who give negative opinions is in the range of 10-30%.

Table 8. Teachers' Views on the Learning Outcomes of the 1st and 5th Grade Turkish Curriculum

Participation Levels		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Items	Grade	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Consistency of the general aims and the learning outcomes of curriculum with each other	1	0.0	1.2	6.7	11.7	8.0	22.1	33.7	16.6
	5	0.2	1.8	4.3	9.4	16.1	22.9	25.8	19.5
Consistency of learning outcomes with curriculum perspective	1	0.0	0.6	6.7	11.0	11.7	22.7	31.3	16.0
	5	0.0	2.0	4.5	8.5	16.4	24.0	26.2	18.4
Relation of the learning outcome with life	1	0.0	3.7	8.0	10.4	18.4	18.4	22.7	18.4
	5	0.0	2.9	6.1	12.1	16.4	22.1	23.1	17.3
Eligibility of learning outcomes to students' developmental characteristics	1	0.0	4.9	7.4	11.7	14.1	22.6	25.2	14.1
	5	0.0	3.1	6.1	11.7	16.1	23.6	23.3	16.1
Eligibility of learning outcomes to students' learning characteristics	1	0.0	2.5	10.4	13.5	16.0	18.3	22.1	17.2
	5	0.0	3.4	7.2	13.7	16.1	22.0	22.4	15.2
Unity of learning outcomes to support the student's cognitive, affective and psycho-motor development as a whole	1	0.6	3.1	9.2	16.6	11.7	21.4	24.5	12.9
	5	0.4	2.9	7.0	14.1	18.2	24.0	18.4	15.0
Distribution of learning outcomes by learning levels	1	0.6	2.5	8.6	11.7	15.3	25.1	17.8	18.4
	5	0.7	2.9	7.0	11.9	17.9	21.5	23.3	14.8
Including higher-level learning in learning outcomes	1	0.6	3.7	9.2	9.8	19.6	20.9	19.6	16.6
	5	0.4	3.8	9.4	11.7	17.7	20.2	22.0	14.8
Supporting learning outcomes within the proposed period	1	1.2	6.1	7.4	11.0	13.6	23.9	22.1	14.7
	5	0.2	6.7	8.7	9.6	17.9	21.1	19.7	16.1
Functionality of learning outcomes	1	0.6	6.1	8.0	11.7	16.6	20.2	22.1	14.7
	5	0.0	3.4	8.3	14.6	14.8	21.3	23.5	14.1
Appropriateness of learning outcomes statements with regard to principles of writing learning outcomes	1	1.2	3.7	8.0	6.7	17.2	18.4	27.0	17.8
	5	0.2	2.0	5.8	13.0	13.5	20.4	24.0	21.1

In the focus group interviews, the answers given to the sub-questions asked within the scope of the main question "What do you think about the learning outcomes of the curriculum?" also support the survey findings in general. Teachers have given a positive opinion regarding the appropriateness of the learning outcomes to the general learning outcomes of the curriculum, the availability of them within the proposed period, the appropriateness to the students' developmental characteristics, the availability of higher-level learning, appropriateness of their sequence and distribution according to language skills:

"It was prepared in accordance with general purposes. In other words, I saw that basic education is in accordance with the basics of that Turkish National Education." (Sivas-T3)

"..... I can say that we don't have much trouble in terms of time because we have six hours for each grade. We also have extra electives. Therefore, there is no problem in terms of time." (Hatay-T1)

"I have also observed that the learning outcomes are appropriate to the age and learning level of the students. As the students could do, it became easier to read with pleasure and a little self-confidence by reaching its pleasure. As a result, the children were able to express themselves more comfortably." (Malatya-T2)

"For example, if a learning outcome requires child's ability to comment on a topic, to speak for a certain period of time, I think it is high level. It was present in these learning outcomes, so there was." (Gaziantep-T3)

"We already had students who could not be sent to the kindergarten in the first year due to the district where our school is located, but at the beginning, the curriculum already supports this

structure. First, there were activities that prepared hand and writing skills that improve muscle skills, and then we started teaching letters. Thus, supportive studies were offered sufficiently.” (Malatya-T2)

“They are also sequenced gradually, and it’s also nice to be sequenced from simple to complex.” (Gaziantep-T4)

On the other hand, teachers had some negative opinions about the learning outcomes. In the evaluations, it is stated that there are problems in the appropriateness of the learning outcomes to the student level, the availability of higher-level learning. In this context, it is emphasized that the number of learning outcomes for higher-level learning should be increased in the curriculum, they should be expressed in the form of observable-measurable behaviors and their scope should be specified:

“Learning outcomes such as interpretation, reasoning, comparison and criticism in Turkish lesson should be increased more. Students’ vocabularies need to be developed to think well for interpreting current content.” (Eskişehir-T1)

“In particular, it is necessary to give more clear learning outcomes instead of concepts such as perceived and felt.” (Hatay-T1)

“For example, I think the spelling rules are quite a lot. I think they need to be divided into grade levels.” (Malatya-T1)

When we integrate all of the findings related with the learning outcomes of the Turkish curriculum, it is found out that while the survey has revealed positive result, it is seen in the interviews and the teachers’ views mentioned above that there are some failing aspects to be considered as vital such as supporting high level learning skills in learning outcomes and expressing learning outcomes as observable behaviours. And this clearly shows the importance of taking teachers’ suggestions into consideration to satisfy the needs.

Evaluation of the Content of the Curriculum

The structure of 2018 Turkish curriculum includes learning outcomes and their explanations. Regarding the content, teaching-learning process, measurement and evaluation, some approaches that are expected to be adopted during the implementation of the curriculum are explained. Within this context about the content, explanations about themes, numbers and types of texts are given under the title of “Implementation of the Curriculum” and these explanations are expected to be taken into consideration while developing the coursebooks. In this sense, it is foreseen that eight themes are to be studied in every grade level of the Turkish curriculum. Within these themes “Merits”, “National Culture” and “The National Struggle and Atatürk” are compulsory and the others are optional. (MoNE, 2018). Table 9 explains some subject samples that are suggested under the themes in the curriculum.

Table 9. Themes and Topic Suggestions of the 1st-8th Grade Turkish Curriculum*

Themes	Topic Suggestions
Virtues	Morality, humility, perseverance, generosity, solidarity, friendship, honesty, trust, benevolence, brotherhood, compassion, sharing, patience, loyalty, respect, love, good faith, loyalty, conscience, solidarity, etc.
National Culture	Family, flag, elders, religious holidays, traditions, traditional sports, human relations, cultural heritage, places, national holidays, cities, land, historical places, historical figures, historical works, Turkish, foundation culture, homeland, country, etc.
National Struggle and Atatürk	July 15, Atatürk, Çanakkale, courage, Republic, veteran, National Anthem, heroism, Kut’ül Amare, national sovereignty, national will, national identity, national struggle, Sarıkamış Operation, martyrdom, patriotism, etc.

Table 9. Continued

Themes	Topic Suggestions
Individual and Society	Mother tongue, justice, peace, individual differences, multilingualism, multiculturalism, solidarity, state, disadvantaged groups, empathy, equality, respect for differences, expatriate, life skills, law, government, power, brotherhood, urban culture, neighborhood relations, right to culture, cultural differences, globalization, civilization, professions, hospitality, greeting, politics, social inclusion, sociocultural awareness, social rules, citizenship, time management etc.
Reading Culture	Information literacy, multiple literacy, digital literacy, love of language, literary personalities, e-book, critical literacy, bookstore, books, libraries, intertextuality, reading habit, reading adventure, interest in reading, reader identity, dictionary culture, periodicals, technology literacy, creative reading, written culture, z-book, z-library, etc.
Communication	Family communication, information communication, communication with other creatures, effective communication, communication skills, communication with people, mass media, neighborhood, cultural communication, intercultural communication, media literacy, student mobility, student teacher communication, etc.
Rights and Freedoms	Individual rights, first generation rights, children's rights, democracy, freedom of religion and conscience, freedom of thought, right to education, disability rights, equality, freedom of communication, right to defense, patient rights, animal rights, freedom of expression, second generation rights, right to belief, human rights, person immunity, compassion, privacy of private life, freedoms, freedom of travel, fundamental rights and freedoms, gender justice, gender equality, right to life, etc.
Personal Development	Success, skill, diligence, conflict management, empathy, entrepreneurship, decision making, self-knowledge, personality types, career choice, motivation, learning to learn, positive thinking, self-control, self-criticism, self-confidence, self-esteem, responsibility, social development, talent, competence, time management etc.
Science and Technology	Scientists, science literacy, ethics, entrepreneurship, communication, imagination, communication, discovery and inventions, mathematics literacy, sense of curiosity, incident, phenomenon, patent, social media, design, technology, copyright, transportation, innovation, etc.
Health and Sports	Fair play, physical education, physical health, nutrition, sportsmanship, balanced diet, mobility, disease prevention, drug use, first aid, self-care, mental health, healthy nutrition, healthy life, sports culture, sportsmanship, cleaning, sleep, etc.
Time and Space	Our environment, our home, past, present, future, travelers, our room, our school, cities, our class, countries, etc.
Feelings	Forgiveness, liking, emotion management, excitement, anxiety, jealousy, fear, happiness, longing, love, system, appreciation, hope, sadness, farewell, loneliness, etc.
Nature and Universe	Plants, living things, environment, environmental protection, nature, natural phenomena, natural disasters, earth, universe, night, planets, day, animals, climate, snow, landscapes, seasons, colors, space, rain, earth, stars, time consciousness etc.
Art	Poster, ballet, literary arts, marbling, literature, aesthetics, aesthetic sensitivity, festival, photography, gala, traditional arts, shadow play, graphics, graffiti, sculpture, architecture, miniature, music, opera, originality, pantomime, landscape, painting, ceramics, cinema, theater, innovative thinking, etc.
Citizenship	Justice, effort, working, labor, equality, immigration, duty awareness, rule of law, cooperation, refugee, freedom, sharing, responsibility, production, tax awareness, etc.
Children's World	Children's culture, children's museum, digital games, entertainment, traditional children's games, imagination, hobbies, discovery, amusement park, curiosity, humor, school, games, toys, dreams, street games, etc.

* Taken directly from the pages 16-17 of the Ministry of National Education 2018 Turkish Course Curriculum.

As it is seen in Table 9, 16 themes are suggested for implementation of the Turkish Curriculum. The other 5 themes except “Merits”, “National Culture” and “The National Struggle and Atatürk” are left to the coursebook writers. Having analyzed the themes and the subject samples, it can be said that the content is mostly based on values and culture. Also, regarding the passages in the coursebooks, the following considerations are expected to be taken into account:

- In every grade level there must be 8 themes and 4 texts. Out of these 4 texts 3 will be reading and 1 will be listening text. Therefore, there will be 32 reading and listening texts in total.
- In every grade level 8 reading passage should be included on condition that they match with the themes and they are equally distributed. There will be 40 texts in the coursebook including these passages.
- Texts are categorized under 6 types such as informative, narrative and poetic. The types of texts to be used depend on the writer as long as they stick with the number of the texts. Whether the text types are equally distributed will be decided according to the text types. For example, there might be more informative texts in “Science and Technology” theme. In another theme there might be more poetic texts. However, ideally it is better for text to be equally distributed (MoNE, 2018, p. 17-18).

In the curriculum, the suggested text types according to the grade levels are also given and it is emphasized that a relation must be established with the learning outcomes in the arrangement of the text types. When Table 10 is examined, it is seen that it is important to include diversity in the content and that the practitioner is provided with a flexible selection opportunity. However, it is considered that this may be far from offering flexibility to the teacher since the people who will make the selection are coursebook authors.

Table 10. Texts Types Proposed in 1st-8th Grade Turkish Curriculum According to Grade Levels **

Grade		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Informative Texts	Memoir		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Biography, Autobiography							+	+
	Blogs							+	+
	Petition						+	+	+
	Ephemera and Brochure (<i>list, diagram, table, graphic, sketch, map, poster etc. mixed texts</i>)		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	e-mail				+	+	+	+	+
	Diary		+	+	+				+
	News Text, Advertisement		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Postcard		+	+	+				
	Guides (<i>user guides, specifications, instructions, etc.</i>)		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Travel Article							+	+
	Article / Anecdote / Interview / Essay						+	+	+
	Letter						+	+	+
	Aphorism (proverb, idiom, graffiti, etc.)		+	+	+	+			
	Aphorism (<i>posy, proverb, idiom, aphorism, graffiti, motto, etc.</i>)						+	+	+
Social Media Posts					+	+	+	+	
Narrative Texts	Comics		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Fable		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Story		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Cartoon		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Fairy Tale / Legend / Epic		+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Table 10. Continued

Grade		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Texts Types									
Narrative Texts	Humorous Anecdote	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Novel				+	+	+	+	+
	Theater	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Poetry	Mani/ Lullaby	+	+	+	+				
	Song/ Folk song	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Poetry	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Rhyme/ Riddle	+	+	+	+				

** Taken directly from the page 18 of the Ministry of National Education 2018 Turkish Course Curriculum.

Since the content was not included in the curriculum, the content of the curriculum was actually evaluated by taking the opinions of the teachers according to the determined criteria. In this context, the findings obtained from the survey (Table 11) show that teachers have mostly positive opinions about the content of the curriculum. In this regard, teachers answered the questionnaire stating that the content is consistent with the learning outcomes, appropriate to the development and learning characteristics of students, related with real life, and appropriate in terms of ordering in the course and in the following classes.

Table 11. Teachers' Views on the Content of the 1st and 5th Grade Turkish Curriculum

Participation Levels		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Items	Grade	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Consistency of learning area, unit, subject and concepts with learning outcomes	1	0.6	2.5	5.5	11.0	15.3	20.9	25.2	19.0
	5	0.0	1.8	5.2	9.2	14.8	24.6	26.0	18.4
Eligibility of learning area, unit, subject and concepts to the students' developmental characteristics	1	0.6	2.5	9.2	11.0	17.2	17.2	27.0	15.3
	5	0.0	1.6	7.0	10.1	16.4	25.2	24.2	15.5
Eligibility of learning area, unit, subject and concepts to the learning characteristics of students	1	0.6	1.8	9.2	14.7	16.0	17.2	25.2	15.3
	5	0.0	2.0	6.1	11.4	17.0	24.1	22.4	17.0
Coverage of contemporary scientific knowledge that should be acquired in the learning area, unit, subject and concepts	1	0.6	3.7	8.6	10.4	17.2	19.0	23.9	16.6
	5	0.0	3.8	6.7	9.2	13.9	25.2	24.2	17.0
Appropriateness of the order of the learning area, unit, subject and concepts in the course for the student characteristics	1	0.6	3.7	6.7	12.3	14.7	21.5	24.5	16.0
	5	0.2	3.1	6.3	12.1	15.7	23.6	24.0	15.0
Appropriateness of learning area, unit, subjects and concepts in the progressive grade level of the course in accordance with student characteristics	1	1.2	3.7	8.0	12.9	16.0	19.0	22.6	16.6
	5	0.2	2.7	6.7	12.1	13.9	23.3	24.7	16.4
The relation of learning area, unit, subjects and concepts with real life	1	0.6	4.3	8.6	13.5	14.7	19.6	22.7	16.0
	5	0.0	3.1	7.8	13.0	13.0	24.0	24.0	15.1
Appropriateness of the ordering of the learning area, unit, subject and concepts in the course in accordance with the prerequisite learnings	1	0.6	5.5	4.9	12.9	16.0	18.4	26.4	15.3
	5	0.0	2.2	6.3	12.6	16.4	21.2	25.8	15.5
Appropriateness of the ordering of the learning area, unit, subject and concepts in the course and in the following classes in accordance with the prerequisite learnings	1	0.6	5.5	5.5	13.5	14.1	17.2	27.0	16.6
	5	0.0	2.2	7.4	11.2	16.6	20.6	25.4	16.6

In the focus group interviews, besides supporting findings, negative evaluations were also made. It was stated that the coursebooks and content used by teachers who gave positive opinions were appropriate for the level of the students, interesting for the students, related to daily life and suitable for the needs of the students:

"It was suitable for the student's level. It was something that we could give or that the student could get more easily." (Sivas-T3)

"It is more suitable for student level. For example, there is the text of İskender Pala. He was also my teacher at the faculty. More literary, more appealing to children. Texts like the ones about Barış Manço which are more suitable for our culture were selected." (Samsun-T1)

"I think fifth grade books are more authentic. In other words, they are better in terms of letting children set goal and have dreams. For instance, there was texts about Aziz Sancar and Oktay Sinanoğlu. It became more authentic by including names familiar to the students. More national heroes from our culture are included." (Gaziantep- T3)

"Many texts are fun. Information about a scientist's life in space was fun. Things they can see, hear, experience, or wonder about in their own life or a recipe for pasta with sauce were a lot of fun. Then he wanted to go and do it all at home. Things that can be associated with daily life." (Sivas-T7)

Within the scope of the negative evaluation, the teachers who thought that the content was not suitable for the student level stated that there was a difficulty in understanding the content due to reasons such as the age of the students and the subjects being abstract for the student:

"Since the students start (the school) early, the skill of grasping something weakened. I teach the subject in two weeks that I used to teach in two hours. Either we will not be able to finish teaching what is in the syllabus on time and pay for that or we will rush into things and take half measures. We are all concerned about this, so the students aren't quite ready." (Eskişehir-T6)

"Secondly, texts in the Turkish coursebooks are too long. Children can't make connection between introduction-body-conclusion parts. Why? Because he has just started reading, he is spelling. And as the texts are too long, we are looking for small texts from source books or from the internet. I mean, we sometimes do such things different from what is written in the curriculum." (Malatya-T1)

"The subject "stems" in 6th grades were given in 5th grades. Because the subject is abstract and the students are too young for this subject, it was difficult to understand. This situation distracts us a lot. It takes a lot of class hours" (Eskişehir-T1)

"It is prepared strictly without considering the level of children, both activities and the curriculum." (Malatya-T2)

Another criticism was that despite the change of the curricula, the content generally remained the same. Only changes in the place of texts among the grade levels were made. The subjects were not organized in a complementary and sequential way:

"Constantly some topics are taken out from here and added there. Or place of the topics changes from level to level. Why is this the only thing that changes in the curriculum? In other words, when there is an update, there is a change only in sequence of the subjects that should be covered at the class level." (Malatya-T3)

"For example, what is wrong in Turkish language curriculum is that every year there are same texts in the same classes. Even I have a hard time reading." (Samsun-T1)

"One topic is given in separate chapters. For example, it gives a feature of the comma somewhere, after 10 topics, another feature. It's getting messy." (Malatya- T2)

"If a subject is told in the 5th grade, we just mention about that in the 6th, 7th and the subject is up to 8th. Considering the time passed, it becomes possible for children to forget the subject if they are not emphasized and elaborated in detail." (İstanbul-T7)

Findings related with the content of the Turkish curriculum revealed that the survey results are mostly positive just as the learning outcomes. However, the evaluation of the curriculum document by the researchers stressed some constraints. Also, it was understood from the focus group interviews that the teachers presented their opinions considering the course book as content not the curriculum; and they had negative criticisms about the texts included in the coursebooks. And it was seen in the in-class observations that the diversity of content criteria was not being implemented by teachers and all the lessons were conducted by focusing on the coursebook in six different schools.

Evaluation of Teaching-Learning Process of the Curriculum

In the 2018 Turkish curriculum, it is recommended not to adopt a single approach to teach four basic language skills, but to use various approaches, methods and techniques appropriately in the planning of teaching-learning process. In addition, it is considered important to design activities that consider students' individual differences, prior learning and interests and that are related to life and encourage students to actively participate in the activities by using information and communication technologies (MoNE, 2018). Therefore, based on the findings of the document analysis, it is possible to say that the explanations provided in the curriculum with regard to teaching-learning process reflect the criteria that should be. In this context, it is seen that the teachers are provided with accurate and necessary information. On the other hand, the curriculum is thought to be incompetent in terms of providing examples of and guidance on which methods and techniques are appropriate to use in the teaching-learning process in relation to the learning outcomes and the content.

The curriculum also attaches great importance to initial literacy teaching and takes phonics approach to literacy teaching. Explanations about this process are given under "Subjects to be Considered in Implementation" (MoNE, 2018). On the other hand, it is stated that the curriculum is based upon thematic approach and requires text-based approach due to the nature of the subject matter, and suggestions for the themes, topics and texts are provided in the curriculum. And these suggestions are expected to be taken into consideration in preparation of coursebooks. Thus, this finding shows that the curriculum promotes only the coursebook as curriculum material.

In the survey implemented to find out the teachers' opinions regarding the activities carried out during the teaching-learning process of the Turkish curriculum, the teachers were asked to evaluate in terms of appropriateness to the learning outcomes and to the teaching of the nature of knowledge, consistency with the curriculum philosophy, relevance to life, sequence and how they complement each other. Additionally, regarding the methods-techniques stated in the curriculum, they were asked to evaluate the incorporation of the teaching methods and techniques appropriate to the learning outcomes and of the target skills to be acquired, and the diversity of the recommended methods-techniques. Lastly, regarding the teaching tools, they were asked to evaluate the correspondence between the recommended materials and the learning outcomes and their diversity. The responses of the teachers regarding these items are presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Teachers' Views on the Teaching-Learning Process of the 1st and 5th Grade Turkish Curriculum

Participation Levels		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Items	Grade	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Availability of teaching activities suitable for learning outcomes	1	0.6	3.1	8.0	11.0	15.3	20.9	26.4	14.7
	5	0.4	2.9	4.9	12.3	16.8	22.9	23.9	15.9
Availability of teaching method techniques suitable for learning outcomes	1	0.6	1.8	8.0	13.5	13.5	23.9	23.4	15.3
	5	0.2	2.7	5.6	11.7	19.5	24.7	19.7	15.9
Diversity of the proposed methods and techniques	1	0.6	3.1	8.6	9.8	17.8	23.3	20.8	16.0
	5	0.4	2.7	7.2	10.5	18.6	22.6	21.9	16.1
Inclusion of skills targeted to be acquired	1	0.6	3.1	7.4	12.9	12.9	20.9	25.6	16.6
	5	0.0	2.7	5.8	11.0	18.2	24.2	23.1	15.0
Cohesion of proposed materials with learning outcomes	1	0.6	4.3	6.7	12.9	15.3	20.2	24.7	15.3
	5	0.2	2.5	8.3	10.5	15.9	23.5	23.6	15.5
Diversity of recommended materials	1	0.6	4.9	8.6	13.5	20.2	19.6	16.0	16.6
	5	0.7	4.0	8.3	13.9	17.0	20.4	21.8	13.9
Eligibility of proposed teaching-learning activities to gain the nature of knowledge	1	0.6	3.7	9.2	11.0	16.6	22.1	20.2	16.6
	5	0.2	2.9	6.7	12.1	15.9	25.1	22.3	14.8
Eligibility of supporting knowledge production to proposed teaching-learning activities	1	1.2	4.9	7.4	11.7	17.2	20.2	22.1	15.3
	5	0.0	3.1	5.6	13.2	16.8	26.5	19.8	15.0
Consistency of the proposed teaching-learning activities with the philosophy of the curriculum	1	3.1	3.7	6.7	13.5	15.3	19.0	23.9	14.8
	5	0.7	2.7	5.6	11.0	17.0	25.6	22.4	15.0
Relation of proposed teaching-learning activities with life	1	0.6	3.7	7.4	14.1	16.0	19.6	20.8	17.8
	5	0.0	2.9	7.6	11.0	15.5	24.0	23.5	15.5
Repetition of proposed teaching-learning activities in order to ensure permanence of the significant learning outcomes	1	1.8	1.8	9.2	12.9	15.3	22.7	22.2	14.1
	5	0.2	2.9	7.4	10.1	18.4	21.5	24.9	14.6
Progressivity of the proposed teaching-learning activities	1	1.2	3.1	8.0	10.4	14.7	26.4	18.4	17.8
	5	0.2	2.0	6.1	10.3	17.0	23.4	26.0	15.0
Compatibility of proposed teaching-learning activities to support each other	1	1.2	3.7	8.0	12.9	11.7	24.5	19.6	18.4
	5	0.0	1.6	4.3	10.5	16.1	25.1	25.6	16.8

Examining Table 12, it can be seen that the majority of teachers have expressed positive opinions of teaching-learning process as in the other dimensions of the Turkish curriculum. On the other hand, the analysis of teachers' responses to the interviews has revealed that the activities were appropriate to the learning outcomes and relevant to daily life, but there are some issues in terms of encouraging information generation, recycling to maintain retention and assuring hierarchy in sequence.

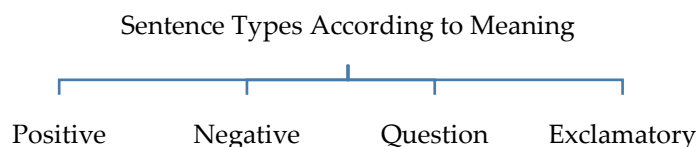
"I think the learning outcomes are related to the activities. When I look at the activities in the book, I think they are for them, they are for the learning outcomes." (Gaziantep-T4)

"They are mostly for an average or lower level. I don't think that I could see activities challenging and attractive to higher level students." (Hatay-T1)

Another teacher who expressed positive opinion about the activities has commented on the grammar practices:

"When we look at the books, we can see activities suitable for intuition. We never see an activity that gives the definition of an adjective explicitly by writing something like this 'adjective: [definition]'. 'Learning outcomes were already designed according to this. I haven't seen any problems regarding the activities in fifth grade.'" (Gaziantep-T2)

What the teacher had identified and stated above regarding the activities is considered as something positive; however, it contradicts with what had been observed in classes. Observations showed that teachers were using direct method in grammar teaching. Thus, it has been found out that there are some differences in practice and the positive opinions presented in the interviews do not reflect the practices in the classroom. In one of the schools where observations were conducted, second grade students were taught sentence knowledge by teacher's direct knowledge transferring not implicating from the text. The teacher started the lesson by drawing the chart below on the board:



Later, the teacher gave examples for positive sentence, stated that "this type of sentence is used when the work is done" and asked students to make example sentences. Students were asked what affixes and words are used to make sentence negative and their answers were taken. Teacher's taking examples from the students encouraged their participation, but it has been revealed that implicit teaching approach was not used and activities were not planned for this purpose. Later on, the following examples were written on the board and students were asked to write these on their notebooks.

I played in the park.	→	didn't play	→	These were written in red pencil.
This pencil is mine.	→	not	→	
There are people on the street.	→	not	→	

While students were writing these examples, one of them asked whether they would write the red-faced words as they are or not. The whole class answered as he should write as it is seen, using the same color. As so many students agree on the answer, it is thought that this situation is experienced frequently in the teaching-learning process. Later on, the other sentence types were taught similarly as taking example sentences, transferring rules about the subject and writing what is written on the board into the notebooks. The teacher thought that students were writing slowly, and she photocopied a page of rules and examples about the subject and asked students to paste it on their notebooks. After lecturing, she photocopied exercises, delivered to the students and gave time to complete. Then, students read the sentences one by one and answered as positive or negative. For another exercise, teacher asked students to write negative and question form of the sentence if it is positive. However, the lesson ended before the time for the exercise was finished. As it is seen from this example, the only activity for students to make practice was asking them to make their own sentences.

When the opinions of the teachers regarding the "Method-Techniques" in the teaching-learning process were analyzed, it was seen that there were limitations in the curriculum in general, and the problems experienced in the classroom were also mentioned when determining that there were no clear expressions.

"It doesn't overlap, so the curriculum remains utopian on some issues. But implementation is very different. It should be clear, so everything in the curriculum should be very clear, clear, clear." (Malatya- T3)

"We want to do group work but let me talk for myself; I have some trouble because the students do not want to do much group work. They want to do more individual work. I have difficulty when I try to have them do group work because there is no product. It turns out to be from one or two groups. The students want to work more individually; I am having a problem with this." (Sivas- T8)

While it was observed that the teachers mostly structured their lessons on question-answer and explanation methods, there were also no implementations that could be realized by organizing a very stimulating educational environment that would allow all linguistic skills to be employed in the lesson, and to stimulate students' feelings and thoughts. In three hours of 12-hour observations, it was found that grammar was taught directly, and in the remaining nine hours, it was observed that different teachers only conducted lessons focused on coursebooks, and the comprehension questions were answered by reading the text, and vocabulary studies were conducted. Considering the lessons observed in this regard, it can be stated that the practices and the use of various methods and techniques to improve the students' understanding and expression skills are not sufficiently realized.

In terms of teaching-learning process, it has also been seen that the teachers talked about the coursebooks while answering the interview questions. Accordingly, they expressed both positive and negative statements regarding the coursebook.

"I am very upset when I see spelling mistakes especially in Turkish books. I think it's a bit sloppier. Okay, so the themes are arranged in a certain order; we obey it, we can adapt it ourselves. I think spelling rules are not paid attention. This bothers me so much." (Eskişehir-T1)

"The most important thing in our class is texts. Although these texts are not suitable for students' age, even I, as a teacher, get bored while reading them, the children are normally bored. Personally, I liked the texts in the new 5th grade students' book, they are suitable for the age level. There was gap filling, which was appropriate for their age, it attracted attention, had interactive texts on which they could play and draw. It could be thought of as a magazine paper." (Eskişehir- T3)

Considering the findings obtained from the focus group interviews, it can be stated that the coursebook generally comes to the minds of teachers as a teaching tool. However, in the Turkish curriculum, there is emphasis on the use of visual, audio and information technologies as much as possible during the teaching-learning process. But the in-class observations showed that Turkish lessons were conducted based on coursebook and teachers were using only the texts and text-related questions in the coursebook. Though it is known that teachers' using different texts and different visual and audial stimula appropriate to the text is important for the quality of teaching-learning process. Regarding this, the use of smart board as visual and audial stimulus was observed only in two schools at the beginning of the lesson to get students' attention. However, it is interesting that the stimulus was again the listening texts in the coursebook. Thus, it can be said that teachers use coursebook as the only resource and this stresses the importance of the quality of coursebooks.

As for the example of maintaining students' actively participating in the lesson by using with visual and audial stimulus at the beginning, the teacher working at the first school mentioned above made use of the listening text like this:

Teacher said "Today, you will listen to the poem you wrote into your notebooks yesterday. Open your notebooks and books and listen." And opened the text on the smart board. After the poem was listened many times by whole class, he said "Have you understood, or do you want to listen one more time?". And the poem was listened to again as students said so. Later, it was read orally by some volunteer students. After the listening and reading of the poem, they started questions about understanding the text. Both the questions in the coursebook and some other questions that were related with real life were asked by the teacher. For example, he asked "Do you look for a fountain in such a

hot day as in the poem, too?”. Many students raised their hands voluntarily and shared their memories. During this process, teacher asked other questions such as “what was written on the fountain, you remember?”, “was it untitled, too?” and tried to support students’ talking, expressing themselves and thinking related to the poem in the lesson.

To sum up, considering the Turkish curriculum in terms of teaching-learning process, it is found out that the majority of teachers responded positively to the survey items about the evaluation of activities, methods-techniques and teaching tools. On the other hand, document analysis, focus group interviews with teachers and the findings obtained from the classroom observations brought forward various limitations. While it is expected to have more detailed, diverse and understandable explanations about activities and methods-techniques, it was observed that the perception of teaching tools has not gone any further from the coursebook yet, and in this context, lessons are carried out within the scope of limited methods-techniques.

Evaluation of the Measurement and Evaluation Dimension of the Curriculum

When Turkish curriculum is examined, it is seen that under the title of “Measurement and Evaluation Approach of the Curriculum” a general framework and directive explanations are provided, and the main responsibility is left to the teachers. As stated in the curriculum, considering individual’s being unique, it is not fair to expect a curriculum to include all the elements of measurement and evaluation. In this sense, leaving decisions related to ensuring the effectiveness of the measurement and evaluation practices to the teachers is considered favorable.

In addition to the general framework regarding the measurement and evaluation, under the “Turkish Curriculum” points to be considered during implementation are presented. These points emphasize that measurement and evaluation practices should be continuous and continuous evaluation is important in determining both progress of the students who have difficulty in learning and whether learning outcomes are met or not. Performance and process-based evaluation approach and diagnosing problems based on the results are specifically stressed by the curriculum. On the other hand, for 4-8 grades, adopting both formative and summative measurement and evaluation approach is suggested. As for the possible tools and techniques, using checklists, rubrics, structured evaluation forms, written exams, performance tasks, projects, portfolios and self-evaluation forms are suggested. In measurement and evaluation tools that will be used in 1-3 grades, in addition to cognitive abilities, the necessity of observing psychomotor and affective abilities is stated. When preparing the written exams to measure cognitive abilities in 4-8 grades, the necessity of using various item types requiring students to use higher level cognitive skills is underlined. It is emphasized that the items combine previous learnings with the new ones and be related with other disciplines and daily life (MoNE, 2018).

From the explanations related to measurement and evaluation it is understood that in this dimension of the curriculum acting with maximum diversity and flexibility is important. In this sense, curriculum’s being only a guide and leaving the decision of choosing and organizing the measurement and evaluation tools to the teacher’s responsibility coincides with the understanding of supporting students’ learning and taking individual differences into consideration in teaching. However, it is not possible to comment on the usefulness of the suggested measurement tools and techniques in the curriculum as they are not explained and exemplified in detail. But how teachers benefit this flexibility that is given to them, and which decisions they make are important questions to be answered.

Table 13. Teachers' Views on the Measurement and Evaluation Dimension of 1st and 5th Grade Turkish Curriculum

Participation Levels		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Items	Grade	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Eligibility of proposed measurement-evaluation approach	1	0.6	4.3	7.4	13.5	13.5	23.9	22.1	14.7
	5	0.2	2.5	6.1	12.1	16.6	21.3	25.7	15.5
Eligibility of the proposed measurement tools and techniques to measure learning outcomes	1	0.6	2.5	9.8	14.7	9.8	26.4	20.9	15.3
	5	0.2	2.5	6.3	10.8	17.7	23.5	24.0	15.0
The usefulness of the proposed measurement tools and techniques	1	1.2	3.1	6.7	15.3	14.7	22.1	22.8	14.1
	5	0.4	2.5	6.5	10.5	17.0	23.8	24.3	15.0
Proposition of measurement tools and techniques to measure the learning outcomes of different behavioral areas	1	0.6	4.3	7.4	14.7	13.5	25.2	19.0	15.3
	5	0.4	4.3	5.6	12.1	17.9	22.6	23.6	13.5
Diversity of the proposed measurement tools and techniques	1	0.6	3.1	10.4	16.0	10.4	20.2	25.8	13.5
	5	0.4	3.6	8.3	11.9	15.5	22.9	23.7	13.7

When Table 13 is examined, it is seen that a great majority of teachers expressed positive opinions about the measurement and evaluation dimension of the curriculum. However, during the interviews, it is stated that teachers prepared questions and activities parallel to the ones in the coursebook or made use of materials available on the Internet rather than paying attention to the approaches and techniques suggested in the curriculum.

"When preparing an exam, I don't get much help from the book and don't pay attention to the curriculum, yet the exam I prepare matches to a great extent to the subject's activities in other words they overlap" (Gaziantep-T3)

"It doesn't guide at all. It didn't help in terms of measurement and evaluation. It totally depends on us. We certainly say no" (Malatya-T4)

"As the new curriculum doesn't provide example measurement and evaluation practices, most teachers would copy the activities like the ones available at the end of the texts in the coursebook, or as the other teachers mentions they will ask from the other resources." (Gaziantep-T5)

"We have evaluation questions at the end of the themes, but they may not be questions measuring each learning outcome. For example, sometimes we want to emphasize a specific learning outcome more but there may not be a question measuring that learning outcome. In such case, we benefit from our own resources, EBA- education information network-, and different Internets sources." (Sivas-T8)

The views presented in the focus group interviews show that problems in terms of measurement and evaluation activities to guide teachers and measurement tools and techniques to be appropriate to measure the learning outcomes etc. are observed. In addition, problems related to different evaluation methods aimed at different skills such as listening, and speaking are reported.

"Measurement and evaluation.... for grammar, reading and writing it is OK but are there any measuring listening and speaking skills? They are left, not measured." (Trabzon-T2)

"When preparing the questions, in the 5th grades, there are themes end evaluation questions in MoNE's books. I don't use them directly because of the copyright issues, but I use similar questions, or the ones I liked in the activities I mean the one suitable for the students' level." (Gaziantep-T2)

Examining the teachers' views, it is seen that measurement and evaluation practices focus usually on cognitive learning outcomes, psychomotor and affective learning outcomes are not given adequate importance and written exams are used as evaluation tool. In addition, teachers stated that the 2015 Turkish curriculum was more explanatory and directive for them.

During the classroom observations, not many measurement and evaluation practices were observed; however, some practices that support the interview findings were recorded. In the observed classes, after answering the questions about the target text in the coursebook, one teacher assigned the students to write a news report and one teacher assigned the students to do a research about Sinan the architect and prepare a presentation. In addition to this, it is observed that one teacher assigned the students to write a poem as a preparation study and started the lesson with students' reading their poems. Thus, it is possible to say that teachers try to foster students' speaking, expressing themselves and writing skills by making them think with the assignments they give. In addition to this, it is found out that in two classes that focuses on grammar separately from the text and in some classes in which grammar is assigned as homework, especially fill in the blank and multiple-choice question types were used. In this sense, it should be emphasized that for the retention of learning it is important that grammar practices should be text oriented and students should discover information themselves.

Evaluation of the Use of the Curriculum

When the survey results in which the 1st and 5th grade Turkish curriculum is evaluated by the teachers are examined in general, it draws attention that some teachers although few in number indicated that they don't have any idea about some items. The reason for this finding is thought to be teachers' not benefiting from the curriculum adequately. Such that, during the focus group interviews only six teachers stated that they use the curriculum as a guide, one teacher said that s/he looks only at the learning outcomes and two teachers said that they look at the curriculum only when they need:

"How we benefit from the curriculum...which learning outcomes are expected from us, I mean in the four language skills by MoNE in my field. Which learning outcomes from the four language skills are we expected to make students reach, it is at least a guide to see this" (Malatya-T3)

"I benefit from it as a guide. Like what and when to teach. I benefit for ordering." (Sivas-T6)

"Of course, we look at it. We update the changes." (Malatya-T2)

On the other hand, it is stated that instead of the curriculum, use of different sources like teacher handbook, coursebook, and yearly plan as the main source or practices of teachers forming the curriculum themselves are more common. It is also considered that curriculum is necessary for the new teachers, not for the experienced teachers:

"To tell the truth I don't look at the curriculum when I teach. We usually follow the coursebook and supplement the coursebooks with other sources." (Malatya-T1)

"Yes, I of course follow. I generally use the teacher handbook." (Malatya-T3)

"The curriculum is of course a guide. When it is first released, I examine it but not in detail. Bu I usually shape it according to yearly plan and the students' level." (Trabzon-T1)

"Actually, there is some laziness, I guess teacher laziness. I guess it is easier when it is more organized and ready-made in the books. I guess it depends on the book, I mean everybody arranges their teaching activities according to what is in the coursebook." (Malatya-T2)

"It is especially necessary for those who have just started the profession." (Hatay-T1)

When explaining how they benefit from the curriculum, teachers provided some criticism and suggestions. In this sense, the necessity of taking teachers' views when preparing the curriculum, evaluating the curriculum frequently, and giving a place to the curriculum in the coursebooks as it is most frequently used source are stated. Some teachers stated that the curriculum does not reflect the Turkish society and diversity in the society, so it would be more suitable to prepare the curriculum locally, and the curriculum should give more flexibility to the teachers:

"We never examine it also no teacher examines it. That is a fact. Actually, you don't need it because what you examine this year changes next year. So much change in education, why do you change it? Why do you change something that you just started a year ago? Can I ask the reason? Without enough examination..... I don't know, I think it would be more useful to take teachers' views into consideration. Because no teacher looks at the Turkish Education Board' curriculum." (Malatya-T1)

"Even the last book or curriculum says that write a poetry about the activity. Now, it is not the topic, child does not have any relation to poetry and does not want to write about this subject. But we limit this. So, the teacher must give flexibility to child. The teacher will say 'You will write a poetry based on different subject or do a different activity' to child." (Gaziantep-T1)

"I am also curious about this: do we really take our own people as reference when a curriculum is prepared, or an education system is designed? I am really curious if people who do this in Ankara do it? Even the president says Finland does it. Finland education system is OK, but do we really do things by looking at our people or do we just copy? For me, what we do is not realistic, we just come and go to school." (Gaziantep-T3)

"Of course, there are thousands of cultures in our country and there will be variations. Here when you go to two close cities you can clearly see the cultural difference. For this reason, rather than a standard curriculum used all around the country, local curriculums can be prepared by people who know the region and the culture, authorities from Ankara, curriculum specialists, parents or teachers." (Gaziantep-T2)

"There are topics which are taught neither in the fifth grade nor in the sixth grade because of the curriculum change. For example, we used to teach possessive construction in the 6th grade in 2008, but in 2018 when the curriculum was updated those topics were taken to the 5th grade. So, in 2017 because the teachers thought that the topic would be taught in the 6th grade, they didn't teach it to their student. When the students were in the 6th grade, the curriculum changed, and the topics were taken to the 5th grade. The students will not learn it anymore. For this reason, I think there shouldn't be frequent curriculum changes, the learning outcomes should be clearly stated, and teachers should decide some parts of the curriculum. (Hatay-T1)"

"For example, everything in the 5th grade curriculum should be in the 5th grade coursebook, so that it can be reached directly. (Hatay-T2)"

From the teachers statements it is believed that the stated problems could be the underlying reasons for the teachers' behaviors of benefitting from the curriculum. As a result, it is understood that there is a great need to ensure active participation of teachers in the curriculum development process and to give them more flexibility in their practices.

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

Findings of this research evaluating the 2018 Turkish curriculum show that the approach, perspective and explanations of the curriculum are in accordance with the contemporary educational considerations. In this regard, the curriculum prepared as a framework has been created to play a guiding role for teachers. Unlike the tradition of including detailed information, examples and guiding books for each curriculum element; only the learning outcomes have been finalized, some explanations for content, teaching-learning process and evaluation are provided and flexibility on decision making is offered in the new curriculum. When the studies conducted for the purpose of needs analysis within the scope of the general features of the 2018 Turkish curriculum are evaluated, it is possible to say that a comprehensive assessment from different sources with different methods and taking into account academic studies is suitable for scientific approach and curriculum development. The process was clarified by the disclosure of the aforementioned information in the curriculum, and the views of various factors affecting education and being affected in the process were taken into account. According to the curriculum evaluation results based on objective findings, the process of developing the curriculum under the name of updating was carried out. The explanations made under the perspective of all curricula in the curriculum reveal the purpose of the education system, but unlike previous curricula, they highlight values and competencies. When these values and competencies are examined, it is understood that it is important to develop the student multifaceted not only cognitively but also affectively, taking into account the requirements of the age. However, it is thought that there is excessive emphasis on national and moral resources in terms of values; in line with the aim of raising students in a multifaceted way, it is suggested to include international values and culture. On the other hand, since the mentioned competencies are common in all curricula, it is thought that it would be meaningful to offer more competencies suitable for the subject area in the Turkish curriculum. Considering the special purposes of the curriculum, it is understood that although the focus is on language skills, it is important to improve students' knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours. In this respect, it is possible to say that the curriculum has adopted objectives suitable for the students and the subject area. However, evaluation results stated some findings that do not coincide with the given explanations. In this regard, it was observed that the explanations were not sufficient and there were problems in terms of guiding teachers at the expected level.

After it was updated, the Turkish curriculum started to be implemented gradually. For the purpose of curriculum evaluation, teachers' opinions have been taken about the first and fifth grade curriculum that were implemented during the data collection of this research, too. Results of the survey showed that the teachers had mostly positive opinions on each element of the curriculum. However, interviews conducted for detailed analysis of the same items at the survey brought forward some problems and criticism related with the curriculum and implementation process. Also, document analysis of the curriculum by the researchers found out some problems. For instance, learning outcomes focus mostly on reading and writing skills, and the rate of speaking skills learning outcomes is too low. However, Turkish lessons are expected to be organized in a way that enables students to develop their comprehension (reading, listening) and narration (speaking, writing) skills holistically in each lesson (Aslan, 2010, 2016, 2017; Dilidüzgün, 2004; Kavcar et al., 2005; Sever, 1996, 2004a, 2004b, 2006, 2008; Sever, Kaya, & Aslan 2011; Ülper, 2010). Thus, putting forward only some of the skills is not appropriate for structuring Turkish curriculum holistically and the distribution of the learning outcomes of the curriculum to language skills should be reviewed.

Another finding about the learning outcomes is that they are mostly cognitive and only one fourth of the learning outcomes are related with higher level learning skills; and this is not considered to be important. This finding is supported by Büyükalın-Filiz and Yıldırım's (2019) and Çerçi's (2018) research. However, the main aim of teaching Turkish is to bring up people who are considerate and sensitive. In this regard, development of students' language skills is thought to be important (Aslan, 2013, 2017; Dilidüzgün, 2012; Karadağ & Kurudayıoğlu, 2010; Kavcar et al., 2005; Sever, 2004a, 2007a, 2011) and the need for developing students' higher level thinking skills in effective learning environments (Aslan, 2010, 2017; Çerçi, 2018; Güzel, 2006; Eroğlu & Kuzu, 2014; Özbay, 2010; Sever, 2002). Thus, all these findings are considered to be inadequate and it is suggested that the learning outcomes of the curriculum should focus on four language skills holistically and on higher level learning skills a lot more.

In addition, learning outcomes of the curriculum were thought to be not appropriate to the level of students and their articulation is problematical by the teachers in the focus group interviews. Also, Considering the studies that show similar results in the literature (Aslan & Atik, 2018; Avşar & Mete 2018; Söylemez, 2018), it is important to prioritize studies to overcome these problems.

Despite the very low level of high-level skills in the learning outcomes, the positive opinions expressed by the teachers in the survey have revealed an inconsistent situation. At this point, it is thought that it would be meaningful to question the knowledge of teachers. It has been seen that a teacher (*Gaziantep-T3*), who participated in the focus group discussions and who gave a positive opinion about the subject, accepted the interpretation skill as a high-level skill that can be evaluated at the level of comprehension (her view is given above). Therefore, this finding indicates that there is a need to support teachers' knowledge about high-level skills and how to develop them.

Integrating the findings related to the content of the Turkish curriculum, it is seen that the curriculum gives some explanation about the selection of the content. The fact that the themes offered have only three compulsory and five elective one to be decided by coursebook writers is considered to be appropriate to the flexibility approach of the curriculum. But there is too much emphasis on coursebook in the explanations that the so-called flexibility seems to be to the coursebook writer, not to the teacher. Emphasizing coursebook as if it should be the only curriculum material is not appropriate. Instead, teachers should be encouraged to develop plans considering their students and choosing the texts themselves. It is also known that diversity of content facilitates retention and development of positive attitude towards learning (Akin & Çeçen, 2015; Aslan, 2010, 2011, 2016, 2017; Hayran, 2010; Saltık, 2018; Sever, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2011; Sever et al., 2011; Zorbaz, 2007). Interview and observation results of the study found out that teachers conducted their lessons based on the coursebooks and coursebooks have serious problems. For instance, it is stated that generally the texts in the coursebook do not change although the curriculum is updated; and same texts are used at different grades. Thus, the need for studies to eliminate these issues about the content of the curriculum and coursebooks is seen clearly. Subject matter experts state that coursebook cannot be sufficient as the only resource (Lüle-Mert, 2012; Sever, 2002, 2007a; Özbay, 2003), Turkish lessons should be designed as stimulus-rich teaching and learning process (Aslan, 2010, 2011, 2016, 2017; Sever, 2006, 2011, 2019), various child literature works (story, fairy tale, poem etc.) and newspaper and magazine articles that are appropriate to the texts in the coursebook, students' developmental level, interest and needs can be used in lessons.

Teaching-learning approach, method or technique to be used is not specified in the curriculum. It is stated that diversity and appropriateness to both learning outcomes and learners should be considered during the organization of teaching-learning process. Teachers' opinions at the survey showed that the activities in the coursebooks are appropriate to the learning outcomes of the curriculum. However, it is stated that there are some issues about appropriateness to the learners. These results coincide with Demirhan-Bal's (2019) study in terms of the consistence of activities and learning outcomes; and with Taş and Minaz's (2019) study in terms of not being organized appropriately to student-centered teaching and individual differences of students. Focus group interviews revealed that teachers underlined that the texts should be sequenced from easy to difficult and higher-level learning activities should be included in the coursebooks. In addition, observations showed that grammar teaching is popular at schools unlike the curriculum expectations. However, it is known that text-based approach should be adopted in grammar teaching along with four main language skills development (Aslan, 2016; Aslan, Doğan-Güldenoğlu, & Altuntaş, 2018; Çat & Kuzu, 2017; Dilidüzgün, 2009; Güneş, 2011; Hengirmen, 2007; Kurudayıoğlu, 2014; Sever et al., 2011; Temizkan, 2014; Yılmaz & Dilidüzgün, 2019). Thus, it is clearly important that teachers design lessons with activities that gives detection of grammar to the students, that make them reach the information themselves by asking leading questions and that make them inquire and internalize the functions of these information. Thus, it is suggested that teachers should provide students with stimulus-rich environment to encourage skill acquisition and active participation of students considering the diversity criteria of the curriculum.

Focus group interviews and observation results showed that use of various methods and techniques in the teaching and learning process is not sufficient. Based on the result that teachers were using mostly question-answer and lecture methods, it can be stated that practices for supporting four main language skills development in parallel in each lesson are not sufficient, too. In order to develop language skills, various stimula such as comics, picture, short film, video, animation, music, poster etc. should be involved in the lessons considering appropriateness to the text and the students (Akın & Çeçen, 2015; Aslan, 2010, 2011, 2016; Hayran, 2010; Saltık, 2018; Sever, 2007b, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2019; Sever et al., 2011; Zorbaz, 2007). Teachers can facilitate language skills development by making students share their feelings and ideas about these stimula. In addition, designing gamification activities related to the syllabus, development of narration skills and writing studies can be used in this process.

Measurement and evaluation approach of the curriculum supports the teacher to make decisions based on the individual differences among students. Just as the other curriculum elements, the curriculum underlines the diversity criteria about the approach, method and technique of measurement and evaluation. However, interview and observation results showed that teachers use the questions at the coursebook, their own questions similar to the ones at the coursebook or materials on the Internet. Because of coursebooks and central examination system, they can't rupture measurement of cognitive skills. However, Turkish lesson is based on skill development not knowledge acquisition (Aslan, 2010, 2016, 2017; Dilidüzgün, 2004; Kavcar et al., 2005; Sever, 1996, 2004a, 2004b, 2006, 2008; Sever et al., 2011; Ülper, 2010). In this regard, diversity of measurement and evaluation methods and evaluation of four language skills specifically becomes important. This result is thought to take its source basically from examination centered system and coursebooks that focus on reading and writing skills. Kıbrıs (2019) who evaluated the 5th-8th grade Turkish curriculum and coursebooks stated that there are less activities for speaking and listening skills. Similarly, Taş and Minaz (2019) concluded that individual differences were not considered in measurement and evaluation process and the

explanations in the curriculum about measurement and evaluation criteria, methods and techniques were not applicable in the given duration of the lesson.

When we consider all issues found out about the Turkish curriculum, it is seen that all of the curriculum elements are not specified, detailed explanation or examples are not offered in this new approach; but it has not been transferred into practice yet. It is clear that teachers could not adapt to the flexibility chance that requires more thinking and learning and that is different from the tradition they are used to. In this regard, teachers' adoption of this curriculum change and providing them with the support needed are highly important. And bringing forward the need on this issue is one of the most important results of this study.

Another important result of this research is that there are few teachers who is knowledgeable about the whole curriculum and using it. As it is stated, teachers' use of coursebook or yearly plans as curriculum is more common. This result mainly explains the practices different from curriculum encountered during the observations. Teachers prefer not to use curriculum for various reasons. Issues such as too often change of the curriculum, centralized curriculum preparation and teachers' perceptions as not having voice at curriculum development show the problems at the practice and the fact that teachers may be developing negative attitude towards curriculum. Thus, it is necessary to focus our attention to the voice of the teachers as curriculum implementers; support their understanding of, adoption of and belief in the curriculum and provide curriculum literacy studies to increase their participation at decision-making processes. In this regard, it is suggested that similar studies should be paid special attention and new studies can investigate teachers' opinions and in-class observations in wider range. In this context, it is thought that more in-depth data can be obtained through one-to-one interviews with teachers for all elements of the curriculum. Additionally, more detailed information about the reflections of the curriculum on practice can be obtained in future researches by keeping the lesson observation hours in the classroom longer. Increasing the number of schools is among the suggestions that can provide diversification of the data. Besides, it can be revealed what are the updated points of Turkish curricula, which are frequently updated and changed, with theoretical analysis. Then, how these changes affect classroom practices can be revealed through interviews and observations. In this way, it is thought that the functionality of these changes can be revealed in more detail.

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