Poem Selection and Text Processing in Secondary School Turkish Textbooks

Ahmet Balcı*

Faculty of Education, Hatay Mustafa Kemal University, Tayfur Sokmen Campus Antakya-Hatay, Turkey
Corresponding author: Ahmet Balcı, E-mail: abalci@mku.edu.tr

ABSTRACT

Starting at the school level, language education develops comprehension and expression skills. It is important to develop literacy skills as it is the basic way of acquiring information. Native language textbooks created with a text-based approach are an integral part of this process. Accurate, qualified, and purposefully selected texts help achieve the objectives of language education, especially comprehension. In Turkey, the Turkish language courses offered in secondary schools to develop comprehension and expression skills aim to develop both the students' native language competencies and their higher-level cognitive skills such as critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation along with their language skills. Since its inception in 2019, the Turkish Curriculum limits the selection of texts for textbooks to a framework that represents informative, narrative, and poetic structures. Due to the scarcity of studies on poetry and its teaching process, this study aims to determine the general view of the teaching process of poems in secondary school Turkish textbooks. Additionally, the study examines all the textbooks to be used in secondary schools in Turkey in the 2022–2023 academic year. The research model is a basic qualitative research design, and data were collected through document analysis. The analysis concluded that course books attempted to make students understand the poems in middle school Turkish textbooks, especially with open-ended questions in the process of comprehension education, and were limited to investigating the meanings of unknown words, explaining the content, determining the subject and main emotion, and trying to recognize some figures of speech.

Key words: Turkish Language Education, Turkish Textbooks, Poetry

INTRODUCTION

Textbooks and Turkish Curriculum

Textbooks, which are the primary source book for a course, are one of the indispensable resources of the teaching process. They provide a wide range of opportunities for teachers and students, such as providing a suitable teaching environment, providing a systematic presentation of information, allowing repetition, and providing common and standardized information (Graves, 2000, p. 175). Textbooks are formally prepared in line with teaching objectives, which ensures that they are often preferred as the main teaching tool by both teachers and students in the classroom (Kılıç & Seven, 2006, pp. 34–44). As textbooks are the main course material, the elements that must be considered in the entire educational process also apply to textbooks. Compliance with the curriculum and cognitive level of the students and the systematic arrangement of the subjects by considering the principles of priority and sequentiality ensure the preparation of the right teaching materials.

All this attention affects language classes as well as other subjects. Activities prepared from a communicative perspective will positively affect the development of basic language skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing, and literacy) as well as grammar and vocabulary teaching (Tomlinson, 1998).

As in all subjects, well-prepared textbooks in language courses facilitate the achievement of the teaching objectives. The books prepared for teaching language courses are prepared with the perspective of primarily targeting the teaching of language skills instead of transferring knowledge. The development of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and literacy skills is primarily achieved through the texts selected for textbooks. The Turkish Curriculum, which was prepared for the teaching of Turkish lessons in primary and secondary schools in Turkey, was updated in 2019 and re-published by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE, 2019). In this curriculum, one can see that criteria, such as suitability to the theme, carrying literary and cultural value, selecting at most two texts from one author, using correct language in translated texts, the text carrying aesthetic value, and using correct language, are emphasized in the texts to be selected for secondary school Turkish textbooks. The criteria for selecting texts of different literary genres as sample texts

for different class levels was also determined. Among these genres, poetry has been identified as a genre that should be included in every class. Additionally, in the text structure classification to be selected for secondary school Turkish textbooks, poetry was determined as one of the three basic structures together with informative and narrative texts (MoNE, 2019, pp. 17–18). In the learning outcomes of the curriculum, the statements such as "Reads poetry," "Reads texts in accordance with the characteristics of the genre," "Identifies the figures of speech in the text," "Distinguishes text types," "Explains the formal features of poetry," and "Writes poetry" are the items related to poetry teaching. With these features, one can understand that poetry has an important place in the section on text structure in Turkish education presented in secondary schools in Turkey.

Poetry and Poetry Teaching

Poetry, one of the oldest known literary genres, has often been considered together with the concept of aesthetics. The first saying about literary theory, starting with Aristotle's *Poetics*, was about poetry being taken as an indicator of valorization. As poetry is a product of verbal art that is unique in its content and presentation, it stimulates emotions (Aksan, 1993, p. 8), and it contains important data in terms of the limits/limitlessness of language. Poetry is everywhere for all people, from graffiti to popular culture to the noblest artistic activities of life (Stibbs, 1981, p. 39). A rich imagination, a strong sense of rhythm, and harmony between content and sound have been the qualities expected from poetry as a genre.

The way poetry uses language and its technical features are different from other forms of literature (Özdemir, 1998, p. 163) and has directly affected its effectiveness. From a linguistic perspective, according to Jakobson (1960), this difference enables the emergence of the "poetic function" among the functions of language (Aksan, 1993, pp. 17–18). In particular, the harmony provided by the meter and repetition of sounds create a deep affectivity for the readers and listeners (Wellek & Varren, 1993, p. 134). The intensive use of imagery and metaphors distances the language of poetry from colloquial speech and adds new aesthetic richness. Poetry classifications such as lyric, pastoral, didactic, and epic are mainly about the content rather than quality. It is possible to see that these classifications are partially utilized in the teaching process. In language education, poems are frequently used to instill a love for the native language and to make students realize the richness of language expression. This richness is achieved especially through the intensity of meaning attributed to words in poetry (Günay, 2001, pp. 218–227). In this language education process, the suitability for the child's level, especially if the children are at an early age, the rhythm and meter, figures of speech, features of shapes, emotional value, and content of words (Huck et al., 2004, pp. 360–365) are the features that one should take into consideration. Tompkins (1998, pp. 432–475) mentions riddles, poems about emotions, poems about colors, poems about the five senses, acrostics, comparisons, poems of contrast, and descriptive poems as poems that children can read and write, whereas Russell (2005, pp. 178–182)

mentions two structures in the poems to be selected for children: those that basically adopt a narrative expression (narrative in verse, etc.) and lyrical poems. As it is a genre with different characteristics in terms of both language and technical features, poetry should be carefully emphasized in the teaching process. Its structure, which differs from other literary genres, also differentiates the elements to be considered in the process of teaching poetry. Poetry has a special place among the texts that are indispensable elements of language and literacy teaching. Therefore, the process of teaching poetry should also be appropriate to this special structure.

Carter (2012, p. 2) points out that the poetry structure is necessary at a young age to use imagery, rhythm, rhyme, personification, alliteration, or other structures. The predisposition to poetry and musicality, which is considered to be inherent in the child's nature, can be felt even in the sounds children make while crying and in the rhythm of their body movements. Language-teaching activities in schools at the basic level should start from the child's own language and the poetry that exists in children's language due to its harmonious structure should be supported with poetry texts. However, as in the case of the UK, textbooks predominantly include narrative and non-fiction texts (Carter, 2012, pp. 3–4). It is possible to say that a similar situation is also valid for Turkey.

Poetry should be evaluated in schools from a perspective that covers all basic language skills. Reading instructions should make the child feel the need to read poetry and should include a richness of imagery and words beyond simple sound repetition. Writing education should be freed from the constraint of filling in a purely prose-oriented activity. Listening to poetry, memorizing poems, including poetry books in reading habits, and combining poetry with drama, visual arts, and music will affect both the poetry- and language-teaching processes in general (Carter, 2012, pp. 4–5). However, a study conducted in the 1980s shows that teachers doubt their knowledge and teaching competence when it comes to poetry (Benton, 1999, p. 521). A similar situation was observed in the studies conducted on pre-service teachers in the following years (Hughes & Dymoke, 2011). Most of the pre-service teachers seem to have a negative perspective on poetry and teaching poetry.

The use of language in poetry is often seen as a departure from the standard accepted use of language. However, the use of language in unusual contexts is one of the most important components of the emergence of the language of literary poetry. The use of language in poetry with a semantic intensity reveals the difference and originality of the language of poetry (Khansir, 2012, pp. 241–243). Teachers also highlight this situation, and in the process of teaching poetry, they especially draw attention to the feature of this genre to make students realize the different possibilities of language (Benton, 1999, p. 524). Poetry is a genre in which content and emotional value can be conveyed in a remarkable manner (Prabhakar, 2021, p. 240). However, all this density of meaning does not change the fact that students have difficulty in analyzing the use of metaphorical language and symbolism of meaning in the poem (Wai & Abidin, 2020, p. 63).

Learning and reading poetry has benefits such as developing verbal language skills, increasing vocabulary, and making students aware of the uses of language. In addition to language skills, benefits such as learning values, developing learning styles, getting to know the world, and gaining writing awareness are frequently mentioned in the literature (Mulatsih, 2018, pp. 121–122). Poems can be utilized in the repeated reading method, which is frequently used, especially for students trying to develop fluent reading skills at the primary school level (Faver, 2008). Studies on not only children but also adult language teachers show that poetry-writing activities increase personal characteristics such as attention, intellectual level, attention to nuance, and the aesthetics of language (Cahnmann-Taylor et al., 2017). The characteristics of poetry as a genre can sometimes lead to negative attitudes in learning a second language. The richness of the meaning of the language used in poetry causes a decline in the poetry reading habits and attitudes of students who find their language skills insufficient. However, the fact that it is short and allows frequent repetition contributes to the development of vocabulary, critical thinking, and in-depth analysis skills (Wai & Abidin, 2020, pp. 56–59). It is also stated that teaching the imagery, symbolism, embedded figures, and richness of meaning in poetry with innovative methods instead of traditional teaching methods will increase the effectiveness and facilitate the teaching process. Newer techniques, such as the use of moving pictures, are more effective than the traditional word and image explanation process (Prabhakar, 2021, pp. 241–243). This way, one can plan a teaching process in which the student is more active than the teacher, and abstract thinking and discussion skills can be developed more easily. However, it is possible to make the same observations made in England (Carter, 2012, p.6) related to the selection of poetry with an instructive approach based on acrostics and themes and the fact that poets are rarely included in school activities in Turkey.

When the book sales rates in the UK and New Zealand were analyzed, findings such as the very low proportion of poetry books and scarcity of poetry-writing activities in general writing education in schools show the prevalence of the problems encountered with the poetry genre, although the countries are different. The problems identified are the insufficient use of poetry in the curriculum and teaching process and the scarcity of academic studies on the subject (especially experimental studies on poetry teaching) (Wilson, 2010, pp. 53–56). Several teachers associate poetry in the curriculum with the reading part of language education and make limited use of linguistic data in the writing instruction process (Wilson & Myhill, 2012, pp. 553–557). In addition to the scarcity of poetry in the teaching process, limiting it to reading comprehension also draws attention as a problem.

Poetry, as a genre, has distinct differences from other text types and structures. These differences manifest themselves in various ways. Text-vocalization studies, which do not make a significant difference in other literary genres, may have a special significance for poetry. Reading a poem aloud is one of the qualities that contains rules in itself and provides readers with aesthetic pleasure. For good vocalization, it is necessary to pay attention to features such as capturing the basic emotion in the poem, paying attention to punctuation, correct pronunciation, and intonation (Tamara & Merentek, 2019, p. 148). Similarly, Taylor (2005, pp. 190–192), who states that poetry teaching should start with vocalization to recognize harmony, believes that the contribution of metaphors to the language of poetry should be emphasized.

By its very nature, poetry has elements of harmony and musicality, the economical and versatile use of language and semantic richness, feeding the imagination and using images and symbols. Because of these qualities, poetry is seen as a riddle to be solved, and irony, semantic ambiguity, and metaphors are frequently emphasized in the teaching process of poems. However, people should focus the same amount on the beauty of multiple meanings, melody, and reflection in poetry (Whalley, 2017, pp. 226–229). This distinct and language-specific structure of poetry—especially with its shades of meaning, cultural and literary references, and rhythmic elements—causes it to be one of the most challenging genres to translate (Fishman, 2021, p. 120).

Acquiring literacy from an early age develops competencies such as enjoying reading, developing imagination, thinking about nature and life, gaining new experiences, gaining a perspective on human behavior, and recognizing universal values and elements (Huck, 1978 as cited in Habibi et al., 2018, p. 145).

Research Problem

Although poetry is one of the oldest literary genres, the limited academic studies on poetry teaching (Dressman & Faust, 2014, p. 40) paved the way for the creation of a theoretical infrastructure based on what experts in the field of children's literature say about children and poetry. Based on the statements of experts in the field of children's literature, it was highlighted that various preparatory work should be done to create a meaningful context in the first stage of the teaching process (such as forming associations with the content of the poem based on children's experiences). In the next stage, the oral presentation/reading of the poem according to the rules of poetry reading will also make the poetry language feel different. In the third stage, students' active participation in the teaching process should be ensured. Encouraging children to express their feelings about the poem, providing a suitable classroom environment for the activity, and teacher-guided small-group discussions and dialogs about the text will ensure active participation of students in the process. In the fourth stage, it should be ensured that the feelings, thoughts, and ideas in the text are explored without forgetting that teaching poetry is an aesthetic experience. Reflecting on the poem should be prioritized instead of exaggerated verse analysis or pay increased attention to the technical features of the poem. These elements should be included in the process to the extent that they support the meaning of the poem. In the last stage, the process of choral speaking, poetry writing, and associating poetry with other art forms (drama, etc.) (Shapiro, 1985, pp. 370–374) will make the teaching process more efficient.

Stibbs (1981, p. 40), referring specifically to the role of the teacher in the classroom, states that the teachers making

poetry a visible and audible tool in the classroom, starting from displaying it on the boards, will increase awareness. Instead of writing poetry in rushed and compressed periods of time, an approach that allows for correction and modification over a longer period of time is more accurate. The results show that very few teachers subscribe to literary magazines that include poetry. A teacher who reads poetry, who loves and writes poetry themselves, and who talks about poetry will make the teaching process much more effective (Stibbs, 1981, pp. 40–49). However, the fact that poetry has become the subject of curricula and examinations has sometimes led teachers to criticize the texts chosen for the teaching process as being too prescriptive, outdated, boring, and linguistically unrelatable for children (Benton, 2000, pp. 82–84).

In the process of teaching poetry, the method is as important as the text structure and the linguistic features required by the poetry genre. Instead of a traditional teacher-centered understanding of the lesson-teaching process, a communication-oriented approach that focuses on the active participation of the student would be more accurate. In particular, an instructional plan focusing on keywords and using pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading strategies will contribute both to a better understanding of the genre and to students' willingness participation in the lesson (Dutta, 2001). In this sense, it is important to teach the ability to convey emotions through poetry from an early age. However, it is also a well-known fact that teaching materials do not provide an accurate and gradualized poetry-writing education process. Techniques such as writing poetry based on painting and acrostics, writing poetry with complementary techniques will help capture the style of poetry (Habibi et al., 2018, pp. 146–147).

Beyond being a language-teaching material, poetry is also used for different teaching areas. Mccall (2004), in his study on teaching cultural diversity and social justice in social studies, states that poetry can be used for this purpose. A poem's brevity and powerful phrasing make it particularly effective in teaching controversial topics (pp. 172–173). The expressive narration facilitates the teaching process of the theme supported in the content. Additionally, information about the period in which the poem was written and the poet before reading the poem makes the teaching process more efficient, and giving students the opportunity to freely discuss and talk about their thoughts regarding the content of the poem facilitates comprehension (Mccall, 2004, pp. 174–175). In fact, current research shows that elements such as dance, which make the student active in the teaching process, contribute positively to meaning-making in the poetry reading and writing process (Jusslin & Höglund, 2021).

In her review of academic articles on poetry teaching between 1990 and 2015, Sigvardsson (2017) criticizes the lack of attention to this topic, especially in teacher education, due to the scarcity of studies and the threat of exams. Sigvardsson (2020) shows that although secondary school teachers have reservations about teaching poetry, they think that students should actively participate in the process. They also think that discussing students' thoughts regarding poetry, creating an appropriate classroom atmosphere, and supporting student interpretations will make the teaching process successful.

The Aim of the Study

The use of poetry texts in the process of language teaching is carried out through word, sentence, and text-level studies. At this stage, textbooks and the texts selected for these books gain importance. Two studies evaluating academic studies on Turkish textbooks in Turkey (Maden, 2021; Temizkan, 2021) show that Turkish textbook reviews have increased. However, in Turkey, although reviews mention some topics such as the characteristics of the texts in Turkish textbooks, selection criteria, and translation qualities, there are no detailed evaluations of the process of teaching poetry. In light of this information, this study aims to evaluate the selection of poetry texts and the activities prepared in the Turkish textbooks used in secondary schools in the 2022–2023 academic year.

METHOD

This study used a basic qualitative research design to examine the poetic texts in secondary school Turkish textbooks and the activities related to these texts. The basic qualitative design is used to conduct a qualitative study from an interpretive perspective, except for phenomenology, theory building, discourse analysis, or ethnographic research (Merriam, 2018, p. 22).

Materials Reviewed

This study analyzed all Turkish textbooks used in secondary schools (Grades 5th–8th) in Turkey in the 2022–2023 academic year. A total of 256 texts (3 reading texts and 1 free-reading text) across eight themes selected by the authors in accordance with the Turkish Curriculum were examined. Although activities covering comprehension and expression skills are prepared for reading texts in the textbooks, there are no activities for free-reading texts. In the review process, as the focus was on the poetry genre and the activities for teaching this genre, the study examined the comprehension activities, but other activities were also considered if they included instructions related to the poetry genre. The data were collected from the following eight Turkish textbooks: 5th-grade Turkish textbook (Çapraz Baran & Diren, 2020 - CB1 [Course Book]), 6th-grade Turkish textbook (Ceylan et al., 2021 - CB2), 6th-grade Turkish textbook (Sarıboyacı, 2021 - CB3), 6th-grade Turkish textbook (Ertürk et al., 2019 - CB4), 7th-grade Turkish textbook (Akgül et al., 2021 - CB5), 7th-grade Turkish textbook (Erkal & Erkal, 2019 - CB6), 7th-grade Turkish textbook (Kır et al., 2021 - CB7), and 8th-grade Turkish textbook (Eselioğlu et al., 2021 - CB8).

Data Collection and Analysis

The data were gathered using document analysis, which involves the process of evaluating written materials

containing data related to the research objectives (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021, p. 189). The data obtained in the research were analyzed by content analysis method.

FINDINGS

This section presents the findings obtained regarding the quality of the poetry texts in the textbooks used in Turkish lessons in the 2022–2023 academic year in secondary schools in Turkey and the activities prepared for these texts. The first textbook analyzed is the only one prepared for the fifth-grade and used throughout Turkey. Table 1 presents the poems selected for this book and the themes of the poems:

As can be seen in Table 1, there are no poetry texts on three themes in the textbook prepared for fifth graders. The four poems are texts that are targeted to be taught in classrooms through activities. Two of the poems were selected as free-reading texts for students to read additional literature related to the theme. The poets of these texts are Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı, Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca, and Orhan Veli Kanık, three well-known poets in Turkey who have become classics in Turkish literature. The fourth poet in the book is Nimetullah Hafız, a native Turkish poet from Kosovo.

The poem "Memleket İsterim (I Want a Country)" deals with the dream of a happy, peaceful country. The activities of this text contained three open-ended questions and questions to analyze the text content. One open-ended question asks whether the reader agrees or disagrees with the poet's views on a given passage in the text. The questions about the main emotion and subject of the poem were in the form of open-ended questions. The activity related to word studies in poetry tries to draw attention to the metaphorical use of language by asking whether the words in the given lines were used in their first meaning. In another activity, students were asked for their opinions about the lines they found to be exaggerated in the poem.

The poem written by Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca deals with the theme of heroism. For this poem, in which one's willingness to fight for their homeland is praised, the activities were mostly organized as open-ended questions. There were questions about the "main emotion" of the poem and the meaning of the poem's content, including questions on the explanation of the person's behavior. Additionally, there was an activity that aimed to have readers find the figures

of speech of personification and anthropomorphism without using the specific name of the figure of speech.

The poem "Kilim (Rug)," the lyrics of a popular song in Turkey in the 1990s, is written in syllabic meter. Questions similar to those in the other activities in this textbook were prepared for the poem containing the meanings attributed to the "rug" woven by hand in Turkish culture. The vocabulary exercise here, which is present in almost all texts, has a directive to find the meanings of unknown words with the help of a dictionary. The second activity comprises six open-ended questions, of which five questions were directly related to the explanation of the text content and one was related to what kind of title would be used if the title were to be changed. The objective here is to determine the appropriate and relevant title by identifying the text content correctly. In the third activity, by asking what the "rug" is likened to in the poem, the aim was both to understand the text and to make readers realize the "simile," one of the frequently used figures of speech in poetry. After an example of a prose provided to make students feel the difference between poetry and prose in terms of form and genre features, the instruction "Compare the following text with the text you have read in terms of genre and form features" aims to have the readers find the structural differences of the poems.

The last poem in the fifth-grade Turkish textbook is a didactic/instructive poem titled "Bilinçli Tüketici (Conscious Consumer)." The open-ended questions ask about conscious consumer behaviors, the meaning of unknown words, and the message in the poem's content. In the fifth-grade textbook, Nimetullah Hafız's poem "Yarın Gene Sabah Olacak (Tomorrow It Will Be Morning Again)" with the theme of "hope" and Orhan Veli Kanık's poem "Çiftçi ile Çocuklar (The Farmer and His Children)" as a narrative in verse were selected as free-reading texts.

At the sixth-grade level in secondary schools, three textbooks were used in different provinces of Turkey in the 2022–2023 academic year. One of these books was published by Ata Publishing (Sarıboyacı, 2021). Table 2 details the poems used in this book and the themes of these poems.

As seen in Table 2, four of the texts selected as samples for the poetry genre in this textbook prepared for sixth graders are free-reading texts. The poems titled "Yaştan Gileyliyim," "Bebeklerin Ulusu Yok," "Ay Şairi," and "Sağlığına Dikkat Et" were selected not as teaching materials in the classroom

Table 1. Anıttepe publishing fifth grade textbook (çapraz baran & diren, 2020)

Theme	Poet	Poem	Reading Text/Additional Reading Text
Individual and Society	Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı	Memleket İsterim	Reading Text
Independence War and Atatürk	Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca	Mustafa Kemal'in Kağnısı	Reading Text
Nature and Universe	Nimetullah Hafız	Yarın Gene Sabah Olacak	Additional Reading Text
Our National Culture	Fatih Kısaparmak	Kilim	Reading Text
Citizenship	Dursun Bulut	Bilinçli Tüketici	Reading Text
	Orhan Veli Kanık	Çiftçi ile Çocukları	Additional Reading Text
Health and Sports	-	-	-
Virtues	-	-	-
Science and Technology	-	-	-

Table 2. Ata Publishing sixth grade textbook (Sarıboyacı, 2021)

Theme	Poet	Poem	Reading Text/Additional Reading Text
Virtues	Bahtiyar Vahapzâde	Yaştan Gileyliyim	Additional Reading Text
Individual and Society	La Fontaine	Aslanla Fare (Trans. Sabahattin Eyüboğlu)	Reading Text
	Ataol Behramoğlu	Bebeklerin Ulusu Yok	Additional Reading Text
Independence War and Atatürk	Süleyman Özbek	Ben Mustafa Kemal'im	Reading Text
Our National Culture	-	-	-
Nature and Universe	Cahit Külebi	Rüzgar	Reading Text
Art	Aytül Akal	Ay Şairi	Additional Reading Text
Science and Technology	-	-	-
Health and Sports	Arife Hancı	Sağlığına Dikkat Et	Additional Reading Text

but as free-reading materials for students to read outside of class. The poem "Yaştan Gileyliyim" belongs to Azerbaijani poet Bahtiyar Vahapzade. In this poem written in Azerbaijani Turkish, a close dialect of Turkey Turkish, the original expressions of the poem were preserved and there was no translation. Hence, there are no activities related to these poems that include text processing in the classroom. There are only three texts that teachers can use in the classroom for teaching poetry over the course of a year. Among these texts, although it shows the characteristics of poetry, J. de La Fontaine's "Aslanla Fare (The Lion and the Mouse)" is a fable and has been translated into Turkish. Considering the difficulty of the language of poetry, the preference for a translated text may also lead to a departure from poetic expression. In this text, which presents the significance of cooperation and that everyone can support each other, the activities are organized with questions about the subject, main emotion, content explanation questions for the text, and questions to find the meaning of unknown words. The questions aimed at having readers comprehend the event-oriented fable genre instead of the characteristics of the poetry genre cover a significant portion of the activities. There are questions about the figures of speech of personification and anthropomorphism, which are frequently used in the fable genre, and the rhetoric of contrast.

The poem "Ben Mustafa Kemal'im (I am Mustafa Kemal)" is about Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, and about Atatürk's love. Although many activities were prepared for the poem in which the subject was one's love for their homeland and love for Atatürk, these activities did not go beyond finding the meanings of unknown words and asking the students to explain the content of the text with open-ended questions. A similar situation applies to Cahit Külebi's poem "Rüzgâr (Wind)." The activities prepared are mainly questions aimed at finding the meaning of unknown words and explaining the content. Unlike the other poems, the sixth activity in this poem asks readers to find the sound similarities at the end of the lines. This enables students to find the "redif" and "rhymes," the definitions of which are given in the book. Drawing attention to the repetition of sounds, which is one of the most important elements of harmony in poetry, is important in terms of comprehending the genre.

Another book for sixth graders used in secondary schools in Turkey was prepared by the Ministry of National Education (Ertürk et al., 2021). Table 3 presents information about the poems selected for this book.

The sixth-grade textbook prepared by Ertürk et al. (2021) contains only three poems. There are no poems in the free-reading texts in this textbook. The poem "Memleket İsterim (I Want a Country)" is a poem written in free verse consisting of four tercets. The text on the theme of longing for a happy and peaceful country is similar to the previous books in terms of the teaching process. The activities prepared for this poem first ask readers to guess the meanings of the unfamiliar words; the activities then require the readers to write the theme and main emotion along with the meaning of the lines with open-ended questions. One of these questions is whether the language used in the poem is fluent and comprehensible. A question was also included for readers to find the figure of speech of contrast in the poem.

The second poem in the textbook is "Bu Vatan Kimin? (Whose Homeland is this?)," which is considered a classic example of one's love of the flag in Turkish literature. The poem comprises six quatrains and is written using a syllabic meter. Vocabulary practices, which are primarily seen in almost all Turkish textbooks, appear in this text. There is an activity in the form of a puzzle about words with unknown meanings. The second activity contains five open-ended questions for the comprehension of the content of the poem. The activities contained open-ended questions to determine the theme and main emotion of the poem with similes. In addition to these questions, there was a question that included a verse from another poem and its aim was to make readers feel the difference in emotion in the poems.

The last poem in the textbook, "Çocukluk (Childhood)," is also in free verse. The activities prepared for the poem about longing for childhood days do not differ from the previous activities. There are questions for finding the meaning of unknown words through matching, open-ended questions to determine the content and the main emotion of the poem. Asking the children to find a different title for the poem using the figure of speech of "hyperbole" is another answer requested from the children.

The last book approved for use in the 2022–2023 school year for sixth graders is also published by the Ministry of National Education (Table 4).

Table 3. Ministry of education publishing sixth grade textbook (Ertürk et al., 2021)

Theme	Poet	Poem	Reading Text/ Additional Reading Text
Feelings	Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı	Memleket İsterim	Reading Text
Independence War and Atatürk	Orhan Şaik Gökyay	Bu Vatan Kimin?	Reading Text
Children's World	Cevdet Kudret Solok	Çocukluk	Reading Text
Virtues	-	-	-
Our National Culture	-	-	-
Reading Culture	-	-	-
Science and Technology	-	-	-
Communication	-	-	-

Table 4. Ministry of education publishing sixth grade textbook (Ceylan et al., 2021)

Theme	Poet	Poem	Reading Text/ Additional Reading Text
Reading Culture	Yusuf Yanç	Arıyorum	Reading Text
Independence War and Atatürk	-	-	-
Science and Technology	-	-	-
Virtues	Bestami Yazgan	Sevgi Diyen Çağlar Aşar	Reading Text
Nature and Universe	-	-	-
Our National Culture	Rıza Tevfik Bölükbaşı	Anadolu	Reading Text
	Bahtiyar Vahapzade	Ana Dili	Reading Text
	Halit Fahri Ozansoy	Vatan Destanı	Additional Reading Text
Health and Sports	-	-	-
Individual and Society	-	-	-

As seen in Table 4, four poems were selected as reading texts in this book. A poem titled "Vatan Destanı (Homeland Epic)" was selected as a free-reading text. The first poem titled "Arıyorum (I Am Searching)" is written in free verse. The text, which is about the theme of Turkish awareness and love for the mother tongue, started with an activity that asks readers to find the meanings of words and phrases with unknown meanings through matching. The rest of the activities had six open-ended questions about the content of the text for the students to understand and explain the poem. Another activity related to the poetry genre asked students to write a poem about one's love for their mother tongue.

The second poem selected for this textbook is Bestami Yazgan's "Sevgi Diyen Çağlar Aşar (Love Transcends the Ages)." The poem consists of five quatrains and is written using a syllabic meter. For this text, which emphasizes the theme of "love," there are open-ended questions about guessing the meanings of unknown words and explaining the lines. One of the activity instructions asked students to prepare two questions about the poem to ask their friends. For another activity, a quatrain taken from a poem was rewritten in prose and readers were asked to find the differences between the two texts. Although the scarcity of such activities aimed at finding the difference between the language used in poetry and prose is a general problem, this textbook draws attention to this fact for the first time.

The poem "Anadolu (Anatolia)" consists of nine quatrains. The poem, written using a syllabic meter, expresses one's love for Turkey/their homeland. Similar to the activities prepared for the previous poems, this textbook includes vocabulary exercises, two-question writing activities about the poem to ask classmates, and open-ended questions to explain the content. The questions asking students to explain the connection between the content of the poem and the visuals used in the textbook and the questions asking students to explain the poem–title relation stand out as activities that we did not encounter in previous poems. Additionally, through two examples, the activities tried to make readers find the difference between the use of pseudonyms (of poets), which were frequently encountered in Turkish poetry in previous centuries, and rhyme and redif. These studies are important in terms of having readers recognize the local usage specific to the poem and the elements of harmony in it. The last reading text with activities in this textbook is titled "Ana Dili (Mother Tongue)." Word-meaning matching questions in a poem written in free verse in six quatrains, open-ended questions aimed at interpreting the content, and asking to find the main emotion in the poem are activities that we frequently encounter in different textbooks. In addition to these instructions, students were also asked to write an acrostic poem about "Turkey" in the activities related to this poem. The goal of the activity was to teach "acrostic" as an element that is used in poetry and that complements narration.

In Turkey, there are three Turkish textbooks approved by the Ministry of National Education for use in seventh grade. The first of these is among the publications of the Ministry of National Education. Table 5 presents information about the poems in this book.

Three poems were selected as reading texts in the Turkish textbook used in the seventh grade. Bahtiyar Vahapzade's

Table 5. Ministry of education publishing seventh grade textbook (Kır et al., 2021)

Theme	Poet	Poem	Reading Text/ Additional Reading Text
Feelings	Coşkun Ertepınar	Bir Dünya Düşünürüm	Reading Text
	Bahtiyar Vahapzade	Korku	Additional Reading Text
Independence War and Atatürk	Abdullah Rıza Ergüven	Atatürk'ü Gördüm Düşümde	Reading Text
Reading Culture	Coşkun Ertepınar	Kitaplarla Kurulan Dostluk	Reading Text
Virtues	-	-	-
Self-improvement	-	-	-
Our National Culture	Orhan Veli Kanık	"Peşin Para, Yoğurt Gölü"	Additional Reading Text
Health and Sports	-	-	-
Art	-	-	-

poem "Korku (Fear)" and Orhan Veli Kanık's two poetic tales titled "Peşin Para (Cash Money)" and "Yoğurt Gölü (Yogurt Lake)" were selected as free-reading texts. The first poem preserved the sound features of Azerbaijani Turkish. The first poem to be taught in the classroom with the activities is titled "Bir Dünya Düşünürüm (I Think of a World)." It is a free verse poem consisting of four six-line stanzas. The poem talks about the dream of a beautiful and peaceful world, and the first activity again involves guessing the meanings of the unknown words. With five open-ended questions prepared for the content of the poem, the aim was to have readers comprehend the content of the poem and determine its main emotion. Additionally, some questions made students explain the rationale of a part of the poem they liked the most and asked the students to describe the world they imagined based on the content, which both directly led them to recognize the in-text elements and to explain their own views based on the poem. Asking students to prepare two questions to ask their friends about the poem is also related to checking the level of comprehension of in-text elements. Other activities related to this poem include finding the figures of speech—personification, anthropomorphism, contrast, and hyperbole—in the poem and writing a poem about "my world."

The poem "Atatürk'ü Gördüm Düşümde (I Dreamt of Atatürk)," which is included in the group of texts under the theme of National Struggle and Atatürk, is a poem written using free verse consisting of three stanzas. In this poem, one's love for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was chosen as the theme and continued to follow the activity structure of the previous poem, such as guessing the meanings of unknown words, explaining the content, talking about the best part of the poem, and finding the main emotion. The question about finding the figure of speech "simile" in a prose text stood out as a different activity in terms of showing the differences in the use of figures of speech in poetry and prose.

The last poem selected in this textbook for seventh graders is titled "Kitaplarla Kurulan Dostluk (Friendship with Books)." This poem, comprising six lines of eight verses, is also written using free verse. The poem is about the permanence of the attachment established with books and reading, and vocabulary exercises and open-ended questions to explain the content of the poem constitute the usual examples of activities. Other open-ended questions included

why this title might have been chosen for the poem, readers' own opinions about the content of the poem, and the types of figures of speech used. The book also presents the names of well-known writers and poets of Turkish literature such as Halide Edip Adıvar, Cengiz Aytmatov, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, and Orhan Veli Kanık and asks students to prepare a presentation on one of these writers. Asking students to complete a given quatrain by choosing an appropriate title for it is a poetry-writing activity.

The second book prepared for seventh graders among the Turkish textbooks, in which we frequently come across similar activity examples, is also among the publications of the Ministry of National Education. Table 6 highlights information regarding the poems used in this book.

In the seventh-grade course book prepared by Akgül et al. (2021), five poems were selected as reading texts, and activities were prepared. The poem titled "Vatan Destanı (Homeland Epic)" comprises eight quatrains and is written using syllabic meter. The text on the theme of one's love for their homeland started with an activity that included the instruction to find the meanings of unknown words. It is seen that open-ended questions include questions that ask students to explain the content of the poem and to reflect on their own feelings and perspectives based on this content. There were activities such as finding a title for the poem, the theme of the poem, and the main emotion it expresses, asking for an explanation of what the concept of "homeland" is likened to, and activities aimed at finding a simile. The activity of writing poems, which is also seen in other textbooks, although not as frequently, is also included here. In this book, unlike the previous books, the instructions first presented words from the concept pool and directed the students to write the poem accordingly.

The poem "Türkiye'm, Anayurdum, Sebebim, Çarem!" (My Turkey, My Motherland, My Reason, My Remedy!)' selected for the textbook for the theme of "Our National Culture" is a free verse poem consisting of six quatrains. In the poem, one's love for Turkey is emphasized, and the activities are mostly organized as open-ended questions. Writing the meanings of unknown words, answering questions such as "Describe what kind of a place the poet lives in according to the narrative in the poem" and "How would you describe the places where you spent your childhood years later" or questions that ask students to explain their own

Table 6. Ministry of education publishing seventh grade textbook (Akgül et al., 2021)

Theme	Poet	Poem	Reading Text/ Additional Reading Text
Virtues	La Fontaine	Eşek ve Köpek (Çev. Acar Erdoğan)	Additional Reading Text
Independence War and Atatürk	Halit Fahri Ozansoy	Vatan Destanı	Reading Text
Self-improvement	-	-	-
Our National Culture	Yavuz Bülent Bâkiler	Türkiye'm, Anayurdum, Sebebim, Çarem!	Reading Text
Science and Technology	-	-	-
Reading Culture	-	-	-
Nature and Universe	Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı	Bu Sabah Hava Berrak	Reading Text
Time and Space	Ziya Osman Saba	İstanbul	Reading Text
	Nüzhet Erman	Akşehir'de Bir Fil	Reading Text

feelings and thoughts based on the content constitute the comprehension studies related to the text. These activities also include the following directive for readers: "Compare the poem 'Türkiye'm, Anayurdum, Sebebim, Çarem!' with the poem 'Vatan Destanı' that you have read before in terms of the messages it gives." The activities also include examples that ask students to find the figures of speech of personification, anthropomorphism, and contrast/contradiction in the poem. In an activity that paid attention to the sound and harmony elements of the poem, students were asked to recite a memorized poem with background music, paying attention to features such as emphasis, intonation, and stops. Making students realize the element of harmony in poetry with music was seen as a noteworthy example in terms of supporting figures of speech and music as it was an activity structure not seen in previous textbooks.

Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı's poem, "Bu Sabah Hava Berrak" (This Morning the Weather is Clear), is a free verse poem comprising a single stanza of 26 lines. The text, which covers the theme of happiness and joy of living that comes with good weather, includes, as seen frequently in other examples, activities of guessing the meanings of unknown words and checking these meanings from the dictionary. In the continuation of this activity, the question "What are three things around you that make you happy or improve your mood? Is 'seeing good health for the sick and prosperity for the poor' an exaggerated perspective? Discuss" is a question for readers to explain the content and express their personal feelings and thoughts based on the content. The poem contains the figures of speech of anthropomorphism (speech) and personification. Moreover, the question of comparing a poem with another poem, which was also seen in previous poetry activities in this textbook, is present here. Students were asked to compare this poem with Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu's poem "Hüzün Geldi (Sadness Came)" in terms of the "point of view" and "message."

The last poem selected for the comprehension exercises is titled "Istanbul." In the poem, which consists of a total of 10 stanzas and is written using free verse, the poet chose Istanbul, one of Türkiye's most important and beautiful cities, and one's love of Istanbul as the theme. Finding the meanings of unknown words and open-ended questions about the content of the poem constitute the majority of the

comprehension activities. An example of the questions in this poem is "In the expression 'This city has changed a lot,' is it the city that has changed or the people living in that city? Discuss." Similar to the activities of previously discussed poems, there are questions about the figures of speech used in the poetry. Based on the three examples given, students are asked to find the figures of speech of allusion, quotation, comparison, hyperbole, and simile in the poem. The comparison question seen in the poetry activities in this textbook is also included here. Readers were asked to evaluate a quatrain selected from "Türkiye'm, Anayurdum Sebebim, Çarem," which involves the theme of Our National Culture, and a quatrain selected from this poem (Istanbul) in terms of the bond the poets established with Istanbul and Turkey. The question was around which common message this relationship and commitment were shaped.

In the seventh-grade course book prepared by Akgül et al. (2021), there are two poems in free-reading texts. "Akşehir'de Bir Fil (An Elephant in Akşehir)" by Nasrettin Hodja is a considered as a humorous piece in verse/poetry. This text, in which humorous elements are emphasized, bears the characteristics of the anecdote genre rather than the poetry genre. J. de La Fontaine's fable "The Donkey and the Dog" is also a text in verse.

The last book approved by the Ministry of National Education to be used for the seventh grade in Turkey was published by Özgün Publications. Table 7 presents information about the texts in this textbook.

This seventh-grade book included poems in general except for one theme. The poem "Baba, Bana Bir Şiir Bul (Father, Find Me a Poem)" on the theme of "virtues" consists of five stanzas. The poem, written using syllabic meter, deals with a child's desire to find a poem describing happiness. The activities prepared for the poem include questions to explain the content, the main emotion, and finding a title for the poem. Another activity aimed to have students convey information about the rhyme and redif in the poem by asking them to write the sound similarities at the end of the lines. In the continuation of this activity, there was an open-ended question about what these sound similarities add to the poem. In the last activity related to poetry, readers are expected to write a poem based on these concepts with the five words given.

Table 7. Özgün publishing seventh grade textbook (Erkal & Erkal, 2019)

Theme	Poet	Poem	Reading Text/Additional Reading Text
Virtues	Mehmet Beşeri	Baba, Bana Bir Şiir Bul	Reading Text
Independence War and Atatürk	Ümit Yaşar Oğuzcan	Bir Mustafa Kemal Vardı	Reading Text
Feelings	Jean de La Fontaine	Meşe ile Saz (Trans. Sabahattin Eyüboğlu)	Reading Text
Our National Culture	Vasfi Mahir Kocatürk	Yurt Türküsü	Reading Text
Nature and Universe	Arif Nihat Asya	Güz	Reading Text
	Hasan Latif Sarıyüce	Kır Çiçekleri	Additional Reading Text
Art	Veysel Şatıroğlu	Sazıma	Reading Text
Self-improvement	Hasan Âli Yücel	Ağaç ve Sen	Reading Text
Science and Technology	-	-	-

The poem "Bir Mustafa Kemal Vardı (There was an Atatürk)" in this textbook is a poem written using free verse with the theme of love and longing for Atatürk. The word-meaning matching activity to find the meanings of unknown words, which is also seen in other poems, is also seen in this book. However, the question about whether some words taken from the poem are used literally or figuratively is different as we do not often see this type of question among the activities of other poems. One can see that this activity tries to emphasize the differentiation of language use in poetry from prose and the use of figurative meaning in poetry language. Based on an example of a poem about figures of speech, the activity asks readers to find examples of "personification" in the poem. In the section titled "Preparation for the Next Text" at the end of the activities in this book, students were asked to write another poem in their notebooks, Arif Nihat Asya's "Bayrak (Flag)", which was thought to be related to the theme. Encouraging students to read poetry beyond the poems selected for the textbook is considered important in this respect.

For the fable "Meşe ile Saz (Oak and Saz)," which was written in verse, the activity asked for story elements in the text under the headings of space, time, entity cast, and event. In this respect, the content-oriented questions aimed not to evaluate a poem but to evaluate the fable as an example of a narrative text structure. Due to the characteristics of the fable genre, especially in the activities that asked students to find examples of the figure of speech of "anthropomorphism," explanations about anthropomorphism (speech) were presented.

The poem "Yurt Türküsü (Folk Song of the Homeland)," which deals with the theme of one's love for the homeland, comprises four stanzas. The poem written using syllabic meter included visual-text content connection and questions about the main emotion. The activity asked readers to find examples of rhyme and redif in the poem, with the expression "sound similarities that provide harmony at the end of the line" and examples of personification. In another activity, a poem on the theme of patriotism was given and asked to be compared with "Yurt Türküsü" in terms of content. In these activities, the number of activities and the emphasis on poetry decreased, along with the emphasis on content. In Arif Nihat Asya's "Güz (Autumn)," there is a decrease in

poetry-related activities. The poem, which consists of seven couplets and is written using syllabic meter, describes the beauty of autumn. Apart from the open-ended question that asked the students what title they would like to give to the poem, there was no activity directly related to the type of poem, except for the activity that asked students to identify the figures of speech used in the poem. The decrease in the number of activities is also seen in "Sazıma (To My Saz)." The poem, which consists of four quatrains and is written using syllabic meter, deals with the bond between the poet, a folk minstrel, and his saz (a musical instrument) and his call to it. In the activities section, there is no activity related to the type of poetry (rhyme and redif) except for the presence of figures of speech and the question of "sound similarities that provide harmony at the end of a line in poetry."

The poem titled "Ağaç ve Sen (The Tree and You)" comprises 11 couplets. The poem written using syllabic meter advises children and deals with the sense of trust one has in them. Apart from the main emotion in the poem, only one question was asked about the content, and the activity asked readers to explain the advice given by the poet. In another activity, one of the couplets was rewritten, and the participants were asked to explain what messages were given in this section. In the poetry-writing activity, students were asked to write poems based on some given words (values). In the "Preparation for the Next Text" section, students were asked to write Can Yücel's poem "Su Gibi (Like Water)" in their notebooks to draw their attention to another poem. This textbook also included Hasan Latif Sarıyüce's poem "Wildflowers" under the theme of "Nature and the Universe" as a free-reading text.

The last textbook analyzed in this study was by Eselioğlu et al. (2021) for eighth graders. In the 2022–2023 academic year, this is the only Turkish textbook used at the eighth-grade level in Turkey. Information about the poems selected for this book is presented in Table 8.

In the eighth-grade Turkish textbook, one can see that a poem was chosen by the authors for each theme selected in accordance with the Turkish Curriculum (MoNE, 2019), except for the theme of "Science and Technology." The first poem in the textbook, "İnsanla Güzel (Beautiful with Humans)," is a poem written in free verse consisting of four stanzas. The comprehension activities prepared for this poem

Table 8. Ministry of education publishing eighth grade textbook (Eselioğlu et al., 2021)

Theme	Poet	Poem	Reading Text/Additional Reading Text
Virtues	İlhan Geçer	İnsanla Güzel	Reading Text
Independence War and Atatürk	Arif Nihat Asya	Bir Bayrak Rüzgâr Bekliyor	Additional Reading Text
Science and Technology	-	-	-
Individual and Society	Necip Fazıl Kısakürek	Kaldırımlar	Reading Text
Time and Space	Attilâ İlhan	Türkiye	Reading Text
	Zeynal Beksaç	İstanbul'la Hasbihâl	Additional Reading Text
Our National Culture	Veysel Şatıroğlu	Vatan Sevgisini İten Duyanlar	Reading Text
Nature and Universe	Cahit Külebi	Rüzgâr	Reading Text
Citizenship	Nazım Hikmet Ran	Yaşamaya Dair	Reading Text

first presented instructions to guess the meaning of unknown words, followed by open-ended questions such as "What do you understand from the phrase 'Sabahlar sizinle aydınlık… (Mornings are bright with you...)'" and "What does the poet complain about in the last stanza." Other questions relate to the subject, main emotion, and the figures of speech used in the poem. The figure of speech questions are related to simile, hyperbole, personification, anthropomorphism, and contrast. The poem "Kaldırımlar (Pavements)," which has a similar poem teaching process, comprises eight quatrains and is written using syllabic meter. There are questions about guessing the meanings of words and checking the meanings from the dictionary, open-ended questions to explain the content of the text such as "Which lines give details about when the poet was on the street," and questions about the subject, main emotion, and figures of speech. The question on figures of speech aimed to draw attention to the use of language in poetry, especially by asking about the contribution of figures of speech to expression. In the activity in which the students were instructed to write a poem, Azerbaijani poet Bahtiyar Vahapzade's poem "Azerbaijan-Türkiye" was given, and they were asked to read it and write a poem based on the feeling it left in them.

In the poem "Türkiye," which is written in free verse with a single stanza, the authors act according to the activity structures aimed at comprehension. There are questions about finding the meanings of unknown words, questions to explain the content, and questions about the main emotion, subject, and figures of speech. A limitation was set in the figures of speech question and the readers were asked to find examples of simile, personification, and contrast in the poem. Further, the activity presented various visuals of Turkey to the students, and they were asked to write a poem based on what these visuals made them feel. This sequence in the content of the activity continues in the poem "Vatan Sevgisini İçten Duyanlar (Those Who Love the Homeland Sincerely)." The poem, which consists of five stanzas and is written using syllabic meter, deals with the theme of one's love for their homeland. In addition to questions about the subject, main emotion, and poem content, the students were asked to listen to another composed poem, the folk song "Uzun İnce Bir Yoldayım (I am on a Long and Thin Road)," in the poet's own voice and write what it made them feel.

Cahit Külebi's poem "Rüzgar (Wind)" is a work consisting of seven stanzas and written in free verse. For this poem,

this textbook, which selected poems from well-known names of Turkish literature, emphasized explaining the content with open-ended questions. Finding the topic, main emotion, an example of figure of speech, and the emotional value that a repeated line adds to the poem are the prominent activity titles. The poetry-writing activity asked students to write a poem by choosing a theme among the six given. There are examples of similar activities in the free verse poem titled "Yaşamaya Dair (On Living)." Among the content questions, especially "What do you think about the contribution of frequent examples in poetry to the expression," aimed to make readers recognize the language of poetry. One can say that identifying the subject, main emotion, and figures of speech were other activity titles.

In this textbook for eighth graders, Arif Nihat Asya's "Bir Bayrak Rüzgâr Bekliyor" and Zeynal Beksaç's "İstanbul'la Hasbihal" were selected as free-reading texts in the poetry genre.

For the evaluation of the eight textbooks analyzed in this research, Table 9 presents the findings regarding the distribution of poems across classes.

Based on the analysis of middle school textbooks, examples of poetry are mostly included under the theme of Our National Culture (f = 8), followed by the themes of National Struggle and Atatürk (f = 7), Nature and the Universe (f = 6), and Virtues (f = 5). It is understood that the textbook authors did not include any poetry examples in the themes of Science and Technology and Communication. The textbooks that included the poetry genre the most are the books prepared by Eselioğlu et al. (2021) for eighth graders and by Erkal and Erkal (2019) for seventh graders. The fewest examples of poetry are found in the book prepared by Ertürk et al. (2021) for sixth graders. The fact that the curriculum does not set a numerical limit for the poetry genre causes the author preferences to select the number of poems to be included.

Table 10 presents the findings regarding the distribution of the texts according to authors.

There were 36 different poets whose poems are used for teaching purposes in the Turkish textbooks used in secondary schools for Turkish lessons in the 2022–2023 academic year. Among these poets, Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı, Bahtiyar Vahapzade, and Jean de La Fontaine stood out with three poems each. Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı's use of clear and expressive language, one of Turkey's most well-known poets,

Table 9. Classification of poetry text in turkish textbooks according to grade and themes

Theme	Grade								Total
	5.Grade	6.Grade			7.Grade			8.Grade	
	CB1	CB2	CB3	CB4	CB5	CB6	CB7	CB8	
Independence War and Atatürk	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	7
Our National Culture	+			+ ++	+	+	+	+	8
Virtues		+		+		+	+	+	5
Individual and Society	+	+ +						+	4
Nature and Universe	+	+				+	+ +	+	6
Citizenship	+ +							+	3
Health and Sports		+							1
Science and Technology									-
Reading Culture				+	+				2
Art		+					+		2
Feelings			+		+ +		+		4
Children's World			+						1
Communication									-
Self-improvement							+		1
Time and Space						+ +		+ +	4
Total	6	7	3	5	5	6	8	8	48

*The abbreviations used in the table are CB1 (Çapraz Baran & Diren, 2020), CB2 (Sarıboyacı, 2021), CB3 (Ertürk et al., 2021), CB4 (Ceylan et al., 2021), CB5 (Kır et al., 2021), CB6 (Akgül et al., 2021), CB7 (Erkal & Erkal, 2019) & CB8 (Eselioğlu et al., 2021).

Table 10. Classification of poems in turkish textbooks according to author names

Poet	Grade								Total
	5.Grade	6.Grade			7.Grade			8.Grade	
	CB1	CB2	CB3	CB4	CB5	CB6	CB7	CB8	
Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı	+		+			+			3
Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca	+								1
Nimetullah Hafız	+								1
Fatih Kısaparmak	+								1
Dursun Bulut	+								1
Orhan Veli Kanık	+				+				2
Bahtiyar Vahapzade		+		+	+				3
Jean de La Fontaine		+				+	+		3
Ataol Behramoğlu		+							1
Süleyman Özbek		+							1
Cahit Külebi		+						+	2
Aytül Akal		+							1
Arife Hancı		+							1
Orhan Şaik Gökyay			+						1
Cevdet Kudret Solok			+						1
Yusuf Yanç				+					1
Bestami Yazgan				+					1
Rıza Tevfik Bölükbaşı				+					1
Halit Fahri Ozansoy				+		+			2
Coşkun Ertepınar					+ +				2
Abdullah Rıza Ergüven					+				1

(Contd...)

Table 10. *(Continued)*

Poet	Grade								Total
	5.Grade	6.Grade			7.Grade			8.Grade	
	CB1	CB2	CB3	CB4	CB5	CB6	CB7	CB8	
Yavuz Bülent Bâkiler						+			1
Ziya Osman Saba						+			1
Nüzhet Erman						+			1
Mehmet Beşeri							+		1
Ümit Yaşar Oğuzcan							+		1
Vasfi Mahir Kocatürk							+		1
Arif Nihat Asya							+	+	2
Hasan Latif Sarıyüce							+		1
Veysel Şatıroğlu							+	+	2
Hasan Âli Yücel							+		1
İlhan Geçer								+	1
Necip Fazıl Kısakürek								+	1
Attila İlhan								+	1
Zeynal Beksaç								+	1
Nazım Hikmet Ran								+	1
Total	6	7	3	5	5	6	8	8	48

*The abbreviations used in the table are CB1 (Çapraz Baran & Diren, 2020), CB2 (Sarıboyacı, 2021), CB3 (Ertürk et al., 2021), CB4 (Ceylan et al., 2021), CB5 (Kır et al., 2021), CB6 (Akgül et al., 2021), CB7 (Erkal & Erkal, 2019) & CB8 (Eselioğlu, Set & Yücel, 2021).

may have been influential in this choice. In the Secondary School Turkish Curriculum, the criterion of including texts of authors from different geographies where Turkish is spoken outside Turkey in the text selection criteria (MoNE, 2019) makes Bahtiyar Vahapzade's choice understandable. The fact that Azerbaijan Turkish is a dialect close to Turkey Turkish allows the poet's poems to be taken without interfering with the original language. The French writer and poet Jean de La Fontaine was chosen because he is the most famous representative of the fable genre, and his works have been translated into Turkish for many years. However, it should not be forgotten that the primary concern here is not to exemplify the genre of poetry but to exemplify the genre of fables written in the form of poetry.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the textbooks used for Turkish lessons in secondary schools in Turkey, authors selected 35 reading texts and 13 poetry texts as free-reading texts. It is possible to say that poems, which are accepted as the third text structure along with informative and narrative texts within the text selection criteria of the Turkish Curriculum (MoNE, 2019), are not as many as texts that exemplify the prose genre. This is in line with Carter's findings for the UK (2012, pp. 3–4). It is thought that the prejudices about the difficulty of the teaching process in general against the poetry genre also affect the text selection process.

When we look at the comprehension activities prepared for the poems, one can see that although the rates vary according to the textbook, in general terms, books emphasize activities about guessing the meaning of unknown words and finding the meaning from the dictionary, questions to explain the verses and parts of the poems, and finding rhyme/redif and figures of speech. Among the figures of speech, simile, metaphor, anthropomorphism, and personification are prominent. Almost all of the activities consisted of open-ended questions. Considering that Turkish lessons aim to develop basic language skills (reading, speaking, listening and writing), it is understandable that the question types are open-ended. It is thought that students are asked to show their understanding levels by enriching them with their telling skills.

Sources often state that the poetry genre differs especially in the way it uses language and that the harmony in poetry is provided by elements such as meter, rhyme, and redif (Aksan, 1993, pp. 17–18; Benton, 1999, p. 524; Khansir, 2012, pp. 241–243). However, there are very few examples of activities that emphasize the difference in word usage in poetry in Turkish language textbooks in Turkey. One can see that the textbooks mostly touch on words with unknown meanings, but there are no instructions and explanations stating that the difference in meaning here is due to the language of poetry. Technical elements such as meter and repetition of sounds, which distinguish poetry from prose in terms of form, are important for the genre (Huck et al., 2004, pp. 360–365). However, although rhyme and redif are included in the activities, the element of meter does not appear in the activities. The limited reflection of the distinctive features that distinguish the poetry genre from other genres on the prepared activities will of course complicate the teaching process. This lack of activities related to poems in the textbooks also makes it difficult to comprehend the

genre. This situation will also make it difficult to realize the aesthetic qualities of the poem.

In the literature, some findings suggest poetry writing increases the level of attention, intellectual level, and attention to the difference in meaning and aesthetic features of language (Cahnmann-Taylor et al., 2017) and that poetry writing is rarely included in writing education (Wilson & Myhill, 2012, pp. 553–557). Although not after every poem in the book, the activities in Turkish textbooks also include instructions for students to write new poems. However, these instructions are limited to asking students to write a poem, rather than planning the stages of writing a poem and the teaching process. Due to the genre characteristics of poetry, it should be used with other language skills in addition to reading education. Although it is desired to include poetry reading not only in writing education but also in speaking education (Tamara & Merentek, 2019, p.148), there was only one activity instruction for preparing a poetry recital in the activities.

Shapiro's (1985, pp. 375-378) findings about the lack of a teaching plan by paying attention to the characteristics of the poetry genre in the teaching process can also apply to Turkish textbooks. Organizing the activities with limited and monotonous guidelines is far from highlighting the beauty and aesthetic quality of the genre. The activities in the textbooks should be organized in accordance with a teaching plan that covers poetry language, technical features, and richness of meaning. Teaching poems in a way that will form the basis for activities aimed at developing writing and speaking skills as well as teaching reading will raise readers' level of awareness of this genre.

REFERENCES

Aksan, D. (1993). *Şiir dili ve Türk şiir dili* [Poetry language and Turkish poetry language]. Şafak Matbaacılık.

Benton, P. (1999). Unweaving the rainbow: poetry teaching in the secondary school I. *Oxford Review of Education*, *25(*4), 521-531. https://doi.org/10.1080/030549899103964

Benton, P. (2000). The conveyor belt curriculum? Poetry teaching in the secondary school II. *Oxford Review of Education*, *26*(1), 81-93. https://doi.org/10.1080/030549800103872

Cahnmann-Taylor, M., Bleyle, S., Hwang, Y., & Zhang, K. (2017). Teaching poetry in TESOL teacher education: heightened attention to language as well as to cultural and political critique through poetry writing. *TESOL Journal*, *8*(1), 70-101. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.263

Carter, D. (2012). *Teaching poetry in the primary school.* Routledge.

Dressman, M., & Faust, M. (2014). On the teaching of poetry in English Journal, 1912-2005: Does history matter. *Journal of Literacy Research*, *46*(1), 39-67. https://doi.org/10.1177/1086296X14521194

Dutta, S. K. (2001). Teaching poetry in the school classroom: An integrated and communicative approach. *CAUCE, Revista de Filologia su Didáctica*, *24*, 519-537. https://cvc.cervantes.es/literatura/cauce/pdf/cauce24/cauce24_32.pdf

Faver, S. (2008). Repeated reading of poetry can enhance reading fluency. *The Reading Teacher*, *62*(4), 350-352. https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.62.4.8

Fishman, E. (2021). Teaching students to translate poetry. *The Reading Teacher*, *75*(1), 119-123. https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1997

Graves, K. (2000). *Designing language course: A guide for teachers*. Heinle.

Habibi, M., Chandra, C., Maahyuddin, R., & Hendri, S. (2018). Validity of teaching materials for writing poetry based on creative techniques in elementary schools. *Mimbar Sekolah Dasar*, *5*(3), 145-154. https://doi.org/10.17509/MIMBAR-SD.V5I3.14501

Huck, C. S., Kiefer, B. Z., Hepler, S., & Hickman, J. (2004). *Children's literature in the elementary school* (8th ed.). Mc Graw Hill.

Hughes, J., & Dymoke, S. (2011). "Wiki-ed poetry": Transforming preservice teachers' preconceptions about poetry and poetry teaching. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *55*(1), 46-56. https://doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.55.1.5

Jusslin, S., & Höglund, H. (2021). Entanglements of dance/poetry: creative dance in students' poetry reading and writing. *Research in Dance Education*, *22*(3), 250-268. https://doi.org/10.1080/14647893.2020.1789088

Kılıç, A., & Seven, S. (2006). *Konu alanı ders kitabı incelemesi (6. baskı)*. Pegem Akademi.

Khansir, A. A. (2012). Teaching poetry in the ELT classroom. *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*, *3*(1), 241-245. https://www.irssh.com

Maden, S. (2021). Türkçe ders kitapları ile ilgili lisansüstü tezlerin eğilimleri: Bir içerik analizi. *Türkiye Eğitim Dergisi*, *6*(1), 30-45. https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/turkegitimdergisi/issue/62994/872526

Mccall, A. L. (2004). Using poetry in social studies classes to teach about cultural diversity and social justice. *The Social Studies*, *95*(4), 172-176. https://doi.org/10.3200/TSSS.95.4.172-176

Merriam, S. B. (2018). *Nitel araştırma: Desen ve uygulama için bir rehber* (Trans. S. Turan). Nobel Akademi.

Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı [MoNE, Ministry of National Education] (2019). *Türkçe dersi öğretim programı (1-8. sınıflar)*. Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı.

Mulatsih, M. V. E. (2018). Learning poetry as a strategy to develop students' teaching skills. *International Journal of Indonesian Education and Teaching*, 2(2), 120-128. https://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/IJIET/article/view/1092/1209

Özdemir, E. (1998). *Eleştirel okuma* (3rd ed.). Ümit Yayıncılık.

Prabhakar, R. (2021). Motion pictures in teaching poetry. *The Criterion*, *12*(3), 240-247.

Russell, D. L. (2005). *Literature for children* (5th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.

Shapiro, S. (1985). An analysis of poetry teaching procedures in sixth-grade basal manuals. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *20*(3), 368-381. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.2307/748024

Sigvardsson, A. (2017). Teaching poetry reading in secondary education: Findings from a systematic literature review. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, *61*(5), 584-599. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2016.1172503

Sigvardsson, A. (2020). Don't fear poetry: Secondary teachers' key strategies for engaging pupils with poetic texts. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, *64*(6), 953-966. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2019.1650823

Stibbs, A. (1981). Teaching poetry. *Childrens Literature in Education*, *12*, 39-50.

Tamara, M. A., & Merentek, R. M. (2019). Improving poetry reading skills in grade v elementary school students using the emotive approach. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, *5*(5), 147-158. https://www.ijicc.net/images/vol5iss5/5511_Tamara_2019_E_R.pdf

Taylor, J. (2005). Teaching poetry in the secondary school. S. Brindley (ed.) In *Teaching English* (pp.187-196). Routledge.

Temizkan, M. (2021). Türkçe ders kitaplarına yönelik lisansüstü çalışmalar üzerine bir değerlendirme. *Okuma Yazma Eğitimi Araştırmaları*, *9*(2), 147-162. https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/oyea/issue/67883/1011359

Tompkins, G. E. (1998). *Language arts, content and teaching strategies* (4th ed.). Prentice Hall.

Tomlinson, B. (1998). *Materials development in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Wai, T. L. K., & Abidin, H. Z. (2020). Learning poetry: attitudes and challenges faced by ESL students. *LSP International Journal*, *7*(2), 55-69. https://doi.org/10.11113/lspi.v7.16343

Wellek, R., & Varren, A. (1993). *Edebiyat teorisi* (Trans. Ö. F.Huyugüzel). Akademi Kitabevi.

Whalley, G. (2017). Teaching poetry. P. Abbs (Ed.) *in the Symbolic Order: A Contemporary Reader on the Arts Debate*. Routledge.

Wilson, A. (2010). Teachers' conceptualisations of the intuitive and the intentional in poetry composition. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, *9*(3), 53-74. http://education.waikato.ac.nz/research/files/etpc/files/2010v9n3art4.pdf

Wilson, A., & Myhill, D. A. (2012). Ways with words: teachers' personal epistemologies of the role of metalanguage in the teaching of poetry writing. *Language and Education*, *26*(6), 553-568. https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2012.669768

Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2021). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri* (12th ed.). Seçkin Yayıncılık.

EXAMINED TURKISH TEXTBOOKS

Akgül, A., Demirer, N., Gürcan, E., Karadaş, D., Karahan, İ., & Uysal, İ. (2021). *Ortaokul ve imam hatip ortaokulu 7. sınıf Türkçe ders kitabı*. N. Demirer (Ed.) Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı.

Ceylan, S., Duru, K., Erkek, G., & Pastutmaz, M. (2021). *Ortaokul ve imam hatip ortaokulu 6. sınıf Türkçe ders kitabı*. Z. Batur & S. Ceylan (ed.) Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı.

Çapraz Baran, Ş., Diren E. (2020). *Ortaokul ve imam hatip ortaokulu 5. sınıf Türkçe ders kitabı*. Anıttepe Yayınları.

Erkal, H., & Erkal, M. (2019). *Ortaokul ve imam hatip ortaokulu 7. sınıf Türkçe ders kitabı*. Özgün Yayınları.

Ertürk, N., Keleş, S., & Külünk, D. (2019). *Ortaokul ve imam hatip ortaokulu 6. sınıf Türkçe ders kitabı*. N. Ertürk (Ed.) Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı.

Eselioğlu, H., Set, S., & Yücel, A. (2021). *Ortaokul ve imam hatip ortaokulu 8. sınıf Türkçe ders kitabı*. A. Yücel (Ed.) Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı.

Kır, T., Kırman, E., & Yağız, S. (2021). *Ortaokul ve imam hatip ortaokulu 7. sınıf Türkçe ders kitabı*. E. Kırman (ed.) Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı.

Sarıboyacı, M. O. (2021). *Ortaokul ve imam hatip ortaokulu 6. sınıf Türkçe ders kitabı*. Ata Yayıncılık.