



Analysis of the Suitability of Reading Text Topics In Pilot 3-4 and New Turkish 3-4 Coursebooks Used In Teaching Turkish In Primary Schools In Germany For Mother Tongue Teaching

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Abstract: Teaching Turkish in primary schools in Germany is a multidimensional educational field that encompasses not only language transmission but also the process of preserving and developing students' cultural identities. In this context, the content and structural features of the reading texts in textbooks play a critical role in both students' language development and in strengthening their cultural awareness. This research aims to examine the reading texts in the Pilot 3-4 and New Turkish 3-4 textbooks used in Germany in terms of their subject content in order to understand this interaction. The main research question of the study is how and to what extent these texts support students' language skills and cultural awareness levels. In the study, which was conducted within the framework of a qualitative research approach, the texts in both book groups were systematically examined using the content analysis method. The findings show that daily life, cultural values, nature, and social themes are prominent in the texts. In addition, it was determined that the texts were appropriate to the students' language level, contained content that would interest them, and contained themes directly related to the cultural context. The research results reveal that teaching materials contribute not only to the language learning process but also to the development of higher-order cognitive skills such as critical thinking, analysis, and problem-solving. These materials, used in mother tongue classes in Germany, are described in the German literature as either "kompetenzorientiert" (competence-oriented) or "zielorientiert" (goal-oriented); significant differences are observed between old and new textbooks in this regard. It is particularly evident that the competency-based approach is prominent in new-generation textbooks. In this regard, the reading texts in Pilot 3, Pilot 4, New Turkish 3, and New Turkish 4 were determined to contain a combination of narrative, informative, and comparative content types.

Keywords: Mother tongue education; Textbook review; Educational materials; Bilingual education; Text types

Introduction

When teaching the mother tongue to Turks residing abroad, the primary objective is not to teach grammar. Instead, the focus is on cultural transmission and fostering identity. Studies in the field of language education—particularly those by Cummins (2001), Kramsch (1998), and Memiş (2016)—emphasize the importance of learning language alongside cultural elements. Traditional holidays, family structures, rural life scenes, and proverbs featured in textbooks serve as significant tools that help children maintain their connection to Turkish culture. However, presenting these cultural elements in overly traditional, past-oriented, or stereotypical ways may undermine the sense of reality for children living in modern European contexts and may lead to feelings of cultural dissonance among those developing hybrid identities (Bhabha, 1994).

The inclusion of cultural elements in textbook texts is essential. For Turkish children living in Germany, materials should be prepared with consideration of both Turkish and German cultures. As Banks (2009) also highlights, effective

mother tongue education requires a multidimensional instructional approach that encompasses not only linguistic proficiency but also cultural awareness. According to Memiş (2016), language and culture are inseparable; foreign language teaching inherently involves transmitting the culture of that language. Learning another language necessitates understanding the lifestyle and worldview of its speakers, which in turn enhances the retention of topics taught in class. Nevertheless, these textbooks should be periodically reviewed for their alignment with educational principles. In Turkish language classes for bilingual children in Germany, the textbooks *Pilot 3-4* and *Yeni Türkçe 3-4* are commonly used. These books predominantly feature elements of Turkish culture, including themes such as holidays, rural and urban life, national symbols, and folk narratives. Although this approach—aiming to transmit cultural elements through mother tongue instruction—is well-intentioned, it may be subject to critique within the framework of contemporary educational paradigms. The traditional lifestyles portrayed in Turkey differ significantly from the social and cultural experiences of children living in Germany. When cultural examples do not align with the lived experiences of the child, a disconnect may arise between the student and the text, making it difficult to establish emotional or cognitive engagement with the content.

For children with a migrant background, identity development is a dynamic process shaped by relationships across multiple domains of belonging and intercultural transitions. Anchoring textbook narratives and examples solely in a Turkey-centered cultural foundation may overlook the cultural diversity and interaction networks present in Germany. To help these children maintain ties with their cultural heritage while integrating into the society they live in, it is crucial to enrich narratives with hybridized content that blends both cultural structures. Language education should not only serve as a vehicle for transmitting past experiences but also facilitate understanding of the current social context and build an identity bridge toward the future. The types of texts included in *Pilot 3-4* and *Yeni Türkçe 3-4* textbooks carry pedagogical value. According to Vygotsky's (1978) cognitive theory, reading texts play a significant role in children's mental development. Different text types activate various modes of thinking: for instance, informational texts enhance analytical skills based on objective knowledge, while narrative texts support the understanding of cause-effect relationships and temporal sequencing (Bruner, 1996). The distribution of text types in textbooks should be balanced. Poems that stimulate imagination and dialogues reflecting everyday life should be incorporated. Relying on a single type of text may limit cognitive language learning (Tompkins, 2011).

The analysis of text types in the *Pilot* and *Yeni Türkçe* textbooks should be conducted not only in terms of language skill development but also with regard to their capacity to support students' cognitive abilities. A balanced distribution of text genres contributes significantly beyond enhancing reading proficiency; it fosters critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and deep analytical skills. Accordingly, the diversity of narrative structures in textbooks should be recognized as a fundamental component that directly nourishes students' cognitive development. In preparing mother tongue teaching materials for children with a migrant background, it is insufficient to consider only their linguistic proficiency. It is equally important to assess the extent to which the texts align with students' lived experiences. For Turkish students living in Germany, the ability of reading materials to establish meaningful connections with their daily practices, emotional experiences, and educational contexts is a key determinant of instructional effectiveness.

Content that fails to relate to multicultural living conditions may weaken students' engagement with the text and diminish their motivation to learn. According to the ecological systems theory, a child's development is shaped by the reciprocal interaction of multiple environmental systems ranging from the micro to the macro level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Texts that contain only cultural elements related to Turkey may hinder children living in Germany from forming natural connections between the text and their social environments. This can be explained through the concept of textual alienation: when a child finds no trace of themselves in a text, they may lose motivation to read (Freire, 1993). In these textbooks, events set in rural Turkey, traditional family structures, and one-dimensional cultural imagery are emphasized, while dynamics that directly affect the daily lives of Turkish children in Germany—such as bilingualism, multicultural classrooms, and integration processes—are often marginalized. This creates a theoretical and practical gap in reflecting the complexities of cultural identity construction and the multilayered processes of belonging experienced by migrant children.

As highlighted in educational research, presenting students with content that resonates with their own realities fosters positive attitudes toward learning, increases self-confidence, and enhances classroom participation (Gay, 2010). Therefore, the analysis of reading texts in Pilot and Yeni Türkçe textbooks should go beyond the representation of cultural elements to ensure contextual relevance and adopt a pedagogically inclusive approach. To achieve effective outcomes in mother tongue education, materials must be designed not only to reference the past but also to establish meaningful connections with current living conditions and future-oriented perspectives. In this regard, incorporating content that reflects the experiences of migrant children in Germany, supports multicultural structures, and aligns with students' lived realities is considered a key factor in enhancing the quality of instruction. In Germany, Turkish language teachers utilize various textbooks in their classes. These textbooks serve as primary instructional materials for students, making their use in lessons highly significant. According to Yalın (2010), the use of instructional materials engages multiple sensory modalities in the learning process, thereby creating a multimodal learning environment. The more intensely the senses are involved in learning, the faster the learning occurs and the more durable the knowledge becomes. Therefore, textbook selection should prioritize usefulness for students and ensure coverage of all four fundamental language skills. As Demirel (2011) notes, the retention rate of information varies depending on the method and number of senses involved: 10% through reading, 20% through listening, 30% through visual materials, 50% through combined visual and auditory input, 70% through verbal expression, and up to 90% through simultaneous doing and saying. Students must be able to comprehend what they read.

Demirel and Epçaçan (2012) also demonstrated that strategies used to improve students' reading comprehension skills have positive effects on both cognitive and affective levels. Research findings show that these strategies are more effective than traditional teaching methods in enhancing students' reading comprehension and self-efficacy perceptions. Moreover, strategies involving collaborative group work, question-and-answer sessions, and discussion activities significantly contribute to both cognitive and affective learning. In Pilot 3 and Pilot 4, each page is presented in Turkish and German. However, textbooks alone are not sufficient as instructional resources. To ensure knowledge retention, repetition through various supplementary materials is employed. "Information stored in short-term memory

disappears within 15–20 seconds if no processing occurs. Yet, through certain strategies and repetition, it can remain longer in short-term memory and be transferred to long-term memory” (Yalın, 2010, p. 87). Another noteworthy point is that the textbooks are structured according to content models defined in German literature as *Kompetenzorientiert* (competence-oriented) or *Zielorientiert* (goal-oriented). Older editions tend to emphasize goal-oriented approaches, while newer editions highlight competence-oriented perspectives. Competence-oriented textbooks focus on effectively utilizing students’ existing skills and abilities, whereas goal-oriented ones aim primarily at achieving specific outcomes. Some perspectives suggest that the inclusion of QR codes in textbooks offers a significant advantage by enabling quick access to information for both students and teachers. However, printing the books on glossy paper complicates photocopying, increases the weight of the books, and discourages students from carrying them regularly. As a result, students often leave the books at school, which in some cases eliminates the opportunity for review or repetition at home. Ponomariovienė, Jakavonytė-Staškuvienė and Torterat (2025), Competency-based education emphasizes the importance of enabling students to apply knowledge across diverse contexts rather than merely memorizing it. Scholars argue that individualizing the learning process and monitoring students’ development enhances their capacity for self-reflection and responsibility. In this model, not only the outcomes but also the learning process itself is subject to evaluation. As a result, students become active learners by understanding their own learning goals. As Yalın (2010, p. 87) notes, “Information stored in short-term memory disappears within 15–20 seconds if no processing occurs. However, through specific strategies and repetition, this information can remain longer in short-term memory and be transferred to long-term memory.” This insight underscores the need for instructional approaches that support cognitive retention through active engagement and strategic reinforcement.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive survey model, which is one of the research approaches aimed at portraying an existing or past situation as it is (Karasar, 2009). Through this model, the reading texts in the Pilot Türkçe 3-4 and Yeni Türkçe 3-4 textbooks—used in Turkish language instruction at primary schools in Germany—were evaluated in terms of their thematic content, alignment with student profiles and age groups, cultural relevance, and pedagogical principles. The study also qualifies as a case study.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of all Turkish language teaching materials used within the scope of the Turkish Language and Culture course in Germany. Although this population may vary depending on publishers or curricular programs, the study specifically targets Turkish language textbooks prepared by the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey for primary schools abroad. Instead of examining the entire population, a purposive sampling method was adopted, in line with the nature of qualitative research. The sample of the study comprises the Pilot Türkçe 3-4 and Yeni Türkçe 3-4 textbooks, which were officially prepared and distributed by the Ministry of National Education for Turkish students in Germany. The purposive sampling method was chosen to identify data sources most relevant to the research objectives (Patton, 2002). These textbook series were selected for their

representation of both traditional and contemporary instructional approaches. Only the reading texts (e.g., poems, stories, informational texts, dialogues) within these books were considered as units of analysis. Sections related to activities, visuals, or grammar were excluded from the scope of the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected using document analysis, a method that enables the systematic examination of written materials and is frequently employed in the evaluation of educational resources (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The reading texts in the textbooks were examined in detail, and their thematic categories, text types, level of cultural content, and degree of alignment with students' lived realities were classified according to predefined themes. In the classification process, theoretical frameworks and coding techniques recommended in the literature were adopted (Krippendorff, 2004). Based on the document review conducted on the selected textbooks, Pilot Türkçe 3 includes 19 reading texts, while Pilot Türkçe 4 contains 33. In addition to reading passages, both books feature short poems. The titles and themes of the reading texts in Pilot 3 and Pilot 4 are presented in tabular form in the findings section. Other textbooks used in primary schools include Yeni Türkçe 3 and Yeni Türkçe 4. The Yeni Türkçe 3 textbook comprises 28 reading texts, and Yeni Türkçe 4 contains 37. These books also include poems, songs, jokes, and riddles, which differ from the standard reading texts. The data collection process was carried out through a systematic examination of the reading texts in Pilot Türkçe 3–4 and Yeni Türkçe 3–4. Each text was coded according to a predefined analytical framework, and the resulting data were interpreted using the principles of qualitative content analysis. During this process, the stages of content analysis defined by Krippendorff (2004) were followed. Patterns across themes, frequency analyses, and contextual classifications of sample texts were conducted to ensure a comprehensive evaluation. This study is descriptive in nature and aims to portray the current situation. The findings were obtained through content analysis to assess the extent to which the textbooks respond to students' needs at structural, thematic, and contextual levels. Based on the results, the study offers recommendations for revisiting the mother tongue teaching materials prepared for Turkish students living in Germany, particularly in terms of cultural relevance, balance of text types, and pedagogical adequacy.

Findings and Discussion

Poems Found in Books as Reading Texts

Below are examples of poems found in books.

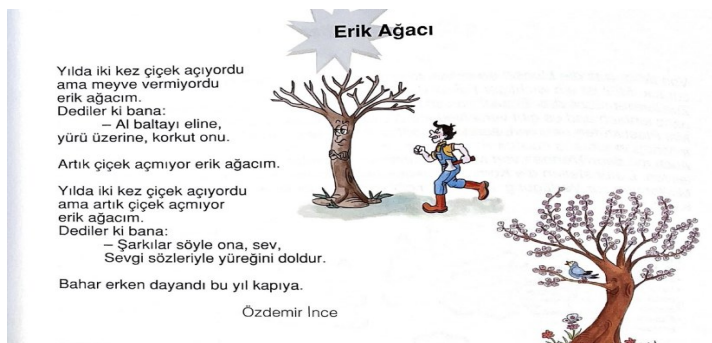


Figure 1. Examples of Poems in Pilot 4 Textbook

Erik Ağacı is a poem written in a simple and rhythmic style. Its formal characteristics make it particularly functional for Turkish-origin students living in Germany. On one hand, it introduces children to the aesthetic dimension of the Turkish language; on the other, its straightforward linguistic structure supports the development of reading and comprehension skills. The poem's short lines facilitate accessibility, especially for students with limited exposure to Turkish. In this respect, the poem serves as an approachable text type for both learners with low language proficiency and those at more advanced levels. Although the poem appears to be about a tree, it conveys a deeper emotional theme. The initial approach to a plum tree that does not blossom—expressed through the line “Take the axe in your hand, scare it”—reflects a mindset oriented toward achieving results through threat and coercion. However, in the subsequent lines, this attitude shifts toward affection: “Sing songs to it, love it.” This transformation reveals the effectiveness of approaching children with love rather than violence, and highlights the importance of patience and emotional awareness. While the plum tree is a nature element specific to Turkey, the narrative carries a universal message: approaching with love, hoping, and blooming again. Thus, the poem not only reflects a culturally specific symbol but also conveys universal human values that can resonate with children across different geographies. The hopeful tone of the line “Spring came early to the door this year,” which concludes the poem, offers emotional support to children facing various challenges during the migration process. Such content not only enhances linguistic skills but also provides psychosocial support. Therefore, the poem fulfills a pedagogical function beyond cultural heritage transmission. Özdemir İnce's Erik Ağacı is well-suited as a versatile educational material for Turkish language instruction in Germany. With its simple language, rhythmic structure, and universal message, it contributes to both the linguistic and emotional development of students. The poem not only narrates the blossoming of a tree but also conveys the transformative power of an approach grounded in hope, patience, and love. Its inclusion in textbooks is thus a pedagogically sound choice. According to Çevik (2017), selecting poems as literary texts in language instruction offers significant advantages in terms of both linguistic and cultural acquisition. Poems help expand students' vocabulary, enhance their aesthetic sensitivity, and facilitate emotional engagement. They are essential tools for the development of language, emotion, and conceptual understanding. Moreover, selecting poems in alignment with learning outcomes, themes, and student proficiency levels ensures a more effective and goal-oriented instructional process. Çevik emphasizes that poems not only teach linguistic structures but also serve as powerful instruments for transmitting national and cultural values.



Figure 2. Examples of Poems in Pilot 3 Textbook

The poem *Annem* is written in a classical, rhymed structure with a simple language typical of children's literature. The use of repetition not only enhances the poetic rhythm but also facilitates comprehension for students who experience reading difficulties or have limited proficiency in Turkish. For children in Germany learning Turkish as a second language, these repetitions support the cognitive internalization of vocabulary and grammatical structures. In this regard, the poem exemplifies texts that aim to foster both emotional engagement and vocabulary development in language instruction. Although the poem appears to express a child's affection for their mother, it carries significant messages in terms of values education. The mother figure is idealized through descriptors such as "sun-faced," "gold-hearted," "dignified," and "sweet-tongued." These portrayals convey not only an individual but also abstract values such as compassion, love, patience, peace, and security through the maternal figure. For Turkish children growing up in Germany, these values help them recognize their cultural heritage and understand the importance of familial relationships within Turkish culture. Moreover, the metaphorical reference to the mother as "the companion of angels" supports the development of metaphorical thinking and subtly touches upon religious-cultural codes. The surrounding illustrations—depicting a mother embracing her child, flowers, and gifts—reinforce the poem's theme and establish an emotional bridge between the text and the student. A child receiving Turkish education in Germany may perceive the poem not only as a literary piece but also as a celebration of Mother's Day or an expression of gratitude. This fosters identification with the text and allows the child to view Turkish not merely as a communicative tool but as a medium for emotional connection. Children of Turkish families living in Germany grow up in a bilingual environment, immersed in both German and Turkish. However, the emotional resonance of each language differs. This poem, in particular, enables the development of emotional expression through the mother tongue. Texts like *Annem* are important in showing children how to articulate their feelings in their native language. While German culture tends to emphasize individual-centered relationships, this poem highlights the collective and compassion-based nature of Turkish family structures.



Figure 3. Example of Poetry in the 4th New Turkish Textbook

Both poems are lyrical examples of emotion-centered children's literature, written in a simple and accessible style. Their short lines, clear meanings, and frequent repetitions make them comprehensible for early-level readers. For students in Germany learning Turkish as a second language, such poems facilitate emotional engagement while naturally enriching vocabulary. Expressions such as “my father whose hand is to be kissed,” “my protector,” “our sun,” and “the mountain I lean on” are metaphorical constructs that, while abstract, resonate directly with the child’s inner world. These metaphors contribute to both linguistic development and the introduction of abstract concepts. In both poems, the father figure is portrayed as strong, reassuring, protective, and guiding. This depiction reinforces the child’s sense of security within the family and idealizes the father-child relationship in a cultural context. The admiration expressed toward the father, the sense of emptiness in his absence, and the peace felt through his presence are central themes. For migrant children in Germany, the father figure represents not only a family member but also a carrier of cultural continuity and value transmission. Such texts help children develop awareness of their own familial experiences. Phrases like “my father whose hand is to be kissed” reflect culturally specific expressions of respect and authority, introducing children in Germany to Turkish norms of familial hierarchy. This enables them to recognize differences between the two cultures. While observing different family dynamics in German-speaking social environments, students are given the opportunity to engage with the Turkish value system through these poems. The metaphor “the mountain I lean on” symbolizes the father’s steadfastness, while “my protector” and “our sun” emphasize his nurturing and life-giving role. These metaphors support the development of abstract thinking skills in children. When selecting poems for Turkish language instruction, attention should be paid not only to thematic relevance but also to genre characteristics, intended learning outcomes, and the developmental level of students. Age-appropriate poems foster affection toward the mother tongue, encourage exploration of expressive richness, and help children articulate emotions and thoughts in artistic ways. As Çevik (2017) emphasizes, choosing poetry as a literary form in language education offers significant advantages in both linguistic and cultural acquisition. Poems enhance vocabulary, cultivate aesthetic sensitivity, and facilitate emotional connection. They are powerful tools for the development of language, emotion, and conceptual understanding. Moreover, selecting poems aligned with learning goals, themes, and student levels ensures a more effective and targeted instructional process.

Table 1

Evaluation of My Father Poem

Field	Contribution
Language Development	Simple structure + rhythm + repetition = facilitates acquisition of language patterns
Values Education	Themes of respect, responsibility, love, and trust within the family
Identity Formation	Embedding the Turkish family structure in the child’s mind through strong and positive imagery
Emotional Awareness	Verbal expression of paternal love helps children recognize and understand their emotions

The two poems titled Babam (My Father), featured in the Yeni Türkçe 4 textbook, offer emotionally, culturally, and linguistically rich content for migrant children learning Turkish. For students at the A1–A2 proficiency levels, these texts significantly contribute to the expression of emotions, understanding the roles of family members, internalizing values, and developing vocabulary. Karst's (2024) doctoral research demonstrates that poetry enhances children's linguistic production skills by supporting not only lexical and structural knowledge but also emotional expressiveness, social awareness, and the process of developing a personal voice. Conducted at the primary school level, this study confirms that poetry is an effective tool in language education, both pedagogically and socially

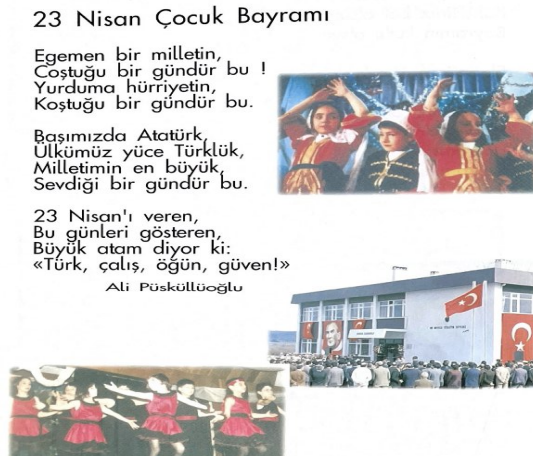


Figure 4. Example of Poetry in the 4th New Turkish Textbook

The poem 23 Nisan Çocuk Bayramı (April 23rd Children's Day) is a lyrical composition consisting of short quatrains with rhyme and meter. Its rhythmic structure, emphasized words, and repetitions make it highly suitable for activities involving oral reading, stress, and intonation. Such poems help children think in meaningful units, recognize emotions, and develop oral expression skills. For Turkish students living in Germany, the language level of the poem is highly appropriate. Although the poem uses simple language suitable for A1–A2 level learners, it introduces complex concepts such as sovereignty, nationhood, and freedom, thereby expanding the students' conceptual world. One of the poem's most prominent strengths is its contribution to the development of national identity awareness. Turkish children growing up in Germany access Turkish culture and history not only through family but also through educational materials. The poem centers on Atatürk's leadership, the significance of April 23rd, and the concept of independence. The line "The day when a sovereign nation rejoices" conveys that April 23rd is not merely a day of celebration, but a historically and socially significant turning point. The phrase "Turk, work, be proud, trust!" directly reflects Atatürk's message to children, fostering both a sense of historical connection and personal responsibility. Through this poem, children not only celebrate a national holiday but also reflect on its origins and meaning. While Turkish children in Germany often grow up immersed in German holidays, occasions like April 23rd are celebrated only in limited circles. This poem introduces students to the culture of national holidays in Turkey and strengthens their connection to their cultural roots. The line "It is the greatest and most beloved day of my nation" may help children feel a sense of belonging to the Turkish nation.

Additionally, the visuals accompanying the poem—such as flags, folk dances, and school celebrations—create collective memories of Turkey in the child’s visual imagination. This visual-poetic integration makes cultural transmission multidimensional. In classroom practice, the poem can be used in various ways: to teach values, to develop historical awareness, and to support rhythm and sound-based activities.

Table 2

April 23 Children's Day Poem

Value/Concept	Reflection in Poetry
Sovereignty	“This is the day a nation rejoices by the river Ege”
Leadership	“Atatürk leads us”
Love of Homeland	“This is the day freedom runs toward my homeland”
Sense of Duty	“Turk, work, be proud, trust”
Cultural Belonging	Emphasized through visuals of holiday celebrations and folk dances

Ali Püsküllüoğlu’s poem strengthens the sense of cultural belonging for Turkish-origin children living in Germany. It helps them grasp the historical significance of national holidays and encourages them to view Turkish not only as a language but also as a carrier of culture and a means of expression. The poem supports the internalization of the meaning behind April 23rd, a day gifted to children by Atatürk. It is not merely a commemorative text, but a medium for fostering cultural awareness and historical consciousness. For children growing up in Germany, it facilitates connection with Turkish cultural heritage and helps them make sense of this bond within their multi-layered identities. According to Karst (2024), poems are not only reflections of individual emotions but also texts that carry the cultural codes of the society in which they are produced. Through poetry, cultural values, norms, and identity elements are transmitted across generations. Therefore, poetry plays a functional role not only in language education but also in cultural transmission. Ritter (2019) notes that studies examining the contribution of poetry to language learning in primary education reveal its effectiveness in enhancing linguistic awareness, expanding vocabulary, and supporting creative expression skills. Moreover, these studies emphasize the distinction between language proficiency and literary comprehension, suggesting that poetry should be considered a multidimensional tool in language education. Research shows that interaction with literary texts—especially poetry—enables students to work flexibly and creatively with linguistic structures. The development of language skills is not limited to reading comprehension; aesthetic texts like poetry offer distinct and complementary learning domains. In this context, poetry supports both vocabulary enrichment and expressive abilities, deepening students’ language learning and allowing them to engage with the aesthetic dimension of literature. Therefore, the use of poetry in primary language education emerges as a valuable and promotable method.

Titles of Reading Texts in Textbooks

The Pilot 3 Turkish textbook contains 19 reading texts, including titles such as Arda’s School, Meeting of Alphabets, Stories from My Grandparents, Apple Sapling, Ali Baba Market, Little Yellow Leaf, Uncle Veli and Winter, Wishes

but Different Languages, Languages and Their Families, The Stork and the Farmer, The Cat and the Mouse, Keloğlan, Three Ball Story, Hans's Fortune, How Till Paid the Greedy Restaurateur, How We Came to Germany, Passport, Letter from Turkey, and Santa Claus. In addition to these, the textbook includes 23 poems/songs, 4 anecdotes, and short photo-based stories. The reading texts are generally categorized under six main themes:

- School and daily life
- Family and intergenerational relationships
- Environment and nature
- Language, culture, and identity
- Fairy tale and story characters
- Migration and biculturalism

While the content appears diverse on the surface, a detailed analysis reveals a dominant narrative style and a strong emphasis on Turkey-centered themes. The multicultural living environment, bilingualism, and integration processes experienced by Turkish primary school students in Germany are represented in only a few texts (e.g., How We Came to Germany, Passport, Letter from Turkey). Content focusing on language, identity, and migration holds high representational value, as it directly intersects with the lived experiences of students in Germany. Expanding these themes in textbooks would significantly enhance students' ability to form meaningful connections between their personal experiences and learning materials. Cultural representation in the texts is largely centered on Turkey. Traditional texts such as Keloğlan, Ali Baba Market, and Stories from My Grandparents are valuable for transmitting cultural heritage, but they do not align with the contemporary German context in which the children live. Migrant children grow up within hybrid identities—shaped by both Turkish and German cultural codes—and construct their sense of self through a dual developmental process. Therefore, it is essential to include more stories that focus on bicultural life experiences. Among the positive examples, the Santa Claus text stands out for its potential to foster intercultural awareness by featuring a figure from German culture. Such content not only supports the transmission of Turkish culture but also facilitates the integration process into German society. Text types play a critical role in children's cognitive development. Data from the textbook indicate a dominance of narrative genres (stories, fairy tales), while informative and comparative texts are limited. Genres such as dialogue, drama, and experiential writing are nearly absent, which restricts the development of higher-order cognitive skills such as critical thinking, cause-effect reasoning, comparison, and problem-solving. Increasing the number of knowledge-based texts like Languages and Their Families would benefit students by promoting both information acquisition and conceptual thinking. Given the varying language proficiency levels of children studying in Germany (A1, A2, B1, etc.), it is important to structure texts with graded language levels and simplified formats to ensure accessibility for learners at different stages.

Table 3

Evaluation of Pilot 3 Textbook Texts

Strong Aspects	Aspects Needing Improvement
Thematic Diversity	Limited representation of real-life experiences in Germany
Transmission of Cultural Heritage	Imbalanced portrayal of Turkish-German cultural dynamics
Partial Inclusion of Migration Theme	Few texts support critical thinking or provide informative content on

	migration
Use of Folktale and Narrative Genres	Lack of authentic contexts such as daily life, school settings, and peer relationships
Values from Turkish Culture	Absence of themes like work life, integration challenges, and identity conflict

The Pilot 4 Turkish textbook includes 33 reading texts, with titles such as People and Languages, The Child, the Wolf, the Sheep and the Lettuce, Our School, The Story of the Green Bicycle, Living Without Working, The Fisherman, How Should It Be?, Sports Festival, My Name is Penguin, Healthy Eating, My Mother, Mr. Hofer's Garden, At the Zoo, Karagöz and Hacivat, Book Hospital, The Mouse That Ate Cats, Little Black Fish, The Donkey That Reads Books, Sunny Field, Keloğlan on the Internet, Derin's Story, An Upside-Down Tale, I Love Anna, The Child and God, Birthday, Trash Everywhere, Where Does the Name Anatolia Come From?, From Germany to Turkey, Tea Everywhere, April 23 National Sovereignty and Children's Day, April 23 World Children's Day, Atatürk's Childhood, and Sugar Festival. In addition to these, the textbook contains 18 poems/songs, 3 anecdotes, and short photo-based stories. Compared to Pilot 3, Pilot 4 offers 14 more reading texts. While Pilot 3 focuses more on grammar and vocabulary instruction, Pilot 4 emphasizes the reinforcement of previously learned content. An analysis of the 33 reading titles reveals a broad thematic diversity. This variety presents a valuable opportunity to support the linguistic, cultural, and cognitive development of Turkish migrant children living in Germany. The texts are distributed across multiple domains, including:

- Values education
- Environmental awareness
- History and cultural heritage
- Humor and imagination
- Science and health
- Cultural identity and bilingualism
- Personal development and literary appreciation

This thematic richness allows students to engage with content that reflects both their cultural background and their lived experiences in a multicultural context. It also fosters critical thinking, emotional expression, and identity formation through exposure to diverse genres and perspectives.

Table 4

Evaluation of Pilot 3 Textbook Texts

Theme/Domain	Relevant Text Titles
Family and Close Relationships	My Mother, Birthday, I Love Anna, Derin's Story
Environmental and Health Awareness	Mr. Hofer's Garden, Sunny Field, Trash Everywhere, Healthy Eating
Cultural Identity / History	Atatürk's Childhood, April 23 National Sovereignty and Children's Day, Where Does the Name Anatolia Come From?, Preschool Teacher

Classical Works / Literature	The Little Black Fish, The Donkey Who Reads Books, Karagöz and Hacivat, Nasreddin Hodja, Book Hospital
Universal Values	Child and God, Empathy, People and Languages, How Should It Be?, Children's Rights, Wolf, Sheep, and Lettuce
Education and School	Our School, Story of the Green Bicycle, Sports Festival, April 23 World Children's Day
Animals and Nature	My Man Penguin, Mouse That Eats Cats, The Strongest Animal, Health Check
Humorous / Local Approaches	An Upside-Down Tale, Lessons from a Cat, I Love My Mom

Positive Aspects

- Presence of texts that promote intercultural awareness (e.g., From Germany to Turkey, People and Languages)
- Content aligned with modern life and children's realities (e.g., Keloğlan on the Internet, Derin's Story)
- Universal themes and values are represented (e.g., Little Black Fish, The Donkey That Reads Books)
- Titles that touch on the identities of bilingual children (e.g., I Love Anna)

Aspects That Require Improvement

- Most texts present a monolithic or Turkey-centered narrative.
- Issues such as bilingualism, migration, and identity—central to children living in Germany—are not directly addressed.
- Themes like April 23 and Atatürk are repeated in similar narratives; deeper and more varied content is needed.
- References to classic characters (e.g., Karagöz–Hacivat) may lack contextual relevance or informational depth.

From the perspective of children living in Germany, the texts in this list predominantly aim to transmit a Turkey-centered cultural narrative. The titles largely focus on national holidays, Turkish history, traditional characters, and local geography. However, unless this cultural transmission is meaningfully connected to the child's lived environment—namely Germany—it may weaken the relevance and emotional engagement of the content.

Table 5

Review of Pilot 3 Textbook Texts

Observation	Explanation
Thematic Diversity	The list offers rich and varied content
Transmission of Values	Core values such as family, culture, nature, and respect are addressed
Lack of Diaspora-Specific Content	Very few texts directly reflect the lived experiences of migrant children
Limited Engagement with German Context	Few texts include familiar, country-specific content related to life in Germany

Universal Perspective	Some texts address culturally neutral themes such as nature, language, and responsibility
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The inclusion of short stories centered on bilingualism is recommended. Selected texts may be adapted for comparative reading in two languages, facilitating cross-linguistic analysis. To support cultural comparison activities, guiding questions can be appended to the end of each text. Under the theme “Stories of Migrant Children,” excerpts from real-life experiences may be incorporated to foster authenticity and relevance. Lesson plans should also include activities related to the child’s immediate social environment, promoting contextual engagement. The Yeni Türkçe 3 textbook comprises the following reading text titles: Okul Bahçesindeki Kavgı, Ceza, Çorba, Laklak ve Liklik, Korku, Okumuş Karga, Pinokyo, Okunmayan Yazı, Küçük Kaplumbağa, Bilgisayar, Mikrop, Sevgili Anne ve Babalar, Köylü ile Falcı, Ak Tavuk ile Çilli Tavuk, Yalancı Masal, Acelen Eden, Su, Ormansız Yerin Öyküsü, Kaplumbağalar Betonu, Sevmez, Kuraklık, Öykülü Bir Türkü, Sünnet Düğünü, Çocuğun Düzelttiği Minare, Midye ile Martı, Keloğlan, Karnaval, Çiftçi ile Kartal, Atatürk.

The textbook contains 28 reading texts, 45 poems/songs, and 5 short comic stories. The majority of these texts convey moral, educational, and social messages. Some are structured in a folkloric or fantastical style, while others are grounded in everyday life experiences. Additionally, the texts address multifaceted themes such as nature-human relationships, technology, health, traditional structures, and individual values. For Turkish students residing in Germany, this thematic diversity offers significant enrichment. However, the functional value of the texts largely depends on the extent to which they align with the students’ lived social contexts.

Table 6

Topics of the New Turkish Textbook Texts

Theme/Field	Relevant Text Titles
Moral and Values Education	Punishment, The Tale of the Liar, The Impatient One, Unread Writing, The Child’s Test with Thought, The Villager and the Fox, The Farmer and the Eagle
Nature and Environmental Awareness	The Story of a Land Without Forests, Drought, Water, Turtles Don’t Like Concrete, The Mussel and the Seagull
Technology and Health	Computer, Microbe
Cultural and Traditional Elements	Circumcision Ceremony, A Songtelling Tale, Atatürk, Keloglan
Animal-Based Tales	White Hen and Speckled Hen, Little Turtle, Educated Crow, Stork and Cat, Fox and Luxury, Pinolyo
Family and Social Relationships	Dear Parents, The Smell in the Schoolyard, Carnival

Certain texts—such as Okunmayan Yazı, which require a high level of abstract thinking—necessitate pedagogical scaffolding to support students in meaning-making processes. Overall, the listed texts reflect a culturally centered perspective rooted in Turkey. Examples such as Atatürk, Keloğlan, Sünnet Düğünü, and Çiftçi ile Kartal serve as vehicles for transmitting traditional and national values specific to Turkish culture. These texts may contribute positively to the formation of cultural identity.

However, for children born and raised in Germany, the lack of content reflecting their lived experiences and supporting an intercultural perspective is notable. When texts do not align with the child's social reality, the process of constructing meaning becomes more difficult, and students may struggle to identify with the material.

If you'd like, I can help you develop a comparative framework or add references to support this analysis in an academic publication or teacher training module.

Strengths of the Textbook

- The inclusion of content addressing universal values (e.g., justice, patience, honesty, cooperation) enhances its appeal and educational relevance.
- Fairy tales featuring animal characters are structured in a way that captures children's interest effectively.
- Texts with themes related to nature and the environment play an important role in raising awareness about contemporary ecological issues.
- Cultural diversity is evident, with a blend of traditional narratives (Keloğlan, Sünnet Düğünü) and modern elements (Computer, Microbe).

Weaknesses of the Textbook

- The cultural context of children living in Germany (e.g., migrant identity, bilingualism, integration process) is almost entirely absent.
- Certain texts such as Punishment, Fight, and Fear require pedagogical sensitivity in their presentation due to the nature of their content.
- Texts like Circumcision Ceremony may necessitate explanatory framing when used in multicultural classroom settings in Europe.

Table 7

Topics of the Texts in the Modern Turkish 3 Coursebook

Type of Contribution	Gains Provided by Texts
Linguistic Development	Short, clear, narrative-driven texts suitable for vocabulary expansion
Values Education	Core values such as honesty, diligence, patience, and responsibility emphasized across stories
Thinking Skills	Some texts foster event analysis, cause-effect reasoning, and comparative thinking
Visual Comprehension	Use of animal figures and nature themes enhances conceptual understanding through imagery

The majority of the texts reflect values rooted in Turkish culture. This is significant for fostering a sense of cultural belonging among children living in Germany. However, for cultural transmission to be effective, the texts must establish a connection with the child's lived context, resonate with their personal experiences, and be open to comparative learning. For instance, the story Circumcision Ceremony may serve as a moment of cultural identification for the child. Yet, when paired with the question "How would a circumcision ceremony take place in Germany?", the text becomes far more meaningful and reflective. Most of the titles are simple and appropriate for learners at the A1–A2 level. Nevertheless, certain concepts within the texts may require clarification—such as concrete, microbe, fortune-telling, punishment, fear, circumcision, and the symbolic meaning of the eagle. This indicates that teacher guidance and explanatory activities are essential to ensure alignment with the students' level of comprehension. To support deeper engagement, bilingual (Turkish–German) discussion questions can be included at the end of each text. Reflective prompts such as "If you lived in Germany, how would this story unfold?" may foster critical thinking and intercultural awareness. Additionally, simple experiments or drawing activities can be integrated into lessons on contemporary themes such as Microbe, Computer, and Drought. Cultural concepts like Circumcision Ceremony, Minaret, and Fortune-teller may be supported through awareness-building activities (e.g., posters, presentations, interviews with family members). The Atatürk theme can be expanded beyond its cultural context by linking it to universal concepts such as "What makes a leader?"

Comic Reading Story Texts in Textbooks

Oduncu ile Dev



Oduncunun biri ormana gitmiş. Ormanda yaşlı, kocaman, kuru bir ağaç seçmiş. Bütün gücüyle bu ağacı kesmeye başlamış.



Oduncu terlemiş, yorulmuş. Ama koca ağacı kesmeyi başarmış. Koca ağaç yere serilmiş.

Oduncu, ağacın kovuğunda kocaman bir küp görünce, gözleri büyümüş, sevinmiş.



Figure 5. Example of a Comic Story Found in the New Turkish 3 Turkish Textbook

The reading texts in the Yeni Türkçe 4 textbook include the following titles: Our New Teacher, Education in Japan, Happy Pencil, School Fun, An Unforgettable Event, A Dog Learning German, I Experienced an Earthquake, The Mouse Family, Birthday, A Fun Source, The World Through an Ant's Eyes, Stranger, Alice in Wonderland, Hacivat and Karagöz, Keloğlan, Şıpsıp and Tıptıp, I Carry the Consequences Within Me, Aviation, What I Saw on the Moon, Bosphorus Bridge, How Soap Cleans Dirt, Generating Ideas, How Do Eskimos Live?, Elif at the Doctor, Examination, Gift, The Wolf and the Old Woman, The Gossiping Blackbird, The Fox and the Stork, The Dove and the Ant, The Little Quince Tree, Inverted Tulip, The Life-Saving Comma, One Hand Helps Another, Children Cause No Harm, Capital of the World's Children, and The Best Gift. The Yeni Türkçe 4 textbook contains 37 reading texts—more than its predecessor, Yeni Türkçe 3. It also includes 53 poems/songs and 8 short comic stories and anecdotes. These 37 texts exhibit a rich, diverse, and multilayered structure in terms of content. They incorporate both informative and narrative texts based on experiential storytelling. In this respect, the materials serve as valuable tools not only for language instruction but also for identity development, social awareness, and cultural belonging—particularly for Turkish children growing up in bilingual and multicultural environments in Germany.

Table 8

Topics of the Texts in Modern Turkish 4 Coursebooks

Theme/Type	Related Titles
Education - School Life	Our New Teacher, School Fun, An Unforgettable Event, Thought, Production, Happy Pencil
Intercultural Learning	Education in Japan, My German-Learning Dog, How Do Eskimos Live?, Capital of the World's Children
Scientific Conceptual Learning	How Does Soap Clean Dirt? Aviation, What I Saw on the Moon, The World Through an Ant's Eye, The Bosphorus Bridge, The Life-Saving Comma
Health eDaily Life	Elif at the Doctor's, Examination, I Experienced the Earthquake
Family-values	Birthday, Gift, The Best Gift, I Carry the Results Inside Me, Hand is Better Than Hand, Children Can't Be Harmed
Fairy Tale-Story-Fantastic	Alice in Wonderland, Keloglan, Hacivat and Karagöz, Şıpsıp and Tıptıp, The Wolf and the Old Woman, The Fox and the Stork, The Gossiping Blackbird, The Dove and the Ant
Nature and Animals	The Mouse Family, The Little Quince Tree, The Upside-Down Tulip, The Dove and the Ant, The Gossiping Hen
Social Communication	Stranger, Gift, Hand is Better Than Hand, Children Can't Be Harmed, Producing Thoughts

Areas for Improvement

- Many texts do not sufficiently align with the everyday life experiences of students born and raised in Germany.
- Themes such as migration, cultural identity conflict, and bilingualism—central to the lives of diaspora children—are largely absent.
- Traditional narratives like *The Wolf and the Old Woman* and *The Gossiping Blackbird* may feel distant or irrelevant to modern children unless adapted contextually.
- Abstract concepts in texts such as *What I Saw on the Moon* and *Aviation* should be reviewed and adjusted to suit the developmental level of the target age group.

Strengths

- The textbook includes titles that can promote bilingualism and intercultural awareness (e.g., *Education in Japan*, *A Dog Learning German*, *How Do Eskimos Live?*).
- Informative texts enhance both Turkish language development and conceptual understanding in children (e.g., *How Soap Cleans Dirt*, *What I Saw on the Moon*).
- Fantastical and narrative-based texts help sustain children's attention and make reading enjoyable.
- Values-based content fosters empathy, responsibility, and kindness in children (e.g., *One Hand Helps Another*, *I Carry the Consequences Within Me*).

This list presents a combination of traditional Turkish narratives and universal fairy tales, allowing children to remain open to both Turkish and global cultures. However, the number of texts that directly represent real-life experiences such as migration or growing up between two cultures remains limited. While texts like *A Dog Learning German* partially address this gap, there is a greater need for first-person narratives that reflect children's lived realities. Cultural comparison questions should be added to the end of texts. For example: “How do you think a doctor’s appointment works in Germany?” (from *Elif at the Doctor*). Context-specific concepts—such as circumcision, blackbird, medical examination, and Bosphorus Bridge—should be supported with explanatory visuals.

The list should be expanded with original texts that include themes of bilingualism and migration. Students should also be encouraged to write their own stories. Free writing activities such as “An event from my life” can be implemented for children living in Germany. Free writing allows students to express their thoughts and emotions independently, fostering creative thinking and idea generation. As students produce their own texts without external intervention, they strengthen their autonomous writing skills and generate richer, more meaningful, and detailed content. Moreover, free writing helps students develop a positive attitude toward writing, increasing their interest and motivation, and thereby boosting their self-confidence. This approach supports the transfer of learned knowledge to different contexts and contributes significantly to both language development and cognitive growth. In conclusion, free writing is an effective educational tool that promotes the multifaceted and lasting development of writing skills from an early age (Çapanoğlu & Sulak, 2023).



Figure 6. Examples of Jokes Found in the New Turkish 4 Turkish Books

Anecdotes are among the narrative genres that stand out for their brevity, striking structure, and thought-provoking humor. In anecdotes designed for children, the language is kept simple, and the humor typically relies on wordplay, semantic shifts, and reasoning patterns unique to the child's cognitive framework. The anecdotes presented in the textbook reflect these narrative features and are appropriately structured for the target age group.

For Turkish children living in Germany, such texts contribute not only to language development but also support meaning-making skills through humor. They help children recognize the flexibility of language and offer insights into culturally specific forms of humor. In this way, anecdotes serve as effective tools for fostering both linguistic competence and intercultural awareness.

Table 9

Themes of Jokes Found in the New Turkish 4 Turkish Books

Joke Title	Short Description	Pedagogical Contribution
Punishment	The teacher is assumed to give punishment for doing something, but it's actually for not doing homework	Encourages cause-effect reasoning and school-related humor

Riddle	Ayşe answers what a thief without legs cannot steal: the doorbell	Develops wordplay awareness, idiom-meaning connection, and humorous logic
Foreign Language	A dog meows like a cat; the child says the dog is speaking a foreign language	Promotes intercultural thinking, linguistic humor, and playful lexical interpretation
Half of Eight	The concept of “half of eight” is humorously interpreted as zero	Supports numerical abstraction, conceptual thinking, and awareness of symbolic representation

Points Requiring Attention

- Cultural references (e.g., a teacher giving punishment, local names such as Ayşe and Adil) may require clarification for children living in Germany.
- Some jokes in anecdotes rely on wordplay that may not have direct equivalents in German, potentially creating gaps in understanding for bilingual children.
- Concepts in the anecdote about punishment may be interpreted as incorrect or problematic by children without critical discussion (e.g., the notion of justice in punishment).

Anecdotes, with their concise and meaning-rich structure, stand out as an effective narrative genre for enhancing vocabulary and reinforcing grammatical structures in language education. However, when such content is presented solely as reading material in instructional resources—without sufficient pedagogical processing—it may lose its functional value in the eyes of students.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

While textbooks prepared in previous years were largely structured with a goal-oriented approach, recent publications increasingly emphasize competence-based frameworks. In competence-oriented materials, the integration of students' existing knowledge and skills into the learning process is prioritized, whereas goal-oriented textbooks focus on achieving predefined outcomes. QR codes embedded in textbooks facilitate direct access to digital content and are considered effective tools for improving information accessibility. However, the frequent use of glossy paper complicates photocopying and reduces portability due to the physical weight of the books.

Linguistic and Pedagogical Considerations

In terms of text content, it is important to recognize that the language proficiency of Turkish children living in Germany is generally lower than that of their peers in Turkey (grades 3 and 4). Consequently, the linguistic structure and vocabulary of some texts may exceed the students' current language capabilities. Instructional materials must be designed with clear and accessible content that aligns with students' actual language levels.

Otherwise, the difficulty of the texts may diminish students' motivation and hinder the intended learning outcomes. To enhance the effectiveness of reading materials, greater diversity in text types is needed, with increased inclusion of informative and analytical texts. In terms of cultural representation, a shift from nostalgic narratives toward contemporary and inclusive perspectives is recommended. Evaluating instructional materials should involve not only pedagogical criteria but also alignment with the students' sociocultural context.

Cultural Identity and Multilingual Realities

Reading texts in Turkish textbooks used in Germany have the potential to support both language development and cultural identity formation among students with migrant backgrounds. While these texts predominantly reflect cultural elements specific to Turkey, they often fail to adequately represent the multicultural experiences and everyday realities of children living in Germany. This gap makes it difficult for students to establish meaningful connections between the texts and their personal lives. Reconstructing content to reflect students' social environments, bilingual experiences, and sense of belonging would significantly enhance the quality of language acquisition. Literary genres such as fairy tales and folk narratives are valuable for fostering imagination, but the cultural elements within these genres must be adapted to align with contemporary life and student experiences. Pedagogically supported texts enable students to develop intercultural sensitivity and express themselves more effectively through both spoken and written language.

The Role of Anecdotes

Anecdotes, with their concise and impactful structure, serve as important tools in language instruction. They help children grasp wordplay, polysemy, and humor patterns, while also fostering critical thinking and abstraction skills. For bilingual children in Germany, anecdotes contribute to meaning-making through humor and facilitate the learning of cultural codes. However, differences in linguistic humor and cultural references necessitate teacher guidance. Therefore, anecdotal texts should be pedagogically supported and enriched through discussion and engaging activities to deepen comprehension.

Recommendations

Instructional materials designed to support the linguistic and cultural development of Turkish children living in Germany should be student-centered, flexible, and reflective of the multicultural social context. Textbooks must be tailored to students' age and language levels, incorporating core elements of Turkish culture in a balanced manner. Expanding thematic diversity will help make texts more engaging and relevant to students' interests.

In particular, narrative genres such as humor and anecdotes should be presented using appropriate pedagogical methods to enhance the meaningfulness of the learning process and increase student motivation. Future efforts should focus on developing materials that consider the bilingual experiences and evolving cultural identities of migrant children, ensuring pedagogical coherence and sociocultural relevance.

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