

Using Text Commentary Method in Reading Education

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Abstract

Reading skills are important in terms of listening, creating comprehension as well as supporting narrative skills (speaking and writing). There are various strategies, methods and techniques related to reading in the literature. Although it is not common today, text commentary method was common in the past. Text commentary method is described as the skills of comprehension and expression of comprehension. The purpose of this study is to explore how the text commentary method can be used in reading education. In alignment with this purpose, studies related to text commentary method were examined to identify the levels involved in text annotation. The identified levels were then compared to the reading gains in the Turkish Language Teaching Program published in 2018 and to the PISA reading skill area levels. It was concluded that text commentary method is a suitable method to improve reading skills. Text commentary method can be used in reading studies which is part of Turkish language education.

Keywords: Text Commentary, Reading, Comprehension, Turkish Language Teaching Program, Turkish Education

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INTRODUCTION

Turkish education aims to improve students' language skills. Language skills consist of two main categories; comprehension and narration. Reading is among the comprehension skills along with listening/watching. As a comprehension skill that is learned afterwards, reading has an important place in a student's both educational and daily lives. In addition to several strategies, methods and techniques for reading, text commentary is another method that has an important place in reading culture. Commentary is a method of reading-comprehension. Using text commentary in reading education can provide a different perspective for reading studies. Therefore, there is a need to explore how text commentary method can be used in reading education.

The aim of Turkish education is to make students competent in communication skills which include listening/watching, speaking, reading and writing. Turkish Language Education Program-2018 (TLEP) is structured towards helping students to acquire language and cognitive skills geared towards listening/watching, speaking, reading, and writing that they can use for a lifetime; to improve themselves individually and socially through using these skills, and to communicate effectively. In alignment with these goals, the program is inclusive of information, skills, and values that would help students to develop habits of reading and writing with an enthusiasm for the Turkish language (MEB, 2018: 8). Self improvement and social improvement through using reading skills are possible through comprehension of texts.

Reading is the process of perception of special symbols that are established among people through sensory organs followed by interpretation and evaluation by the brain (Yalçın, 2006:47). Meaning making during reading is necessary for comprehension. Comprehension is reflecting on the information obtained through listening, reading, and visual reading, searching for causes, finding results, and evaluation (Güneş, 2007: 229). Reading that is a form of comprehension between the author and the reader is addressed in detail in TLEP-2018.

Objectives of reading skills are defined by grade levels with a thematic approach in TLEP-2018. A total of 142 reading objectives were included. A breakdown of these 142 objectives is as follows: 34 objectives at the 5th grade level, 35 objectives at the 6th grade level, 38 objectives at the 7th grade level, and 35 objectives at the 8th grade level. These objectives are categorized into *reading fluency*, *presence of vocabulary*, and *comprehension*. Reading fluency has 16, vocabulary has 32, and comprehension has 94 objectives. It is seen that reading fluency has the lowest objectives while comprehension has the highest at all grade levels (MEB, 2018). Reading which has more objectives than other skill areas in TLEP-2018 is crucial for students as it is necessary in multiple areas.

It is known that several central exams conducted by National Education Ministry (NEM) include questions to measure reading skills. In the Central Exam for Secondary Education conducted in 2018, questions related to reading objectives were asked to 8th grade students. Additionally, the Elementary and Secondary Education Institutions Scholarship exam, there are questions for reading objectives for 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels. PISA which is conducted every three years includes questions related to reading objectives. According to the PISA-2015 report, Turkey was below the average in reading skills. In PISA-2015, middle school students were ranked the last in reading skills in school level ranking (MEB, 2015). This indicates that students face challenges in reading skills. There are various methods and techniques of reading which is an important skill both nationally and internationally.

Reading out loud, reading silently, reviewing, reading through summarizing, reading by notetaking, reading by marking, reading by guessing, reading by asking questions, word choir, reading theater, memorizing, making connections with texts, reading by discussing and critical reading are known as reading method and techniques. The specified reading methods and techniques are included in the Primary Turkish Education Program issued in 2006 and in the Turkish Language Education Program issued in 2018.

The literature includes reading strategies that approach reading as a process. Also known as cognitive awareness strategies, reading strategies consist of three categories that are; pre-reading process, reading process, and post-reading process (Karatay, 2014). In addition to many strategies, methods, and techniques for reading, there is also text commentary method that has an important place in the reading culture.

The word commentary includes different dimensions including clarification (Parlatır, 2006: 1573). The influence of commenting on religious resources in the Islamic world gave rise to studies of commentary that is the activity of clarifying a religious, mystic, scientific, and literary texts for readers. From a literary perspective, commentary is defined as the activity of comprehension and narration with the purpose of explaining a difficult text from different perspectives. The type of the text that will be commented on and the purpose of the commentator cause text commentaries to have different characteristics.

To find answers to questions like “what is commentary? what is text commentary? What is the method of text commentary?”, Ali Nihad Tarlan’s works are referred as primary sources. According to Tarlan (1981), text commentary is different from literature critique. Literature critique involves more subjective approaches that are concerned with the aesthetic beauty of the work because the limits of aesthetic beauty is yet to be defined. Text commentary aims to understand that literary work and explains what it comprehends. It’s objective. It does not intervene with the reader’s taste. It does not lead the reader to judge the work as “beautiful, or bad.” It analyzes the work objectively (Tarlan, 1981:192). On the other hand, according to Saraç (2007: 131), there is no concensus on the limits of text commentary.

Text commentary is defined with concepts of reading skills such as *comprehension, narration, explanation* and because of this, it is related to Turkish education in terms of reading-comprehension. It is a necessity to consider text commentary as a reading method in Turkish education in which reading skills practices are performed on texts.

Text commentary method is used to explain several poems including odes and eulogies in Classical Turkish poetry. There are many studies related to the applications of text commentary (Akar, 1994; Coşkun, Öbek, Bayram, 2012; Çavuşoğlu, 2001; Çelebioğlu, 1998; Doğan, 2004; İpekten, 991; İpekten, 1993, İpekten, 1997; Kurnaz, 1996; Kurnaz, 2011; Olgun, 2005; Pala, 2004; Pala, 2006; Sefercioğlu, 2011; Tarlan, 1964, Tarlan, 2001; Tolasa, 2001). In identifying the limits of text commentary, applied studies on commentaries can provide background. Evaluation of studies related to commentaries is important in terms of identifying the levels of text commentary. Additionally, text commentary can be considered as a reading method in the Turkish education that aims to provide education that is text-centered. Departing from this point, the purpose of this article is to explain how text commentary method can be used in reading education. To achieve this purpose, three sub-purposes were identified:

1. Identification of text commentary levels based on text commentary studies in Turkish literature.
2. Evaluation of objectives presented in TLEP-2018 based on the levels of text commentary.
3. Evaluation of PISA reading skills levels in terms of text commentary levels.

In alignment with the identified purpose and sub-purposes, 19 resources were evaluated as presented below:

1. Akar, Metin (1994). *Water Qasida Commentary*. Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Publishing.
2. Coşkun, Menderes, Öbek, İhsan Ali ve Bayram, Yavuz (2012). *Ghazal commentaries*. İstanbul: Kesit Publishing.

3. Çavuşoğlu, Mehmed (2001). *Analysis of Diwan of Necatî Bey*. İstanbul: Kitabevi Publishing.
4. Çelebioğlu, Âmil (1998). *Old Turkish Literature Studies*. İstanbul: MEB Publishing.
5. Doğan, Muhammed Nur (2004). *The Diwan of Fatih and Its Commentary*. İstanbul: Erguvan Publishing House.
6. İpekten, Halûk (1991b). *The Life of Fuzûlî, His Literary Identity, and Explanations of His Poems*. Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları.
7. İpekten, Halûk (1991a). *The Life, Works, and Explanations of Poems of Şeyh Galib*. Erzurum: Atatürk University Science-Literature Faculty Publications.
8. İpekten, Halûk (1993). *The Life, Art, and Artworks of Bâkî*. Ankara: Akçağ Publications.
9. İpekten, Halûk (1997). *The Life, Art, and Artworks of Nâilî*. Ankara: Akçağ Publications.
10. Kurnaz, Cemal (1996). *Analysis of Hayâlî Bey Diwan*. İstanbul: MEB Publications.
11. Kurnaz, Cemal (2011). *Among Ghazals*. Ankara: Kurgan Edebiyat Publications.
12. Olgun, Tahir (2005). *Text Commentary Samples from Tahirü'l Mevlevî (Olgun)*. (Haz. Ş. Demirel). Ankara: Araştırma Publications.
13. Pala, İskender (2004a). *Water Qasida*. İstanbul: Kapı Publications.
14. Pala, İskender (2004b). *Şi'r-i Kadîm*. İstanbul: Kapı Publications.
15. Pala, İskender (2006). *And Encore Ghazal*. İstanbul: Kapı Publications.
16. Sefercioğlu, Nejat Mustafa (2001). *Analysis of Nev'î Diwan*. Ankara: Akçağ Publications.
17. Tarlan, Nihad Ali (1964). *An Analysis of Şeyhî Diwan*. İstanbul: İstanbul University School of Arts PrintHouse.
18. Tarlan, Nihad Ali (2001). *Fuzûlî Diwan Commentary*. Ankara: Akçağ Publications.
19. Tolasa, Harun (2001). *The Poem World of Ahmed Paşa*. Ankara: Akçağ Publications.

5 publications that were analyzed and evaluated were also included in the study (Tarlan, 1964; Kurnaz, 1996; Çavuşoğlu, 2001; Sefercioğlu, 2001; Tolasa, 2001) because these resources used text commentary method as well. On the other hand, text commentary applications performed with academic writing styles such as articles and presentations were not included in the study.

Text Commentary Studies in Turkish Literature

Reading skills objectives in TLEP-2018 related to the history of text commentary in Turkish literature, text commentary applications in the field of classical Turkish poetry, levels of text commentary as a reading method and levels of text commentary; and reading reading skills area related topics in terms of text commentary levels in PISA are provided in the next section.

Background on the History of Text Commentary in Turkish Literature

Commentary applications in Turkish literature have developed through the cultures of dervish house and mysticism as well as classical Turkish literature. According to Taşçı (2014: 83), “the increasing distance to Farsi after the sixteenth century and the willingness of new generations to learn the Farsi language and literature influenced the emergence of commentaries.” Literary commentary applications have first emerged with translations. Turkish translations works that are considered beautiful in the Arabian and Farsi literature and the need to explain parts that readers would have difficulty in comprehending are the first form of commentary activities. Additionally, commentary works for pedagogical purposes were seen in dervish lodges and sufi circles. Among these, commentaries done on Yunus Emre poems and Mevlana’s *Mesnevi* are the prominent ones. Commentaries on poems which are important products of classical Turkish Literature, are not seen

commonly during the Republic Period. However, during this period, with the efforts of academics including Tahir Olgun, Ömer Ferit Kam and Ali Nihad Tarlan, classical Turkish poetry has become an application field of commentary method.

As Ceylan (2000: 34-35) states, commentary method was used for poems that are sufi in nature until Tâhirü'l-Mevlevî. This indicates that commentaries for Turkish poems are established by the sufi circle and commentaries are used as an instrument for sufi education. Examination of sufi poem commentaries reveal that there is a didactic concern rather than an aesthetic concern with the purpose of providing a foundation for and contribution to the murid's education. For this purpose, sufi poems cite verses, hadiths, lives of prophets and elders of the religious order, and historical events.

Efforts of translating and explaining Arabian and Farsi poet's poems as well as explaining sufi texts in dervish lodge-sufi circles for pedagogical purposes define the starting point of commentary method in Turkish literature. However, theoretical approaches to what commentaries should be and how they should be are seen in the Republic Period.

Text Commentaries in the Field of Classical Turkish Poetry

The work titled "Text Commentary Examples from Tâhirü'l Mevlevî (Olgun)" is a publication, by Dr. Şener Demirel, of the work titled "A Few Texts and Their Explanations from Divan Literature" disseminated by Tahir Olgun (Olgun, 2005). In this publication, several poem examples from classical Turkish literature are explained through the commentary method. When the commentary method applications in the work are examined, it is seen that the author makes an effort to diffuse deeper into the world of meanings through the verses of classical poems. This effort of deep diffusion has certain characteristics such as comprehension of the author's imaginary world, the author's perspectives on the community, social and historical events, determination of literary works, examination of religious, sufi, historical, and mythological components. The commentary method used in this work is described as follows: First, the title of the text that will be commentated is presented. Prior to the commentary, information on the purpose of the poem is presented according to resources including history books. Information on the life and characteristics of the person described in the poem are also provided. The text that will be commentated on is narrated and provided as prose. Vocabulary and noun phrases are explained. Several resources such as dictionaries are referred when needed. Historical events, places, and names in the text are explained in detail according to information gathered from history books.

"Fuzûlî Diwan Commentary (Fuzûlî Divanı Şerhi)" is a commentary work published by Tarlan (2001). This work includes explanation of Fuzuli's ghazals in Turkish divan literature through using the commentary method in which 294 ghazals were commentated (Tarlan, 2001). Tarlan has organized his work similar to the traditional commentary approach: First verses are introduced and translated into Turkish first, and then an explanation of the verse is provided. However, the process of explaining vocabulary from verses that need dictionary definitions is not consistent throughout the work. In the commentary work, word definitions are provided when seen necessary. In explaining the verses, fineness and characteristics of meanings were presented. In doing so, use of Qur'an, hadiths, sufi concepts, religious events, content identified by the tradition, use of poetic themes, astronomy and mythology components, literary arts, similar forms of articulation from different authors are presented.

Books titled "The Life, Art, and Poem Explanations of Şeyh Galib" (İpekten, 1991a), "The Life, Art, and Works of Fuzuli" (İpekten, 1991b), "The Life, Art, and Works of Baki" (İpekten, 1993), "The Life, Art, and Works of Naili" (İpekten, 1997) have the same content organization. In each piece, poem commentaries are provided under the title "Explanations of Certain Poems." The method used in poem commentaries is the same: First, the meter of the poem is written. Then, the couplet is transformed into a prose in Turkish. Dictionary definitions of words used in the couplets are provided. Identification of literary arts, the special use of the word due to its influence on the meaning, identification and explanation of religious, sufi, historical, and mythological components that were used or cited are provided in the explanation section. When the commentaries in this book are evaluated, it is seen that Olgun (2005) and Tarlan (2001) used the same commentary approaches.

The book titled “Old Turkish Literature Studies” that consists of Amil Celebioglu’s publications contains the sections of “1-Individuals, Artworks, Types; 2-Text Commentary, 3- Folk Literature” (Çelebioğlu, 1998). The second section of this book is related to the current article. This section consists of writings titled; “A Commentary of a Ghazal Attributed to Hz. Mevlana (Rumi), Thoughts on the First Couplet of Mesnevi According to Various Commentaries, Commentaries on the Poems of Yunus, Commentary of One Poem of Yunus, Ney (Reed Flute) in Fuzuli’s Poems, Thoughts on a Couplet of Fuzuli, About Letters, Certain Literary Characteristics Related to the Letter Aleph, Poems on and Characteristics of Ships in Old Turkish Literature, Opinions on Youth in Old Literature, Moon in Our Culture and Literature, Ramadan in Our Literature, Ramadan in Our Religious-Sufi Literature, Ramadan in Divan Poetry.” Writings except for the first three are generally prepared from a thematic perspective. In the first writing, a shorter version of a commentary by Emir Buhârî on a ghazal considered to be by Mevlana is presented as an example of a Turkish commentary. This section is important as it has classical commentary considerations.

“Diwan of Fatih and Commentary” published by Muhammed Nur Doğan includes 84 poems written by Fatih Sultan Mehmet with the pen name Avni (Doğan, 2004). While some of these poems are explained through a traditional commentary method, others only have transition into a prose. In the commentaries, verses are translated into proses, they are explained departing from the thinking system of classical Turkish poetry, literary arts were revealed, exmainations were done word by word when necessary, explanations were provided based on religious and sufi works, and poems from other poets were provided as examples for explanation in couplets.

In “Water Eulogy” published by Iskender Pala, Fuzuli’s eulogy that has the word “su (water)” repeated after every rhyme is commentated (Pala, 2004a). First, short information on Fuzuli’s life is provided, and after the “Praising the Water” section, the poem’s text was written independently. Each couplet was commentated with the explanation that reads: “As certain parts of the poem you’re reading might require explanations, we believe that it would be beneficial to address couplet by couplet (p.10).” In the commentary of the poem, words that needed explanation were defined in contemporary Turkish, the couplets were translated to Turkish, and the poet’s imaginary world, the use of literary arts and its influence on meaning, the influence of sentence structures on meaning, explaining through various sciences related to water, theological information, excerpts related to prophet Mohammed’s life were explained with additional information from history and culture. The poet’s cultural knowledge and literary style are seen clearly throughout the commentary.

In his works “Şi'r-i Kadîm (Poem Commentaries)” (Pala, 2004b) and “....and Ghazal, again” (Pala, 2006), Iskender Pala processed several poems from classical Turkish Literature through commentaries. The commentary approach in these books are the same as the one used in the “Praising the Water.”

The section titled “From Ghazal to Ghazal” in the “Among Ghazals” book published by Cemal Kurnaz (Kurnaz, 2011) includes commentaries of one ghazal from Zâtî, Hayalî Bey, Yahya Bey, Bâki and Fuzuli. The main characteristic that distinguishes these writings from other authors’ commentaries is the fact that the tonal attributes that are associated with content and provide rhythm in ghazals were given attention.

The book titled “Ghazal Commentaries” published by Menderes Coşkun, Ali İhsan Öbek, and Yavuz Bayram (Coşkun, Öbek, Bayram, 2012) contains traditional commentaries of 38 poems mostly including ghazals between the 14th and 19th centuries. The process of the commentaries is as follows: Information on poets is provided. Following the rhythm, rhyme-repeated voice information, the couplets are written according to Turkish writing with Arabic letters. Then, the couplets are written in Latin alphabet which is followed by explanation of the dictionary meanings of the words. The couplets written as proses according to Ottoman Turkish are also written in Turkey Turkish as proses. These couplets are followed by explanation of the couplets. The commentary section included identification of literary arts presented in the couplets, explanation of poetic themes, showing the meaning relationships between words, identification of references for verses and hadiths, and explanations on legendary individuals/entities.

“Water Qasida Commentary” (Akar, 1994) was published by Metin Akar. The book includes the commentary of the “water” qasida. In this commentary, following information on text commentary, the text of the poem is provided. Then, the commentary of the poem is given. In this section, following the couplets, articles of A, B, C, Ç are given as subheadings. The subheading A includes the prose version of the couplet in Ottoman Turkish, subsection B includes dictionary definitions of certain words, C subsection includes the prose of the couplet in Turkish, and subsection Ç includes the commentary of the couplet. Literary arts, poetic themes, and connections between vocabulary are identified in the commentary section. Additionally, explanations related to culture are provided.

There is a separate section in this book that addresses the characteristics related to genre and style. In this section, sections of the qasida, the number of couplets in each section, the reasons for using “water” as the repeated voice, identification of words are addressed. This work is different from others as it addresses the genre and style characteristics together under a separate heading. In addition to text commentaries, there are also “analysis” and “examination” studies that share commonalities with commentaries:

The work titled “Analysis of Şeyhî Divanı” published by Ali Nihad Tarlan examines one of the important names of Classical Turkish Poetry in the first centuries, Şeyhî’s diwan, from multiple perspectives (Tarlan, 1964). Firstly, the sufi perspective of Şeyhî was compared by providing examples from Selmân-ı Sâveci who influenced Şeyhî and the way Şeyhî addressed sufism in his poems was explained. Then, information about Şeyhî’s philosophy, life, personality and environment were presented. The section titled “Şeyhî’s Art” is the most voluminous section. In this section, Şeyhî’s way of using what he saw both in humans and nature to identify the aesthetic and emotional world is explained by providing comparative examples from both Persian literature (Selmân and Hâfız) and the poet’s era. Literary arts, literary figures, rhythms used, poets writing parallels for Şeyhî and mistakes related to verses in the Şeyhî’s diwan were explained. In the section titled “Şeyhî’s Qasidas,” theological, sufi, and mythological components were identified and explained. The work ends with the sections of “Anecdotes in Şeyhî Diwan, and Language and Punctuation in Şeyhî Diwan.”

“Analysis of Şeyhî Diwan” is different from works produced by using the commentary method. It is a thematic study that examines the Şeyhî’s Diwan from different elements. However, considering the requirement of identifying literary arts in addition to theological, sufi, historical, imaginary, and mythological components when doing a commentary, this work is also considered as having an annotation nature.

In the work “Analysis of Necatî Bey Diwan” published by Mehmed Çavuşoğlu, the “Necatî Bey Diwan” was examined in four sections including “Religion-Sufism, Society, Human, Nature, and Objects” (Çavuşoğlu, 2001). Vocabulary related to these sections in the diwan were identified and explained in sub-headings in the sections. As the sections indicate, Çavuşoğlu has focused more on the view of Necatî Bey on the external world. The aim was to examine the poet’s psychology through his use of style in expressing his views on the external world. In explaining the abovementioned sections in the Diwan, various resources were used including Qur’an and its meanings, several religious books, history books, and sources related to Turkish culture. In the sub-section titled “Arts, Professions, Games” in the “Society in the Necatî Bey Diwan” section, a type of ink called “tavûsî ink” is mentioned among calligraphy and gilding supplies (p. 86). Footnotes were provided to give information on “tavûsî ink” mentioned and a research document related to the topic is cited. In the conclusion section of the book, an overview of the four chapters is provided.

The book titled “The Poem World of Ahmed Pasha” prepared by Harun Tolasa shows similarities with Çavuşoğlu’s (2001) book in terms of methodology (Tolasa, 2001). In this work, components and concepts constituting Ahmed Pasha’s Diwan are identified and categorized under the chapters of “religion-sufism, society, human, nature and objects.” These concepts were explained in terms of how, where, and for what purposes they are used which would allow for access to the artist’s

artistic world. These four chapters have various sections within each chapter. The conclusion chapter provides an overview evaluation of sections in each chapter.

In the book titled “An Analysis of Nev’î Diwan published by Nejat Sefercioğlu, components and concepts constituting the Nev’î Diwan, similar to the works of Çavuşoğlu (2001) and Tolasa (2001), are examined in terms of “Religion-Sufism, society, human, nature” (Sefercioğlu, 2001). Such classification is used as a result of examining each couplet separately. In the analysis of the Nev’î Diwan, several sub-headings were used and various resources were used for explanations when needed. In the “results” section, an overall evaluation of Nev’î’s artistic world based on the data obtained within the four sections.

The work titled “An Analysis of Hayâlî Bey Diwan” and published by Cemal Kurnaz consists of the sections; “religion-sufism, society, nature, and conclusion” (Kurnaz, 1996). Under these headings, components and concepts that are shaped in the poet’s imaginary world were identified in terms of the way they are used. The conclusion section provides an overall evaluation. The most important characteristic of this work is that it compares the ways of using comparisons and metaphors of the four poets based on the data in the “An Analysis of Necati Bey Diwan” (Çavuşoğlu, 2001), “The Poem World of Ahmed Pasha” (Tolasa, 2001), and “An Analysis of Nev’î Diwan” (2001).

Levels of Text Commentary as a Method of Reading

It is possible to reach a shared method departing from commentary applications done in works that are reviewed. The characteristics and procedures to be present in text commentary reading method are as follows: Writing the rhythm, transforming poem to prose, providing dictionary definitions of words, the influence of the words used on the meaning, identification of rhyme and repeated voice, explanation of the poetic theme, explanation of literary arts, religious-sufi components, historical and mythological components, comparison of couplets with other couplets when necessary, providing examples from other poets, referring to various works including religious-sufi, historical, and literary works, grasping the imaginary world of the artist, characteristics of style and genre, making general decisions. Based on these characteristics, the text commentary method levels for reading skills are as follows:

1. Rhythm knowledge
2. Transforming poem to prose
3. Rhyme and repeated voice knowledge
4. Dictionary knowledge
5. Explanation-Interpretation
6. Rhetoric Knowledge
7. Grammar in terms of contribution to the meaning
8. Comparisons within poems/works
9. Comparisons with the author’s other poems/works
10. Comparisons with works of different authors
11. Citing works of other authors for detailed information.
12. Cultural knowledge
13. Type characteristics
14. Style characteristics
15. General evaluation (general decision making).

Reading Skills in TLEP (2018) in terms Text Commentary Method Levels

The levels identified in relation to text commentary method can be used to improve reading skills in Turkish education. Particularly the levels of 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 13 can be used in comprehension activities geared towards informative and narrative text types in Turkish education. The 5th article may change in accordance with the content of texts in Turkish education. For example, explanation, which is the main purpose of annotations, focuses on revealing the meaning of the couplet. Thus, ways to improve a topic, theme, main feeling, main theme, narrative types and thoughts in a text in Turkish lessons can be considered within the 5th article. 1st, 2nd and 3rd levels are related to poems. When the levels are taken into consideration, there are two characteristics of annotation as a reading method:

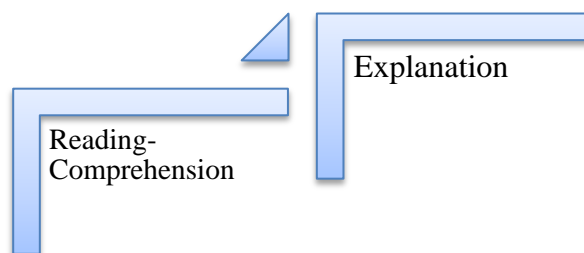


Figure 1. Commentary as a method of reading

In figure 1, two characteristics of an annotation as a method of reading are presented: reading-comprehension and explanation. Reading-comprehension is the level that involves familiarization with the text, obtaining information about the text, comprehension of the topic, supporting arguments, main argument, theme, literary arts in the text, and use of grammar. Explanation is the expression of what is understood from the text through the reader's narrative. TLEP-2018 includes objectives related to acquiring reading skills that are also within the field of text commentary.

The articles under the heading “Special Purposes of Turkish Language Teaching Program” in TLEP-2018 are presented below and related to students' reading skills.

- Improving listening/watching, speaking, reading, and writing skills,
- Helping students to enrich their vocabulary through reading, listening/watching, and improve their emotional, thought, and imaginary worlds,
- Acquiring enthusiasm for and habit of reading and writing (NEM, 2018: 8).

In reaching the objectives of “improving readings skills,” “enriching vocabulary through reading,” “acquiring awareness for language through reading,” “improving emotions, thoughts, and imaginary worlds,” and “developing enthusiasm and habits for reading and writing,” reading in accordance with appropriate annotation levels can be useful. Also, the special purposes of the program it is stated that the reading and writing objectives -prepared with a thematic approach- “are structured for meaning making through in-text, paratext, and inter-text reading: (NEM, 2018: 8). This statement overlaps with the 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th levels of annotation.

Some of the reading skills related objectives in TLEP-2018 meet the levels of text commentary. Table 1 shows the reading objectives and the levels of text commentary related to these objectives.

Table 1. Levels of Text Commentary Method in Reading Objectives in TLEP-2018

| Reading Objectives | Grade Level | Commentary Levels |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Reads the text in accordance with the characteristics of the type. | 5, 6, 7 and 8. Grades | 13th level |
| Guesses the meanings of words or word groups from the context. | 5, 6, 7 and 8th Grades | 4th level |
| Identifies the contributions of phrases and idioms to the text. | 5, 6, 7, and 8th Grades | 4th level |
| Finds the synonyms of the words. | 5th Grade | 4th level |
| Finds the antonyms of the words. | 5th Grade | 4th level |
| Distinguishes the meanings of heteronyms. | 5th Grade | 4th level |
| Explains the contribution of nouns and adjectives to the text's meaning. | 6th Grade | 7th level |
| Explains the contribution of possessive construction and adjective clauses to the meaning of the text. | 6th Grade | 7th level |
| Explains the contribution of preposition, conjunction, and interjections to the meaning of the text. | 6th Grade | 7th level |
| Explains the contribution of pronouns to the meaning of texts. | 6th Grade | 7th level |
| Evaluates the contribution of transitional and connecting statements between the components of the text. | 5, 6, 7 and 8th Grades | 7th level |
| Identifies literary arts in the text. | 6, 7 and 8th Grades | 6th level |
| Explains the contribution of adverbs to the meaning of the text. | 7th Grade | 7th level |
| Identifies the narrative types in the text. | 8th Grade | 5th level |
| Distinguishes types of texts. | 5, 6, 7 and 8th Grades | 13th level |
| Identifies the key theme of the text. | 5, 6, 7 and 8th Grades | 5th level |
| Interprets the text. | 5, 6, 7 and 8th Grades | 5th level |
| Asks questions related to the text. | 5, 6, 7 and 8th Grades | 5, 8, 9, 10 and 11. levels |
| Answers the questions related to the text. | 5, 6, 7 and 8th Grades | 5, 8, 9, 10 and 11. levels |
| Identifies the topic of the text. | 5, 6, 7 and 8th Grades | 5th Level |
| Makes comparisons between texts. | 5, 6, 7 and 8th. Grades | 9th and 10th levels |
| Makes inferences about the texts read. | 5, 6, 7 and 8th. Grades | 6th level |
| Identifies the rhetorics in the text. | 5th and 6th Grades | 6th level |
| Explains the structural characteristics of the poem. | 6th Grade | 3rd level |
| Identifies the supporting ideas in the text. | 7th and 8th Grades | 5th level |
| Identifies the discourse types in the text. | 7th Grade | 5th level |
| Identifies ways to develop the thought used in the text. | 7th and 8th Grades | 5th level |

Table 1 shows the levels of the text commentary method that overlaps with the objectives in TLEP-2018. 16 objectives in 5th grade, 19 objectives in 6th grade, 17 objectives in 7th gradem and 16 objectives in 8th grade meet the levels of text commentary method. Certain objectives overlap with more than one text commentary method levels. The frequency of the levels constituting the text commentary method in objectives are presented in figure 2:

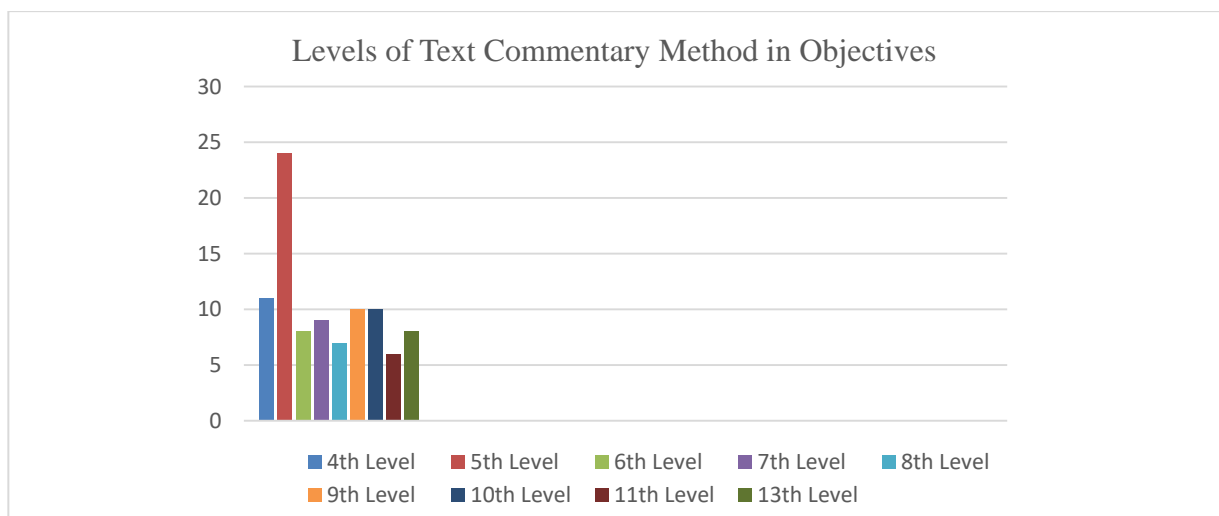


Figure 2. Frequency of the levels of text commentary method in objectives

“5th Level: Explaining-Interpreting” is ranked the first with 24 frequency in terms of overlaps with the objectives. “4th Level: Vocabulary” overlaps with 11, “9th Level: Comparing with the author’s other works” and “10th level: Comparing with different author’s works” overlap with 10; “7th level: Grammar in terms of contribution to the meaning” overlaps with 9; “6th Level: Knowledge of literary arts” and “13th Level: Genre Characteristics” overlap with 8, “8th Level: In-Poem/In-work comparison” overlaps with 7, and “11th Level: Citing different authors’ works for more information” overlaps with 6 objectives. In text books prepared in consideration with the objectives in TLEP-2018, it is seen that there are activities that overlap with commentary levels:

Activity Related to the 4th Level of the Text Commentary Method:

1. ETKİNLİK a) Metinde geçen bazı kelimeler, harfleri karışık olarak verilmiştir. Kutu içinde verilen anlamlarına bakarak kelimeleri örnekteki gibi düzenleyiniz.

| | | |
|-----------------|----------|-------|
| balistik | bared | sinis |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| İSTİKBAL | | |
| azlim | tikislal | haşit |
| 4 | 5 | 6 |
| | | |
| marruğ | haşedet | zazi |
| 7 | 8 | 9 |
| | | |

1. Gelecek.
2. Millete ve seçilmiş hükümete yönelik, zor ve silah kullanarak devirme girişimi.
3. Gizli ve kurnazca kötülük yapan.
4. Acımasız ve haksız davranan, zulmeden.
5. Bağımsızlık.
6. Tanık.
7. Gururlu.
8. Yüce bir ülkü uğrunda ölme, şehitlik.
9. Ermiş, eren.]

Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School 5th Grade Turkish Textbook, MEB Publications, p.56

Activity Related to the 5th Level of the Text Commentary Method:

3. ETKİNLİK: Okuduğunuz metnin konusunu, ana fikrini ve yardımcı fikirlerini bulunuz.

Metnin Konusu

Metnin Ana Fikri

Metnin Yardımcı Fikirleri

Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School 7th Grade Turkish Textbook (1), MEB Publications, p.13

Activity Related to the 13th Level of the Text Commentary Method:

4. ETKİNLİK

Aşağıdaki bilgilerden okuduğunuz metne ait olanları X ile işaretleyiniz.

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | İnsanı ve toplumu ilgilendiren bir konu seçilmiştir. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Hayali konular ele alınmıştır. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yazar, kendisiyle konuşuyormuş gibi yazmıştır. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Anlaşılması zor bir dil kullanılmıştır. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Konu içten ve samimi bir dille anlatılmıştır. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Nesnel yargılara yer verilmiştir. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Öznel yargılara yer verilmiştir. |

Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School 8th Grade Turkish Textbook (1), MEB Publications, p.12

Activity Related to the 6th Level of the Text Commentary Method:

5. "Ebru sanatı, bir dağ gibi yıkılmadan geleceğe koşuyor." cümlesindeki söz sanatları nelerdir?

.....
.....

Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School 8th Grade Turkish Textbook, MEB Publications, p.155

Activity Related to the 10th Level of the Text Commentary Method:

12. Etkinlik

Kitabınızın ilk metni olan "Forsa" adlı metinle "Ömür Törpüsü" adlı metni karşılaştırabilmeniz için aşağıdaki soruları cevaplayınız. Soruları cevaplamaya geçmeden önce hatırlayabilmeniz için "Forsa" adlı metni sessiz okuma yöntemiyle bir kez okuyunuz.

- Sizce "Forsa" adlı metin, "Birey ve Toplum" teması altında ele alınabilecek, işlenebilecek bir metin midir? Açıklayınız.
- Sizce "Ömür Törpüsü" adlı metin, "Erdemler" teması altında ele alınabilecek, işlenebilecek bir metin midir? Açıklayınız.
- Sizce "Forsa" ve "Ömür Törpüsü" adlı metinlerde ele alınan konuların, anlatılanların birbiriyle herhangi bir ilişkisi olduğu söylenebilir mi? Açıklayınız.
- "Forsa" ve "Ömür Törpüsü" adlı metinlerin ana fikirlerini söyleyiniz. Her iki ana fikrin de insanlar için önemli mesajlar içerdiğini düşünüyor musunuz? Açıklayınız.
- "Forsa" ve "Ömür Törpüsü" adlı metinleri "metindeki anlatıcı" bakımından karşılaştırdığınızda neler söyleyebilirsiniz?
- "Forsa" ve "Ömür Törpüsü" adlı metinleri "olay örgüleri" bakımından karşılaştırdığınızda neler söyleyebilirsiniz?
- "Forsa" adlı metnin kahramanı "Kara Memiş" ile "Ömür Törpüsü" adlı metnin kahramanı "Hasan Bey"i karşılaştırdığınızda herhangi bir benzerlik ve farklılık görebiliyor musunuz? Açıklayınız.

6th Grade Middle School Turkish Textbook, Eksen Publishing, p.155

Activity Related to the 7th Level of the Text Commentary Method:

5.Etkinlik a) Aşağıdaki paragrafı okuyunuz. Paragrafta kullanılan geçiş ve bağlantı ifadelerini bulup altlarını çiziniz.

KÜLTÜR NEDİR?

İlk olarak kültür kelimesi Latince "ekin ekmek" anlamında kullanılmıştır. Oysaki bizler kültürü bir ferdin veya bir milletin manevi değerlerini işlemesi, çoğaltması ve geliştirmesi olarak adlandırırız. Başka bir deyişle kültür; tarihsel, toplumsal gelişme süreci içinde oluşturulan bütün maddi ve manevi değerlerin sonraki nesillere aktarılmasında kullanılan araçların bütünüdür. Özellikle dil, kültürel unsurların en önemli taşıyıcısı olmuştur. Son olarak kültür; bir insanın birçok şeyi okumuş, düşünmüş ve yaşayışına sindirmiş hâlidir, diyebiliriz.

Komisyon

Middle School and Imam Hatip Middle School 7th Grade Turkish Textbook (2), MEB Publications, p.182

Certain concepts related to reading in literature overlap with the levels of text commentary method. Annotated reading, a reading method, is one of those concepts. According to Çifçi (2013: 11), annotated reading is "the activity of helping students comprehend through preparation such as various prior information and sub-text questions in the classroom with the guidance of the teacher." Annotated reading has overlapping characteristics with the levels of text commentary method such as using dictionary, sub-text questions, identification of main theme and supporting arguments. Additionally, reading with the text commentary method is related to the characteristics of a critical reader.

Certain skills are needed to be a critical reader (Çifçi, 2013). Some of these skills overlap with the levels of the commentary:

- Mastery of semantics
- Familiarity with the field literature
- Familiarity with the text genre
- Identifying the main theme of the text correctly

Mastery of semantics involves knowing the meanings of vocabulary, metaphors, idioms, terms, and phrases, and identifying the contribution of these to the text's meaning (Çifçi, 2013: 49-52). Mastery of semantics overlaps with the 4th level of the commentary -“dictionary knowledge.” Knowing the field literature is evaluating by accessing different publications in the field of the text that's read (Çifçi, 2013: 52). The 9th, 10th, and 11th levels of commentary overlap with being familiar with the field literature. Knowing the text genre overlaps with the 13th level, and identifying the text's main theme correctly overlaps with the 5th level of the commentary.

PISA Reading Skills Field in terms of Text Commentary Method Levels

The levels of the text commentary method as a reading method are also related to the competency levels included in PISA reading skills field (NEM, 2015: 32). Certain explanations in these levels overlap with the levels of the text commentary method which is shown in table 2.

Table 2. PISA Reading Levels and Text Commentary Method levels

| No. | PISA Level | Explanation | Commentary Level |
|-----------|------------|---|---------------------|
| 1a Level | | (...) Comprehension of the key idea of a text | 5th Level |
| | | (...) Making connections between the information in the text and another information that is widely known | 10th Level |
| 2th Level | | (...) Identifying the key idea in the text | 5th Level |
| | | (...) Comparing information in the text with information outside the text. | 9th and 10th Levels |
| 3th Level | | Identifying the key idea. | 5th Level |
| | | (...) Gathering information to identify the meanings of idioms or vocabulary and | 4th Level |
| | | Making connections between texts and making comparisons. | 9th and 10th Levels |
| | | (...) Examining texts through explanations. | 5th Level |
| | | (...) Interpreting the characteristics of a text. | 13th Level |
| | | (...) Making associations between the text and information used in daily life. | 10th Level |
| 6th Level | | (...) Making inferences. | 5th Level |
| | | Demonstrating understanding of texts in detail. | 5th Level |
| | | (...) Interpreting abstract concepts | 4th and 5th Levels |

The levels of the text commentary methods overlap with 4 levels in PISA. The levels of 4, 5, 9, 10 and 13 in the text commentary meet the competencies in reading skills in PISA. This shows that commentary as a reading method can contribute to students in terms of PISA reading skills.

CONCLUSION

Reading skills are important for comprehension. Comprehension provides a foundation for narrative skills. In other words, narration depends on comprehension. Various strategies, methods, and techniques are used for better reading which is an important skill in comprehension.

When studies on commentary that is one of the reading and writing methods in Dervish lodge-sufi literature and classical Turkish poetry, it was seen that the text commentary method has certain

levels. These levels revealed that the text commentary method should be considered as a reading method.

Text commentary-based reading method can be considered as a method for improvement of reading skills in the Turkish language education. The text commentary which is a primeval method in the reading culture overlaps with 28 reading objectives -seen repetitively in different grade levels- in TLEP-2018. The levels of text commentary-based reading method in middle school Turkish language textbooks prepared in alignment with these objectives stand out. Additionally, the text commentary method is compatible with the annotated reading. The competency of reading levels in PISA, which is an international exam towards reading skills, overlap with the levels of the text commentary based reading method and this is an important finding. The identified conditions support the comment related to consideration of the levels of text commentary as a reading method on its own.

Departing from the text commentary studies on classical Turkish poetry, the levels of this reading method are identified. The objective sentences prepared in alignment with these levels can be considered as the fundamentals of the text commentary based reading method:

1. Learning of the meanings of unknown vocabulary from dictionaries.
2. Identifies the topic of the text.
3. Explains the main theme of the text.
4. Explains the supporting arguments of the text.
5. Identifies the literary arts in the text.
6. Identifies the contributions of grammar components to the meaning (identifies the contribution of the use of noun, adjective, pronouns, adverb, conjunctions, and interjections to the meaning).
7. Makes in-text comparisons.
8. Compares the text with other works of the author/poet.
9. Compares the text with the works of other authors/poets.
10. Refers to different resources related to the components of the text in order to understand the text content better.
11. Explains the cultural elements in the text.
12. Identifies the characteristics related to the genre of the text.
13. Identifies the stylistic characteristics of the text.
14. Provides an overall evaluation of the text.

The objectives of the identified text commentary-based reading method can be considered in preparing Turkish education programs. Also, in alignment with these objectives, activities can be prepared for textbooks. Applied research related to reading education in consideration with the abovementioned objectives can be conducted. Additionally, it is seen that text commentary-based reading method is both a reading-comprehension and writing-narrating method. Thus, commentary levels as a writing method can also be researched.

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