

Readability of Texts in Textbooks in Teaching Turkish to Foreigners

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ABSTRACT Turkey's value has increased on the world stage through social, cultural, political and economic reforms recently and this fact has necessitated teaching Turkish. For this reason, private sector and universities are making every effort to professionalize language teaching through their own programs in Turkey. For this purpose, this article studies on examination of readability of texts in textbooks prepared by institutions teaching Turkish to foreigners in Turkey. As a result of the paper, in A1 level textbooks of Istanbul, Izmir and Yeni Hitit readability of texts was determined as elementary reading (easy level), readability of texts in *Turkish 1 For Foreigners* (Gazi University) textbooks was determined Intermediate reading. This paper reveals that more care should be taken in the selection of texts in textbooks *Turkish 1 For Foreigners*. From A2 level books, readability of texts of only Izmir textbook was assessed at elementary reading, readability of other textbooks was assessed at Intermediate reading. This paper shows that readability of texts is not suitable for student's level in A2 level textbooks Istanbul, Yeni Hitit and Turkish 1 for Foreigners.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of teaching Turkish to foreigners has become more important and gained momentum. Especially government policy to support teaching Turkish to foreigners has enabled many institutions and universities to do important work in this field. In the process, some universities have established Turkish Education Centers for foreigners and made a significant contribution to teaching Turkish to foreign students coming to Turkey through student exchange programs. As the issue of teaching Turkish to foreigners becomes important, diversity in course materials has begun to increase. Most important of these materials are textbooks. Ozbay (2003) has indicated that 94.4 percent of Turkish teachers used mostly textbooks in lessons and this revealed the importance of using textbooks. Considering that the most basic material is the textbook in teaching Turkish to foreigners, it is important that these books meet interests, needs and levels of the students and ensure effective and long-lasting learning. Therefore, more attention should be taken into consideration in the selection of reading texts and student's level should not be ignored. Texts must have certain basic criteria in order to encourage and improve student's cognitive and linguistic skills. The most important phase of these criteria is that reading texts should be readable and easy to understand.

Vocabulary contained in the text, the frequency of use of words, the length of phrases and sentences affects readability and understandability fundamentally. At this point, readability concept signifies that texts are easy or difficult to be understood by the reader (Atesman 1997). While difficult texts make reading and comprehension difficult, easy texts decrease the interest in reading (Temur 2003).

Readability, in the past, was usually used in correspondence with each of the institutions, military organizations and health companies; however, nowadays it has become a concept which is used by linguists and scientists and on which academic studies are carried (Goldbort 2001). Readability, emerged at the beginning of the 19th century in the United States and many studies on the readability of especially English, Spanish, German, French, Swedish, Japanese, Russian and Chinese texts have been conducted (Dubay 2004; Al Ajla et al. 2008). In those studies, the factors affecting readability have been identified (Al Ajla et al. 2008).

Ziriki says (2009) that readability is the easiness of a reading text which take its source from writing. It also thought to be the complexity level of a textbook related to a specific class in terms of reading. In other words, the understanding level of the students is highly dependent on the readability level of a book. Uchennah (2002) underlined the importance of readability especially

in vocabulary, difficulty and length of a sentence. He suggested that multifarious methods should be improved in order to make sure that learners link between the textbooks.

Gogus (1978) defined readability of a text as being read and understood by a student at a certain level, emphasizes that readability concept is the most fundamental concept in teaching reading because children and younger students can't read every text, even if they can read, they can't fully understand it. Klare (1963) defines readability concept as a situation where the whole of linguistic properties are more or less acceptable in a text. Rye (1982) signifies 11 factors affecting readability. These include children's skill and interest in reading syntax, sentence length, word length, word frequency, the importance of the subject, arrangement of text, the purpose of reading, column width and row spacing, print format and the physical setting.

Three basic approaches attract attention in determining readability of any text:

These include:

Expert opinion

Subtractive readability procedure

Readability formulas (Klare 1963). Especially, these formulas are more common as they are easy to use, objective and structured with a small number of variables.

As a result of studies on the readability of texts, many formulas have been created in order to determine readability of texts. These are as follows:

Dale-Chall Reading Ease formula, developed by Edgar Dale and Jeanne Chall, aims to determine the difficulty of texts through sentence length and unknown words contained in the text.

Sentence length: Number of words/sentence number.

Difficult word rate = (number of difficult words / remaining number of words) x 100 (Gunes 2000: 340).

McLaughlin "SMOG" formula published in 1969 is one of the easiest to use. First, a section of text containing 30 sentences is selected in application of the formula. Then the number of words containing three or more syllables is determined. Average number (N) is found (Johnson 2000; Solmaz 2009: 31). The following readability classification is done by putting figures into place in the equation:

Smog Classification = $3 + \sqrt{\text{number of polysyllabic words}}$

Reading age = (square root of N) + 8 years

Fry readability formula, based on the other readability formulas, has been developed to assess the readability level of English texts and reading scores of teaching tools of elementary and high school classes (Cetinkaya 2010). The formula was first used in 1969 to assess the level difference of elementary and high school. It was structured to evaluate university-level texts in 1977 (Dubay 2004: 44). The application of the formula is as follows: Three different sections each containing hundred words is taken from the related book. Syllables of all three citations are counted. In the final stage, the average sentence length and number of syllables are placed on a chart. The intersection of two points is marked. The marked area of the points shows the level of reading education.

There are two important elements in the Gunning's Fog Index published in 1952 by Gunning: These are the words with three or more syllables and the average number of words used in sentences. Words with three or more syllables are counted in a hundred-word section taken from the text, then the remainder is divided by the number of words and multiplied by 100 and then the percentage of words with three or more syllables is found. The percentage of three or more syllable-words and the average number of words are added together then multiplied by fog index (0.4). If the result is between 8 and 10 the text is considered easy, if more than 11 the text is considered difficult (Stone 1996; Gunes 2000: 340).

The Flesch Reading Ease Formula is one of the leading and most frequently used of all the formulas used to assess the readability level. It was published in 1948 by Rudolf Flesch. The application of the formula is as follows:

A 100-word section of the text is taken from the beginning, the length of words and phrases in this section are determined. The total number of syllables is divided by the total number of words in order to determine the length of words. The sentence length is obtained by dividing the total number of words by the total number of sentences.

Word length = Number of syllables / Number of words.

Sentence length = Number of words / Number of sentences (Karatay et al. 2013)

In Turkey, the first paper on readability formulas was made by Atesman. This formula is based on the length of Turkish words and phras-

es and applied on a 100-word section selected from text. This formula, based on the English Reading Ease Formula, was created by Flesch. Atesman (1997) adapted this formula into Turkish in the following way:

$$O.S. = 198.825 - 40.175 \times 1 - 2.610 \times 2$$

$\times 1$ = Average word length in syllables
 $\times 2$ = Average sentence length in words

Another formula, created after Atesman in 2010 by Uzun - Cetinkaya, is aimed at classifying and defining readability of Turkish Texts. The average word length and the average sentence length are used in this formula. The formula equation is as follows:

$$OP = 118.823 - 25.987 \times OSU - 0.971 \times OTU$$

OP = Readability score
 OTU = Average sentence length
 OSU = Average word length

Papers on Readability in Turkey

In Turkey, the first paper on readability was conducted in 1997 by Atesman. He created this formula by adapting the Flesch Readability Scale into Turkish. Atesman Formula is based on word and sentence length. After Atesman, the number of studies on readability has increased.

Another paper on readability of Children's Book Series, published by the Ministry of Education was conducted in 1996 by Gunes (2000). Gunes notes that only 40 out of 52 books of Children's Book Series were prepared according to the criteria of readability. According to Gunes (2003), short and simple sentences, used in textbooks, increase readability. As a result, short sentences are learned better than long sentences.

As a result of his paper conducted on the length of words and sentences of tales included in 1-8 grade Turkish textbooks, Zorbaz (2007) concluded that the length of words and sentences used in tales do not increase according to class-level and that the length of sentences and readability of texts vary slightly in sixth grade and that apart from this slight difference, there is no significant difference in classes.

Another paper was conducted in 2002 by Temur. In this paper, he aimed to assess readability by comparing texts of elementary fifth grade Turkish textbooks with compositions of students reading these textbooks. Temur used Atesman (1997) Readability Formula in his paper and concluded that the average readability of texts of

textbooks was higher than student's compositions but the difference was not significant.

Another paper on readability was conducted by Ciftci et al. (2007). This paper aimed at analyzing the length of words and sentences and readability of forty-six prose apart from poetry and drama texts studied in textbooks of elementary sixth grade. Flesch Readability Formula, adapted by Atesman, was used in this paper which indicated that readability level of narrative texts was higher than readability of informative texts since sentences of narrative texts were shorter.

Tekbiyik (2006) assessed high school physics textbooks through FOG test showing reading age. As a result, it was concluded that level of the textbook was high for student's age and this affected student's reading and interpretation of texts negatively.

Demir (2008), in his paper, entitled "an assessment of readability of texts of elementary seventh grade Turkish textbooks", used Flesch Readability Formula, adapted into Turkish by Atesman, and concluded that texts were very easy to read.

A paper, conducted in 2009 by Solmaz, aimed at determining the level and direction of relation between readability of texts and the variables such as the frequency of vocabulary use, the length of words and sentences in Turkish textbooks of fourth and fifth grade. The findings obtained from this paper can be summarized as follows: There is negative correlation ($r = -0.129$) between readability score and the average word-length; there is negative correlation ($r = -0.329$) between readability score and the average sentence-length; there is positive correlation ($r = 0.407$) between readability score and word-group but the correlation is not significant.

Temizyurek (2010) assessed readability of ten books selected out of a hundred books published by the Ministry of Education and concluded that there is no significant difference in the length of words but there is significant difference in the length of sentences.

"Classification and interpretation of readability of Turkish texts" was conducted by Cetinkaya (2010). This paper was aimed at determining correlations between readability of texts and the linguistic properties such as difficulty of vocabulary and syntactic complexity. As a result, readability of texts is classified and interpreted in the Table 1.

Another paper named “readability and comprehensibility of texts in Turkish textbooks” was conducted by Karatay (2013) and the others. In the paper, texts of 6th, 7th and 8th grade textbooks and expert opinions were analyzed through subtractive readability procedure. As a result, subtractive readability scores of texts, classified easy, medium and hard in difficulty by teachers, were consistent with 6th and 8th grade classes.

Okur and Ari (2013), in their paper named “readability of texts in 6th, 7th and 8th grade textbooks” analyzed narrative and informative texts in 15 Turkish textbooks by using Atesman (1997) and Uzun-Cetinkaya (2010) Formula. As a result, they concluded that texts of 6th, 7th and 8th grade were of medium difficulty but there was no increase in the number of easy texts from 6 to 8 classes, on the contrary the number of easy texts was more in 8th grade than in 7th grade. As a result of the inconsistent increases and decreases in difficulty of texts, they concluded that examination and evaluation criteria are not sufficient or the criteria are not complied with. Okur and the others (2013), in their paper, named “readability of texts in textbooks of 5th grade” analyzed readability of texts in textbooks of 5th grade by using Atesman (1997) and Uzun-Cetinkaya (2010) Formulas. As a result, they concluded that narrative texts were easier to read than informative texts.

Bagci and Unal (2013) examined the 56 texts contained in 8th Grade Turkish textbooks belonging to two different publishing houses in their paper called “Readability of Texts in 8th Grade Turkish Textbooks” according to Atesman (1997) and Cetinkaya - Uzun (2010) Formulas. As a result, it was determined that levels of most texts were of middle hardship (difficulty).

Yilmaz and Temiz (2014) examined the readability conditions of the texts in Yeni Hitit Turkish for Foreigners Textbook 1, 2, 3 in their paper called “Readability Conditions of Texts in Textbooks Used in Teaching Turkish to Foreigners”. In conclusion, the levels of the texts contained in Yeni Hitit Turkish for Foreigners Textbook 1, 2 were of middle hardship (difficulty) while the levels of the texts contained in Yeni Hitit Turkish for Foreigners Textbook 3 were difficult.

Aim of the Paper

The purpose of the paper is to analyze readability of texts in A1 - A2 level books prepared to teach Turkish to foreigners. Sub-problems of the paper;

What is the average word and sentence length of reading texts in A1 - A2 level books teaching Turkish to foreigners?

What is the readability level of reading texts in A1 - A2 level books prepared to teach Turkish to foreigners?

Importance of the Paper

Turkey’s value has increased on the world stage through social, cultural, political and economic reforms in recent years and this fact has necessitated teaching Turkish as a foreign language. For this reason, private sector and universities are making every effort to professionalize language teaching through their own programs in Turkey. For this purpose, textbooks are published and efforts are being put into overcoming deficiencies in this field by improving course materials. Especially, suitability of these books is important for beginner, Intermediate and advanced level students in order to provide more qualified, permanent and effective learning. For this purpose, this paper is the first one that analyzes readability of texts in books prepared by centers teaching Turkish to foreigners institutionally and that provides recommendations in this context.

METHODOLOGY

Relational scanning model, used for description of a situation that exists in its own terms, was used in the paper aimed at assessing readability of texts in textbooks teaching Turkish to foreigners. Relational scanning studies are the research designs that does not allow researcher to make any change in elements of the paper (Buyukozturk 2004).

Readability formula, created by Uzun-Cetinkaya (2010) by considering the differences between Turkish and English, was used in the paper. According to this formula;

First, words are counted. Numbers, symbols, words separated by a joining line and abbreviations are all considered to be words in calculation of the words. Sentences are counted. Dot (.), question mark (?), colon (:), and two brackets () are considered to be a complete sentence. Syllables, symbols and shapes are counted according to their pronunciation. For example, cm: 4 syllables, 1916: seven syllables

Average length of sentence is calculated by the following formula:

Average length of sentence = Total number of words / Total number of sentences

Average length of word is calculated by the following formula:

Average length of word = Total number of syllables / Total number of words

The formula is calculated:

OP= 118.823 – 25.987 x OSU – 0.971 x OTU

OP= readability score

OTU= average sentence length

OSU= average word length

OSU: The average word-length

OTU: The average sentence-length

UÇOP: Uzun-Cetinkaya readability score

“The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages”, published in 2001 and translated into Turkish by National Education Council of the Ministry of Education in 2009 aimed at providing a common framework in order to organize studies on language curricula, program guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages explains comprehensively what language learners should know to use the language in communication, what ability they should improve and what knowledge they should possess to gain proficiency in the language. In the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, under the heading “General Reading” a person at A1 level is considered capable of understanding short and simple texts by choosing basic phrases, familiar expressions, names and words and by rereading when necessary (The Ministry of Education 2009: 68).

Considering that A1 level books cover the period in which basic language skills can be acquired, readability of texts must be “Elementary Reading” (basic level). Table 2 shows that readability scores of texts in the first units of the books Istanbul, Izmir and Yeni Hitit (Ankara University) are “Elementary Reading” (easy level). The table shows that only the text in the book Turkish 1 for Foreigners (Gazi University) is “Intermediate Reading” (medium level).

Table 3 shows that texts in the second units of the books Istanbul, Izmir and Yeni Hitit (Ankara University) are “Elementary Reading”. The table shows that only the text in the book Turkish 1 for Foreigners (Gazi University) is “Intermediate Reading”. Table 4 shows that texts in the third units of the books Istanbul and Izmir are “Elementary Reading”. The table shows that textbooks in the books Yeni Hitit (Ankara University) and Turkish 1 for Foreigners (Gazi University) are “Intermediate Reading”.

Table 5 shows that readability of text in the fourth unit of only Izmir book is “Elementary Reading”. The table shows that texts in other books are “Intermediate Reading”. Table 6 shows that only readability of text in the fifth unit of the book “Yeni Hitit” (Ankara University) is “Elementary Reading”. The table shows that readability of texts in the other three books is “Intermediate Reading”.

Limitations

Ankara University (Yeni Hitit A1-A2 For Foreigners), Istanbul University Language Center (Istanbul A1-A2), Dokuz Eylul University Faculty of Language, Training and Research Center (Izmir A1-A2), Gazi University Turkish Education Research and Application Center (Turkish 1 For Foreigners) and 57 texts selected randomly from the books above.

Reliability

In order to ensure reliability of texts, selected from books that form the sample of the paper by Uzun-Cetinkaya Readability Formula, syllables, words and sentences were counted two times and even three times if any inconsistency was noticed in numbers.

RESULTS

In this section average word-length and sentence-length, readability scores by Uzun-Cetinkaya (2010) formula and difficulty of the analyzed texts selected from each unit of all textbooks teaching Turkish to foreigners were grouped and given in Table 1.

Table 1: Classification and interpretation of readability of Turkish texts (Uzun Cetinkaya 2010)

Readability score	Readability level	Class level
0-34	High level	10 th , 11 th , 12 th Class
35-50	Intermediate reading	8 th ve 9 th Class
51+	Elementary reading	5 th , 6 th , 7 th Class

Abbreviations and definitions used here are as follows:

Table 2: Teaching Turkish to foreigners A1 level readability level unit 1

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>OSU</i>	<i>OTU</i>	<i>UÇOP</i>	<i>Readability level</i>
1	Istanbul	2.2	2.72	58.93	Elementary reading
1	İzmir	2.06	2.5	62.87	Elementary reading
1	Yeni Hitit (Ank. Uni.)	2	2.63	64.29	Elementary reading
1	Yabancılar İçin Türkçe I (Gazi Uni.)	2.73	3.75	44.23	Intermediate reading

Table 3: Teaching Turkish to foreigners A1 level readability level unit 2

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>OSU</i>	<i>OTU</i>	<i>UÇOP</i>	<i>Readability level</i>
2	Istanbul	2.42	4.57	51.31	Elementary reading
2	Izmir	2.02	3.70	62.73	Elementary reading
2	Yeni Hitit (Ank. Uni.)	2.24	3.88	56.84	Elementary reading
2	Yabancılar İçin Türkçe I (Gazi Uni.)	2.76	3.29	43.74	Intermediate reading

Table 4: Teaching Turkish to foreigners A1 level readability level unit 3

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>OSU</i>	<i>OTU</i>	<i>UÇOP</i>	<i>Readability level</i>
3	Istanbul	2.48	3.27	51.20	Elementary reading
3	Izmir	2.14	6.66	56.74	Elementary reading
3	Yeni Hitit (Ank. Uni.)	2.76	6.06	41.21	Intermediate reading
3	Yabancılar İçin Türkçe I (Gazi Uni.)	2.56	4.87	47.56	Intermediate reading

Table 5: Teaching Turkish to foreigners A1 level readability level unit 4

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>OSU</i>	<i>OTU</i>	<i>UÇOP</i>	<i>Readability level</i>
4	Istanbul	2.5	4.31	49.66	Intermediate reading
4	Izmir	2.1	3.03	61.31	Elementary reading
4	Yeni Hitit (Ank. Uni.)	2.5	5.40	48.62	Intermediate reading
4	Yabancılar İçin Türkçe I (Gazi Uni.)	2.54	4.95	48.01	Intermediate reading

Table 6: Teaching Turkish to foreigners A1 level readability level unit 5

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>OSU</i>	<i>OTU</i>	<i>UÇOP</i>	<i>Readability level</i>
5	Istanbul	2.64	10.25	40.26	Intermediate reading
5	Izmir	2.57	4.65	47.52	Intermediate reading
5	Yeni Hitit (Ank. Uni.)	2.29	6.06	53.42	Elementary reading
5	Yabancılar İçin Türkçe I (Gazi Uni.)	2.43	5.63	50.20	Intermediate reading

Table 7 shows that readability of text in the sixth unit of the book “Turkish 1 for Foreigners” (Gazi University) is rated “Intermediate Reading”. The table shows that readability of texts in other books is “Elementary Reading”. Table 8 shows that in A1 level books unit seven is included only in the books “Izmir and Turkish 1 for Foreigners” (Gazi University). The table shows that unit 7 is not included in other books. The table shows that readability of texts in the seventh

unit of the book “Izmir” is rated “Elementary Reading” whereas readability is rated “Intermediate Reading” in the book “Tömer” (Gazi University). Table 9 shows that the eighth unit is included in the books “Izmir and Turkish 1 for Foreigners” (Gazi University). Readability of texts in units of both of these books is rated “Elementary Reading”.

General Reading section of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Table 7: Teaching Turkish to foreigners A1 level readability level unit 6

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>OSU</i>	<i>OTU</i>	<i>UÇOP</i>	<i>Readability level</i>
6	Istanbul	2.24	3.88	56.84	Elementary reading
6	Izmir	2.14	4	59.33	Elementary reading
6	Yeni Hitit (Ank. Uni.)	2.32	6.89	51.84	Elementary reading
6	Yabancılar İcin Türkçe I (Gazi Uni.)	2.6	5.49	45.92	Intermediate reading

Table 8: Teaching Turkish to foreigners A1 level readability level unit 7

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>OSU</i>	<i>OTU</i>	<i>UÇOP</i>	<i>Readability level</i>
7	Izmir	2.28	3.80	55.88	Elementary reading
7	Yabancılar İcin Türkçe I (Gazi Uni.)	2.66	7.14	42.76	Intermediate reading

Table 9: Teaching Turkish to foreigners A1 level readability level unit 8

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>OSU</i>	<i>OTU</i>	<i>UÇOP</i>	<i>Readability level</i>
8	Izmir	2.29	9.09	50.49	Elementary reading
8	Yabancılar İcin Türkçe I (Gazi Uni.)	2.43	3.57	52.20	Elementary reading

define an A2 level-person as follows: An A2 level-person is capable of understanding short and simple texts about the known and concrete issues, everyday or job-related language. An A2 level-person can understand short and simple texts that contain the most frequent words including some internationally used common words (The Ministry of Education 2009: 68). A2 level as well as A1 level are considered to be the level at which basic language skills are acquired. Teaching Turkish to foreigners at a basic level includes A1 - A2 level achievements in the Common European Framework of Reference for Lan-

guages. In this respect, readability level of texts in A2 level books should be almost identical to the level of A1 texts. In other words, readability level of texts in A1 and A2 level books should be mainly “Elementary Reading”.

Table 10 shows that readability level of texts selected from the first units of A2 level books is rated “Intermediate Reading” in the book Turkish 1 for Foreigners (Gazi University), while readability level of texts in the other three books is rated “Elementary Reading”. Table 11 shows that readability level of texts selected from the second unit of only Istanbul book is rated “El-

Table 10: Teaching Turkish to foreigners A2 level readability level unit 1

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>OSU</i>	<i>OTU</i>	<i>UÇOP</i>	<i>Readability level</i>
1	Istanbul	2.18	4.54	57.76	Elementary reading
1	Izmir	2.38	3.70	53.37	Elementary reading
1(7)	Yeni Hitit (Ank. Uni.)	2.16	3.73	59.06	Elementary reading
1 (9)	Yabancılar İcin Türkçe I (Gazi Uni.)	2.61	4.16	46.95	Intermediate reading

Table 11: Teaching Turkish to foreigners A2 level readability level unit 2

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>OSU</i>	<i>OTU</i>	<i>UÇOP</i>	<i>Readability level</i>
2	Istanbul	2.37	5.55	51.84	Elementary reading
2	Izmir	2.58	4.87	47.04	Intermediate reading
2 (8)	Yeni Hitit (Ank. Uni.)	2.42	6.25	49.86	Intermediate reading
2 (10)	Yabancılar İcin Türkçe I (Gazi Uni.)	2.45	8.88	46.52	Intermediate reading

elementary Reading”, readability level of texts in the other books is rated “Intermediate Reading”.

Table 12 shows that readability level of all analyzed texts, included in the third units of books, is rated “Intermediate Reading”. Table 13 shows that readability level of text selected from the fourth units of only Istanbul book is rated “Elementary Reading”, readability level of texts in the other books is rated “Intermediate Reading”. Table 14 shows that while readability level of texts included in the fifth unit of the books Istanbul and Turkish 1 for Foreigners (Gazi University) is rated “Intermediate Reading”, readability level of texts included in the fifth unit of the books Izmir and Yeni Hitit (Ankara University) is rated “Elementary Reading”.

Table 15 shows that while readability level of texts included in the sixth unit of the books Izmir and Turkish 1 for Foreigners (Gazi University) is rated “Elementary Reading”, readability level of texts in the other two books is rated “Intermediate Reading”. Table 16 shows while the seventh unit is available in the books Izmir and Turkish 1 for Foreigners (Gazi University), it is not available in other books. The table shows that while readability level of text in the seventh unit of Izmir book is rated “Elementary Reading”, readability level of text in the book Turkish 1 for Foreigners is rated “Intermediate Reading”. Table 17 shows that unit 8 is available only in Izmir book. Readability level of text, analysed in this unit, is rated “Elementary Reading”.

Table 13: Teaching Turkish to foreigners A2 level readability level unit 4

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>OSU</i>	<i>OTU</i>	<i>UÇOP</i>	<i>Readability level</i>
4	Istanbul	2.22	4.76	56.50	Elementary reading
4	Izmir	2.55	5.63	47.08	Intermediate reading
4 (10)	Yeni Hitit (Ank. Uni.)	2.69	6.15	42.94	Intermediate reading
4 (12)	Yabancılar İçin Türkçe I (Gazi Uni.)	2.66	6.55	43.33	Intermediate reading

Table 14: Teaching Turkish to foreigners A2 level readability level unit 5

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>OSU</i>	<i>OTU</i>	<i>UÇOP</i>	<i>Readability level</i>
5	Istanbul	2.84	5.23	39.94	Intermediate reading
5	Izmir	2.4	4.87	51.72	Elementary reading
5 (11)	Yeni Hitit (Ank. Uni.)	2.86	8.33	36.41	Elementary reading
5 (13)	Yabancılar İçin Türkçe I (Gazi Uni.)	2.6	6.66	44.79	Intermediate reading

Table 15: Teaching Turkish to foreigners A2 level readability level unit 6

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>OSU</i>	<i>OTU</i>	<i>UÇOP</i>	<i>Readability level</i>
6	Istanbul	2.76	3.55	43.65	Intermediate reading
6	Izmir	2.49	5.71	48.56	Elementary reading
6 (12)	Yeni Hitit (Ank. Uni.)	2.5	8.51	45.60	Intermediate reading
6 (14)	Yabancılar İçin Türkçe I (Gazi Uni.)	2.44	4.54	50.99	Elementary reading

Table 16: Teaching Turkish to foreigners A2 level readability level unit 7

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>OSU</i>	<i>OTU</i>	<i>UÇOP</i>	<i>Readability level</i>
7	Izmir	2.34	4	54.13	Elementary reading
7 (15)	Yabancılar İçin Türkçe I (Gazi Uni.)	2.69	4.54	44.50	Intermediate reading

Table 17: Teaching Turkish to foreigners A2 level readability unit 8

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>OSU</i>	<i>OTU</i>	<i>UÇOP</i>	<i>Readability level</i>
8	Izmir	2.29	5	54.45	Elementary reading

DISCUSSION

Readability level of texts in units of the books Izmir A1, Istanbul A1 and Hitit Yayınları (publishing) A1 (the first six units) is mainly “Elementary Reading”. As a result, it overlaps with what is required from an A1 level person according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages defines an A1 level person as follows: “An A1 level person can understand very short and simple texts by choosing expressions one by one, familiar names, words and basic phrases and reread them when necessary” (The Ministry of Education 2009: 68). The results obtained from those three books bear a resemblance to the readability paper conducted by Gunes (2000) over the Children’s Book Series published by the Ministry of Education in 1996 and the readability paper conducted by Yılmaz and Temiz (2014) over the texts contained in Yeni Hitit Turkish for Foreigners Textbook 1.

Gunes (2003) notes that short and simple sentences, used in textbooks, increase readability. He also emphasizes that short sentences are better learned. Readability level of texts in all units of the book Turkish 1 for Foreigners is rated “Intermediate Reading”. In addition, identification of readability level of all of the examined texts of units, included in the book “Turkish I for Foreigners (Gazi University)”, as Intermediate Reading” contrast with the statement “An A2 level person can understand short and simple texts of concrete and known issues about the frequently used everyday and job-related language and very short, simple texts that contain the most frequent words including some of the common words used internationally” which is required of an individual under the general heading “Reading” of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The more readable is a text the easier it is.

CONCLUSION

Readability of most of the texts (85 percent), analysed in Izmir A1 book, is “Elementary Reading” and it indicates that texts were selected carefully. Readability of more than the half of the texts (66.6 percent), analyzed in the book Istanbul A1, is “Elementary Reading” and it looks positive in terms of readability. Readability level

of four out of six units in the book Yeni Hitit A1-A2 (Ankara University), about 66.6 percent of the units, is rated “Elementary Reading” and looks positive. While readability level of texts in A1 level books is required to be “Elementary Reading”, readability of nearly all texts in the A1 level book Turkish 1 for Foreigners (Gazi University) is rated “Intermediate Reading”. It is a negative result and indicates that texts were not selected with care.

In the book Izmir A2, 62.5 percent of texts is “Elementary Reading” and 37.5 percent of texts is “Intermediate Reading”. As a result, it is positive in terms of distribution of the texts.

In the A2 level book Istanbul, while the number of “Elementary Reading” texts is required to be more than the number of “Intermediate Reading” texts, the texts are equal and it is a negative result in terms of readability.

In the A1-A2 level book Yeni Hitit (Ankara University), the number of “Intermediate Reading” texts is not required to be so high (66.6 percent). Therefore, it indicates that texts should be selected more carefully and more readable texts should be selected.

In the A2 level book Turkish 1 for Foreigners (Gazi University), namely about 85 percent of the units is rated “Intermediate Reading” and readability of the remaining one, namely about 15 percent of the units is rated “Elementary Reading”. The number of “Intermediate Reading” texts is not required to be so high. Therefore, it indicates that texts were not selected with care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the results, the following recommendations can be made:

Reading texts should be selected with care and readability of these texts should be analysed in the preparation of the books aimed at teaching Turkish to foreigners.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages should be taken into consideration in selection of texts for textbooks, especially achievements included under the general heading “Reading” of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages should be analysed and taken into consideration.

The paper should be conducted on the other levels of books teaching Turkish to foreigners, and results should be analyzed. Comprehensibility of texts should be analyzed in addition to

readability by conducting applied studies (such as subtractive readability procedure) on students and results, obtained through analysis of comprehensibility, should be assessed comparatively with the results of the paper since readability and comprehensibility are different things.

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