

# Determination of Turkish Teachers' Perceptions Towards Turkish Lesson Activities

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#### Abstract

Activities are an important element that supports learning and forms the basis of student-centered approaches in education and training processes. In this context, the aim of this study is to determine the perceptions of Turkish teachers towards the activities in Turkish textbooks. In the study, the relational screening model, one of the quantitative research methods, was used. In line with the purpose of the study, the study group was determined through purposive sampling. The study group consisted of 225 Turkish teachers who volunteered to participate in the study. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers and the "Turkish Teachers' Perceptions of Turkish Course Activities Scale". In the study, it was concluded that Turkish teachers have a very high level of perception towards Turkish course activities, that their perceptions of activities differ significantly according to age, and that there is no significant difference according to the gender variable.

Keywords: Turkish lesson, activity, perception

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In education and training processes, activities are an important element that supports learning and forms the basis of student-centered approaches. While the role of the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge is at the forefront in the traditional understanding of education, modern educational approaches emphasize the active participation and experiences of the student. In this context, activities make learning more effective and meaningful by enabling students to take an active role in the processes of accessing information, developing skills and gaining experience (Özmantar et al., 2010).

In general terms, an activity can be defined as any kind of work planned for a specific purpose that enables the active participation of the individual in the learning process. This definition shows that activities are not only limited to the classroom, but also include activities at home, in the garden and even while playing games. From this perspective, activities aim not only to help students acquire knowledge but also to develop skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, co-operation and communication. The concept of activity aims to put the student at the centre in learning-teaching processes and is based on the principle of learning by doing and living. This principle argues that students can achieve more permanent and meaningful learning through experiences. Activity appears as a basic component of learning processes. Activities that contribute to the development of individuals both in educational environments and in daily life are also associated with various learning approaches. Textbooks used in Turkish language teaching and the activities in these textbooks have a vital importance in terms of developing students' language skills, supporting their thinking processes and enriching their learning experiences (Batur & Özdemir, 2021; Baş, Turhan & Karaca, 2017). These activities not only help students learn grammar rules, but also aim to improve their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills (Cevik & Günes, 2017). Effective activities should encourage students' active participation, develop their high-level cognitive skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, creativity) and make learning more meaningful (Oryaşın, 2021). For this reason, Turkish teachers'

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perceptions of activities in textbooks are of great importance in terms of the effectiveness of activities and their role in learning processes.

Activities aim to develop students' various thinking skills. These skills include recall, inference, problem solving, self-evaluation, discussion, analysing, questioning, transforming, comparing, evaluating and designing (Bayrak Özmutlu & Kanık Uysal, 2021). However, some studies show that the activities in textbooks give more weight to recall skills and less to high-level skills such as problem solving, self-evaluation and discussion (Karadağ & Tekercioğlu, 2019).

The design and content of activities are critical for the effective management of learning processes. Activities should be appropriate to the level of the student, interesting, supported by various materials and associated with daily life (Batur & Özdemir, 2021). Visual elements (pictures, photographs, graphics, cartoons) used in the activities should enrich learning, but they should be compatible with the text and encourage students to think (Sarıkaya, 2019). Some studies indicate that the use of visuals in textbooks is insufficient and that visuals are generally not compatible with the content (Muradoğlu & Işık, 2019). In addition, making the activities suitable for digital use is important in terms of ensuring students' active participation in the lesson and making learning more fun.

Activities in textbooks aim to develop students' various thinking skills. These skills include cognitive skills such as recall, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation, as well as higher-order thinking skills such as self-evaluation, discussion, problem solving, interpretation and design (Bayrak Özmutlu & Kanık Uysal, 2021). However, some studies show that the activities in textbooks generally remain at the recall level and do not adequately support higher-order thinking skills (Tosunoğlu & Demir, 2014). In particular, it is seen that less weight is given to skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. This may negatively affect the development of students' critical thinking skills. In addition, some activities may be aimed directly at evaluation rather than developing prediction skills (Bayrak Özmutlu & Kanık Uysal, 2021; Karadağ & Tekercioğlu, 2019).

Activities in Turkish textbooks have important functions such as developing students' language skills, supporting their thinking processes and enriching their learning experiences (Batur & Özdemir, 2021; Erdoğan, 2014; Güneş, 2017). These activities aim for students to achieve certain outcomes and these outcomes include language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking), thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation) and other cognitive processes (Baş, Turhan, & Karaca, 2017; Sarıkaya, 2019). Activities are expected to encourage student participation, develop high-level cognitive skills and activate learning (Oryaşın, 2021). In this context, Turkish teachers' perceptions of activities in textbooks are of great importance in terms of the effectiveness of activities and their role in learning processes.

Rather than presenting information, teachers should ensure the active participation of students, create a discussion environment and allow students to create products (Güneş, 2017). Measurement and evaluation processes are an integral part of the activities. These processes are used to determine students' prior knowledge and evaluate their learning levels (Göçer, 2008). Assessment criteria can be determined by teachers but should not be imposed on students. Teachers' roles during activities are to guide students, facilitate learning and provide support according to their individual needs (Baş, Turhan, & Karaca, 2017). Teachers should encourage students to ask questions, create discussion environments and help students take responsibility for their own learning processes (Güneş, 2017). The role of teachers is to manage the learning processes in activities are an integral part of learning (Göçer, 2008). These processes are used to determine students' prior knowledge, assess their learning levels and give feedback. Assessment criteria can be determined by teachers, but students should also be involved in this process (Çerçi, 2016).

However, existing studies reveal that the activities in Turkish textbooks are not always of the desired quality (Çevik & Güneş, 2017; Güneş, 2017). Some activities are in the nature of

exercises and do not comply with the principles of the constructivist approach (Güneş, 2017). It was determined that student interests and needs were not paid enough attention, most of the activities were repetitive and did not sufficiently support students' critical and creative thinking skills (Tosunoğlu & Demir, 2014). In addition, it is seen that the use of mental skills in the activities is insufficient and the principles of interaction and social constructivist approach are not paid enough attention (Karadağ & Tekercioğlu, 2019).

According to the results of the literature review, teachers' perceptions of the activities can be summarised as follows:

Quality and Inadequacy of Activities: Teachers think that some of the activities in the textbooks remain at the exercise level and are not suitable for the constructivist learning approach (Güneş, 2017; Batur & Özdemir, 2021). It is stated that such activities are based on repetition rather than developing students' mental skills (Güneş, 2011). In addition, it is also stated that the activities do not fully address the interests and needs of the students (Güneş, 2017).

Relationship of Activities with Outcomes: Some teachers state that the activities do not fully overlap with the learning outcomes in the curriculum (Batur & Özdemir, 2021). Especially the fact that grammar acquisitions are not given enough space is an issue criticised by teachers. In addition to the teachers who think that the writing activities are appropriate for the learning outcomes, there are also opinions that the activities are below or above the student level. It is also stated that there are not enough activities suitable for the targeted outcomes in reading passages (Muradoğlu & Işık, 2019).

Appropriateness to Student Level: Many teachers state that the activities in the textbooks are not suitable for the student level. In particular, it is stated that visual reading activities are not interesting enough for children and the visuals are at a very simple level (Muradoğlu & Işık, 2019). In addition, the low number of words in the activities16 is a problem expressed by some teachers. This may cause difficulties in the learning process (Aydın, 2024).

Variety of Activities and Repetition: Teachers frequently criticise that most of the activities in the textbooks are similar and repetitive. Teachers emphasise that the activities should be more diverse and creative. It is seen that especially speaking activities are stereotyped activities and there is not enough space for original activities (Aydın, 2024; Güneş, 2017).

Difficulties in Implementing Activities: Teachers stated that they encountered problems such as lack of time, overcrowded class sizes and low developmental levels of students while implementing the activities. This situation may make it difficult to realise the activities in accordance with their purpose. Some teachers also emphasise the importance of parental support in the implementation of activities (Erdoğan, 2014).

# Purpose of the Research

Turkish textbooks and Turkish lesson activities are the most basic resources for Turkish teachers to conduct Turkish lessons. In this context, the aim of this study is to determine the perceptions of Turkish teachers towards the activities in Turkish textbooks. In line with this purpose, the questions to be answered in the research process are as follows:

1- What is the level of Turkish teachers' perceptions of Turkish lesson activities?

- 2- Do Turkish teachers' perceptions of activities differ according to age?
- 3- Do Turkish teachers' perceptions of activities differ according to gender?
- 4- Do the activity perceptions of Turkish teachers differ according to professional seniority?

5- Do Turkish teachers' perceptions of effectiveness differ according to the faculty of graduation?

6- Do Turkish teachers' perceptions of effectiveness differ according to educational level?

7- Do Turkish teachers' perceptions of effectiveness differ according to the number of students in their classrooms?

#### METHOD

In this study, the relational survey model, one of the quantitative research methods, was used to determine the perceptions of Turkish teachers towards Turkish lesson activities. According to Karasar (2024, p. 81), the relational survey model is 'a research model that aims to determine the existence or degree of change between two or more variables.' Within the framework of this method, it was tried to reveal the perceptions of Turkish teachers working in secondary schools towards Turkish lesson activities.

## Study Group

In line with the purpose of the study, the study group was determined through purposive sampling. According to Creswell (2019, pp. 266-267), researchers purposefully select individuals and research locations in order to have information about the main event. The study group of the research, which was selected to determine the perceptions of Turkish teachers towards Turkish lesson activities, consisted of 225 Turkish teachers working in public schools in Hatay province and participating in the research voluntarily.

Numerical results regarding the descriptive characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 1:

Features	n	%	
Age			
20-25	46	20.4	
26-30	56	24.9	
31-35	53	23.6	
36-40	42	18.7	
41-50	20	8.9	
Over 50	8	3.6	
Gender			
Female	129	57.3	
Male	96	42.7	
Year of Work			
1-5	107	47.3	
6-10	45	19.9	
11-15	44	19.5	
16-20	12	5.3	
21 and above	17	7.5	
Graduate Faculty			
Faculty of Education	213	94.7	
Other	12	5.3	
Education Level			
Bachelor's degree	189	84	
Master's degree graduate	36	16	
Number of Students			
0-15	16	7.1	
16-20	40	17.8	
21-25	45	20	
26-30	71	31.6	
31-35	38	16.9	
36 and above	15	6.7	

Table 1. Participant Information
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The majority of the teachers in the study group (n=56, 14.9%) were between 26-30 years old and 57.3% of them were female. It was determined that the majority of the teachers had undergraduate education (n=189, 84%) and graduated from the faculty of education (n=213,

94.7%). It was also determined that 47.3% of them had been working for 5 years or less (Table 1).

# Data Collection and Analysis

The data in the study were collected with a semi-structured interview form consisting of 7 items prepared by the researchers and the 'Turkish Teachers' Perceptions Scale for Turkish Course Activities' prepared by Sahan and Cerci (2018). In order to determine the validity level of the scale, construct validity was examined and exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis applications were performed. For each item in the scale, the participants were asked to tick one of the five-point Likert-based boxes graded between 'strongly disagree' and 'strongly agree'. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was found to be 0.97 in the study in which the scale applied in the research was developed and 0.94 in this study.

The semi-structured interview form consisting of 7 items was checked by five field experts and the form was finalised after the necessary corrections were made. Before starting the study, the necessary permissions were obtained from Hatay Mustafa Kemal University Social and Human Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee (decision dated 04.04.2024 and numbered 24). Data were collected electronically through Google forms.

Before the analysis, it was checked whether the assumptions were met. Taking into account the number of participants, the assumption test (normality analysis) for all groups was evaluated with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and skewness and kurtosis values. As a result of the evaluations, it was determined that the participants' perception scores towards course activities did not meet the assumptions of parametric analysis on a group basis. Therefore, the data were analysed with nonparametric tests. In this context, Mann Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis analyses were performed using SPSS 20 software.

# RESULTS

As a result of analysing the perceptions of Turkish teachers towards Turkish lesson activities, the following findings were obtained:

The perception levels of the Turkish teachers participating in the study towards Turkish lesson activities are shown in Table 2:

Table 2. Turkish teachers' perception levels towards Turkish course					
N	Ā	SS			
225	124,80	24,759			

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Table 2 shows the mean values of the total scores of 225 participants, ignoring the variables. The mean value is 124.80, which indicates a very high level of perception.

Table 3 shows the perception levels of the Turkish teachers participating in the study towards Turkish lesson activities according to age variable:

Variable	Age Range	N	Rank	sd	<b>X</b> <sup>2</sup>	р	Significant difference
			Mean			P	Significant anter ence
	A: 20-25	46	138,45	5	13,528	,019	A-C
	B: 26-30	56	116,36				A-D
	C: 31-35	53	107,80				A-E
Age	D: 36-40	42	94,24				
	E: 41-50	20	92,10				
	F: 50 and	0	120.20				
	above	8	128,38				

Table 3. Perception of Turkish lesson activities according to age

According to Table 3, there is a significant difference between the groups depending on the age variable ( $X^2$ =13,528, p<0,05). The mean perception scores of the teachers in group A (20-25) years old) were higher than the averages of the other groups and this situation showed a significant difference with groups C-D-E. The difference is in favour of group A. A-F group averages are close to each other and there is no significant difference between these groups. Similarly, no significant difference was observed between other age groups.

The perception levels of the Turkish teachers participating in the study towards Turkish lesson activities according to gender variable are shown in Table 4:

Tuble III e	Tuble interception of Turkish lesson detivities decorang to gender									
Gender	Ν	Rank mean	Row total	U	р					
Female	129	119,75	15448,00	5321,000	,071					
Male	96	103,93	9977,00							
Total	225									

Table 4. Perception of Turkish lesson activities according to gender

According to the gender variable, there is no statistically significant difference between the mean perception scores of female and male teachers (U=5321,00, p>0,05).

Table 5 shows the perception levels of the Turkish teachers participating in the study towards Turkish lesson activities according to the professional seniority variable:

Table 5. Perception of Turkish lesson activities according to the variable of professional seniority

Variable	Seniority	Ν	Rank Mean	sd	<b>X</b> <sup>2</sup>	р	Significant difference
	Δ.1.Γ	107		4	27 221	000	
	A: 1-5	107	136,70	4	37,321	,000	A-B
	B: 6-10	45	80,30				A-C
Professional	C: 11-15	44	82,43				D-B
seniority	D: 16-20	12	139,71				D-C
	E: 21 an over	17	110,68				
	Total	225					

Table 5 shows the comparative analysis of the mean perception scores of teachers with different seniority levels. According to the Kruskal-Wallis analysis, there is a statistically significant difference between the groups depending on the seniority variable ( $X^2=37,321, p<0,05$ ). The two groups with the highest mean values are D (16-20 years) and A (1-5 years) teachers respectively. The difference is between these two groups and other groups. In other words, a statistically significant difference was found between group A and groups B and C, and between group D and groups B-C. The difference is in favour of the groups with high mean values (A and D).

Table 6 shows the perception levels of the Turkish teachers participating in the study towards Turkish lesson activities according to the faculty of graduation variable:

Graduate Faculty	Ν	Rank Mean	Row total	U	р
Faculty of Education	213	109,68	23362,00	571,00	,001
Other	12	171,92	2063,00		
Total	225				

Table 6. Perception towards Turkish course according to the faculty of graduation

According to the results of Mann Whitney U analysis according to the faculty of graduation variable, the mean scores of the teachers in the other category are higher than the graduates of the faculty of education. This situation created a statistically significant difference in favour of the other group in the intergroup comparison (U= 571,00, p<0,05).

The perception levels of the Turkish teachers participating in the study towards Turkish lesson activities according to the education level variable are shown in Table 7:

Table 7. Perception towards Turkish lesson according to education level

Educational Level	N	Rank mean	Row total	U	р	
Bachelor's degree	189	114,69	21675,50	3083,50	,373	

Master's degree graduate	36	104,15	3749,50	
Total	225			

The mean scores of the teachers according to the education level variable are close to each other. Therefore, it was observed that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the groups (U=3083,50, p>0,05).

The perception levels of the Turkish teachers participating in the study towards Turkish lesson activities according to the average number of students are shown in Table 8:

Variable	Seniority	N	Rank Mean	sd	<b>X</b> <sup>2</sup>	р	Significant difference
	A: 0-15	16	138,41	5	32,922	,000,	A-D, A-E
	B: 16-20	40	139,08				B-C, B-D, B-E
Number of	C: 21-25	45	113,82				C-D
students	D: 26-30	71	82,04				E-D
	E: 31-35	38	113,00				F-C, F-D, F-E
	F: 36 and above	15	160,43				
	Total	225					

Table 8. Perception towards Turkish lesson according to the number of students

Based on the number of students in the groups, there were differences in the mean perception scores of the teachers. The highest mean values were in groups F (36 and above), B (16-20), A (0-5), C (21-25), E (31-35) and D (26-30), respectively. The difference between these averages was analysed by Kruskal Wallis analysis. According to the findings, the difference between the averages is statistically significant (X<sup>2</sup>=32,922, p<0,05). The difference observed between A-D and A-E groups is in favour of A group; the difference between B-C, B-D and B-E groups is in favour of B group; the difference between C-D group is in favour of C group; the difference between F-C, F-D and F-E groups is in favour of F group.

# **CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION**

In this study, it was aimed to determine the perceptions of Turkish teachers towards Turkish lesson activities. Turkish teachers' general perception scores from the scale were analysed. The average value of the 225 teachers who participated in the study was 124,80 and it was concluded that they had a very high level of perception. When the related literature is examined, the results of different studies (Şahan, 2017; Şimşek, 2015; Kaya, 2015), in which teachers' perceptions towards activities are at a high level, support the results obtained in our research.

In the first sub-problem of the research, the relationship between the perceptions of Turkish teachers towards Turkish lesson activities and their ages was examined. The mean perception scores of the teachers in group A (20-25 years old) were higher than the averages of the other groups and this situation showed a significant difference with groups C-D-E. As a result, it can be said that Turkish teachers' perceptions of effectiveness differ significantly according to age. It can be thought that the emergence of such a result may be due to the fact that Turkish teachers are dynamic, young and new to the profession in the first five years of their profession. When the related literature is examined, it is seen that there are research results that support (Şahan, 2017) and do not support (Şimşek, 2015; Üner, 2010) the research result in terms of professional seniority.

According to the results obtained from the research, no statistically significant difference was found between the mean perception scores of teachers in the female and male categories. According to the professional seniority variable, the highest group of Turkish teachers' perceptions towards Turkish lesson activities are the teachers with seniority between D (16-20 years) and A (1-5 years). The difference is between these two groups and other groups. According to the results of the analyses made according to the faculty of graduation variable, the

mean scores of the teachers in the other category are higher compared to the graduates of the faculty of education. The mean scores of the teachers according to the education level variable are close to each other. Therefore, it was observed that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the groups. Based on the number of students in the groups, there were differences in the mean perception scores of the teachers. When the literature is examined, there are studies supporting the results of the research in the context of professional seniority (Şimşek, 2015; Üner, 2010), education level (Şahan, 2017) and undergraduate programme (Özçakmak, 2011; Güfta & Özçakmak, 2013; Şahan, 2017).

When the results of the research are analysed holistically, Turkish teachers' perceptions of Turkish lesson activities are of great importance in terms of the quality of the activities and the effectiveness of the learning process. More effective and student-centred activities should be designed by taking teachers' criticisms and suggestions about the activities in the textbooks into consideration. The activities should be organised in accordance with the constructivist approach, diverse, appropriate to the level of the students and overlapping with the learning outcomes. In this way, Turkish lessons should be aimed to develop students' language skills, critical and creative thinking skills and contribute to their correct and effective use of Turkish. It is of great importance that teachers play an active role in this process, evaluate the activities in the textbooks and adapt them according to student needs.

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