# Content Readability Levels in New Media About "Social Media Addiction": Websites in Turkish

## Yeni Medyada "Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı" Konulu İçeriklerin Okunabilirlik Düzeyleri: Türkçe İnternet Siteleri

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**ABSTRACT**

This research aims to examine the readability levels of informative content on Turkish websites regarding social media addiction using an interdisciplinary approach. Between November 1 and 10, 2024, the phrase "social media addiction" was searched on the Google search engine. Among the websites that appeared in search results, commercial content, advertisements, forums, magazines, slideshows, surveys, websites that contain only images or videos, and sentences that have fewer than 10 words were not included in the study. Within this framework, 79 websites from new media, such as the web pages of public and private institutions or personal and expert blogs, were included in the review as a result of a 50-page scan. The texts on these websites were calculated according to the average number of syllables and the average number of words with four syllables or more using the Ateşman with Bezirci and Yılmaz readability scores. The IBM SPSS 25,0 program was used for the data analysis. While the average number of syllables of the sites included in the study was 2.91±0.11, the average number of words with four syllables or more in the sentence was 4.22±1.28, the average Ateşman readability score was 45.94±11.63, and the average Bezirci and Yılmaz readability score was 13.20±4.00. In conclusion, the readability levels of the texts in the informative websites on social media addiction were found to be at the "difficult" level according to Ateşman and at the "undergraduate" level according to Bezirci and Yılmaz.

*Keywords:* Social Media Addiction, New Media, Internet, Ateşman Readability Score, Bezirci and Yılmaz Readability Score.

**ÖZ**

Bu çalışmada, disiplinler arası bir yaklaşımla Türkçe internet sitelerinde yer alan sosyal medya bağımlılığı (SMB) konusundaki bilgilendirme içeriklerinin okunabilirlik düzeylerinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. 1-10 Kasım 2024 tarihleri arasında arama motoru Google'da "sosyal medya bağımlılığı" sözcükleri ile tarama yapılmıştır. Tarama sonucu ortaya çıkan siteler arasından ticari, reklam, forum, magazin, slâyt, anket, yalnızca resim ya da video içeren, cümle sayısı 10'dan daha az olan siteler ve sosyal medya bağımlılığı ile ilgili yapılan akademik makaleler kapsam dışı bırakılmıştır. Bu çerçevede yapılan 50 sayfalık tarama sonucu kamu ve özel kurumların web sayfaları, kişisel ve uzman blogları gibi yeni medya ortamlarından 79 web sitesi incelemeye dâhil edilmiştir. Bu sitelerdeki metinlerin Ateşman ile Bezirci ve Yılmaz okunabilirlik değerlerine göre ortalama hece sayısı ve dört hece ve üstü kelime sayısı ortalamasına göre hesaplamaları yapılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde IBM SPSS 25,0 programı kullanılmıştır. Çalışmaya dâhil edilen sitelerin ortalama hece sayısı 2,91±0,11 iken cümlede ortalama dört hece ve üstü kelime sayısı ortalaması 4,22±1,28, ortalama Ateşman okunabilirlik değeri 45,94±11,63 ve ortalama Bezirci ve Yılmaz okunabilirlik değeri 13,20±4,00 olarak tespit edilmiştir. Sonuç olarak SMB konusundaki bilgilendirme içerikli sitelerdeki metinlerin okunabilirlik düzeyleri Ateşman'a göre "zor" düzeyde, Bezirci ve Yılmaz'a göre ise "lisans" derecesinde bulunmuştur.

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı, Yeni Medya, İnternet, Ateşman Okunabilirlik Ölçütü, Bezirci ve Yılmaz Okunabilirlik Ölçütü.

## Introduction

Today, most people rely on the internet and search engines to find information. They access news and other content through websites and digital media platforms. The interactive features of new media environments that allow visual, audio, two-way communication, and feedback make these environments even more appealing.

The features of new communication tools enable two-way communication with the opportunity for active participation. The ability to comment on a newspaper article in an online environment turns the newspaper from a hot media into a cool media. According to McLuhan, this dominance of cool media requires more participation. Thus, unlike in hot media, it is the participant or recipient who completes the message in cool media. When considering engagement, elements such as the ability to read the message, drawing attention, and feedback are important. In other words, the message is no longer in a fixed form printed by the printer. The message becomes flexible, variable, and evolvable. Therefore, the information it covers becomes secondary, and how it is communicated becomes more important (Bourse & Yücel, 2012: 107).

The reliability of the websites on the internet and in new media environments, and the accuracy and timeliness of the news and information on these websites, is an important issue that needs to be questioned. Another aspect to consider is the readability and comprehensibility of the information texts on these websites. Because a text, publication, or content with low or difficult readability will also have low comprehensibility, the ultimate goal cannot be achieved.

Social media addiction (SMA), which has gained significance in recent years and has become a topical problem, written, reported, and discussed as much as substance addiction, is an important issue because it is a behavioural dimension of addiction. Although it is observed that many academic studies have been conducted on SMA as a socially significant issue, it is seen that there is no research on the readability level of the texts on the websites that publish on this issue and problem on the internet. Therefore, the importance, purpose, and authenticity of this study are to determine the level of readability of the content and texts about SMA on websites in Turkish from a different perspective. From this viewpoint, informative texts on the subject of SMA on Turkish websites were selected and analysed. Readability scores created by Ateşman with Bezirci and Yılmaz were used to evaluate the content. The texts on the websites and pages of public institutions, private institutions, and personal/expert blogs in different media environments on Turkish websites that cover the subject of SMA were analysed.

## Social Media Addiction

Addiction used to be a concept that defined situations such as taking, eating, drinking, and using harmful and tangible substances. But today the definition has been expanded, and many behavioural situations are now included in the scope of addiction in terms of their consequences. Bringing the internet into our lives has led to many digital and behavioural addictions. Social media addiction is defined as a disorder in DSM-V and classified as a behavioural addiction. This definition mainly covers behavioural addiction (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011: 52; American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2014).

According to Holden (2001), addiction is a condition that occurs in response to a tangible substance. In the Turkish Education Program for Fighting Addiction, it is stated that "addiction is defined as the loss of control over an object or an action that an individual uses, and withdrawal symptoms such as restlessness, insomnia, and anger are observed when the frequency of the behaviour or use is reduced or stopped" (Yeşilay, 2024a).

Although addiction is fundamentally divided into substance addiction and behavioural addiction, both types of addiction have many sub-categories within them. To be considered an addiction, the substance used or the behaviour must become harmful. Smoking, injecting certain

substances, or short-term behaviour exhibited to satisfy psychological needs are not addictions. Behavioural addiction occurs when the use is long-term and the behaviour is out of control (Oral & Çakır, 2023: 43-45). When behavioural addiction progresses long-term and gradually, it causes physical, mental, and social balances to change or deteriorate (Oral & Erdoğan, 2023: 7). Habits play a primary role in developing social media addiction. A behaviour that seems harmless at first turns into an irrational behaviour and becomes addictive when it is repeated over and over again (Strack et al., 2006: 41)

Due to the development and spread of technology, digital tools have an important place in our daily lives. The digital technologies we use in daily life, especially the internet and smartphones, meet our need for communication. The transformation of communication tools from traditional to digital and the increased use of digital tools have brought along problematic internet use and technology addiction (Balcı & Kaya, 2023: 4). In the historical process, the fact that technology has shaped human life has put new forms of lifestyle into the life of the individual and introduced the phenomenon of the "dependent individual" (Yengin, 2019: 130). In this context, addicted individuals who use social media problematically constitute a significant link in the cycle of technological addiction.

The TURBAHAR project, conducted by Üsküdar University, shows Türkiye's addiction risk profile and mental health map report. Six symptoms of addiction were questioned in the study, and 43.7% of individuals were found to be at high risk of social media addiction (Ünübol & Hızlı Sayar, 2019: 260).

Behavioural addictions include technology, shopping, eating, and gambling. Types of technology addiction include internet addiction, digital gaming addiction, smartphone addiction, and social media addiction. These types of addiction have also been the subject of recent studies (Yeşilay, 2024b). In addition, digital addiction in particular has recently been acknowledged as a serious issue. Since the addiction problem has emerged due to concern and anxiety, it is seen that

a field has emerged on this subject, and studies have been conducted multidimensionally (Balcı et al., 2024a: 12).

According to the data in 2023, more than five billion people globally are registered as social media users (Digital, 2024). On social media platforms, people's behaviours towards problematic use of these channels are addressed by studies conducted in different disciplines. Senseless and excessive social media use is also examined as a behavioural type of addiction and associated with different psychological variables (Balcı et al., 2024b: 100).

In today's world, with the rapid advancement of technology and the increasing use of the internet, individuals have begun to seek information online on many subjects, including health issues, as noted in several studies. Consequently, the importance of online sites has also increased. Online educational services are becoming increasingly widespread (Balatsoukas et al., 2015; Kirazlı et al., 2020).

On the other hand, especially during the pandemic period in 2019, when people around the world were forced to stay at home, people began using the internet more frequently to access information. This process highlighted the importance of the readability of online texts and content, as well as the quality of such information within the scope of health literacy (Paakkari & Okan, 2020).

## Readability

The literature indicates that various measures have been developed to assess readability levels, and these have been applied in both international and Turkish studies. It is also stated that more than 1000 studies that can be associated with readability were published until the 1980s, and about 100 statistically reliable and valid readability measures were developed (Dubay, 2004, as cited in Çoban, 2014: 98).

In this sense, the first measure for assessing readability was created in 1923 by Bertha Lively S. L. Pressey using the word list created by Thorndike (1921). Following this initial work, the development of readability measures continued to

expand. When we look at the areas of use for the developed measures, it is seen that they are mostly used by educators in formal education institutions to measure sentence and word difficulties in educational materials, as well as in the fields of media, news, law, health, and insurance (Çoban, 2014: 98).

It is observed that the first studies in Türkiye aimed at developing readability criteria in the literature on readability in Türkiye (Ateşman, 1997; Sönmez, 2003; Bezirci & Yılmaz, 2010; Çetinkaya & Uzun, 2010), were conducted in 1997 (Kavun & Maden, 2024: 41). When we look at the process of studies on readability in Türkiye, it is seen that the first studies started in 1997. The first study was Ender Ateşman's study in 1997, which investigated, defined, and categorized the difficulty levels of texts in Turkish (Yılmaz & Temiz, 2014). Therefore, Ateşman (1997) and Bezirci & Yılmaz's (2010) readability measures are mostly used to assess the readability level of Turkish texts.

The Ateşman (1997) measure has been cited as the primary criterion in readability studies, largely due to its early availability, online accessibility, and ease of application based on the variables it employs. The Çetinkaya & Uzun (2010) measure, ranked second, appears to be similar to the Ateşman model, while the Bezirci & Yılmaz (2010) measure, ranked third, differs from the first two by providing mathematical calculations of variables such as syllable count and word length (Kavun & Maden, 2024: 52).

When it comes to readability, it is also important to look at the education and literacy levels of the population. Naturally, each country's situation and statistical data regarding education and reading differ on a global scale. According to the statement made by TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute), the average duration of education for the population over the age of 25 in 2023 is 9.3 years in Türkiye. In terms of gender, the average education level for women is 8.6 years, while for men it is 10.1 years. Moreover, in 2023, the proportion of associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctorate graduates

in the population over the age of 25 appears to be 24.6% in the same age group. The graduation rate for secondary education and above is 48.3% (Turkish Statistical Institute [TÜİK], 2024).

According to Yılmaz & Topaktaş (2014: 218), the notion of readability is used to indicate easy comprehension of what is read, while the concept of comprehensibility is used to indicate elements such as the font or style used. On the other hand, readability and comprehensibility are also related to the notion of legibility. An important note about the notions of legibility and readability is that these two concepts are complementary rather than interchangeable (Dursun, 2018: 137).

According to Kara (2005: 128), the information design is an important element in making texts readable today. The fact that a news item is accurate and understandable by the reader also ensures that the reader spends less time understanding the news item or text. Information design makes it possible to bring together dispersed information and present it in a readable form using computer and internet technology. According to Somericik (2000), no document should be unpleasant or difficult to read. Design in readability is important in conveying corporate identity to the reader as well as affecting readability in a text (Akdağ, 2009: 29). It can be said that titles, visuals, character structure, length, and brevity have an effect on the readability of texts on web pages for individuals.

In this study, since the aim is to present the mathematical results of variables such as syllable count and word length in the examined social media texts, along with the most widely used Ateşman (1997) readability measure in the literature, the Bezirci and Yılmaz (2010) measure was also employed as a secondary tool.

**Ateşman Readability Measure**
The concept of readability, formulated by Ateşman, defines the level of comprehensibility of a text as easy or difficult. Ease or difficulty in the readability of the text is related to its suitability for the level of the reader. The scoring between readability score

and readability level is grouped as 90-100 very easy, 70-89 easy, 50-69 medium difficulty, 30-49 difficult, and 1-29 very difficult (1997: 58-74). The concept of comprehensibility is related to syllable count, word count, word groups, difficult words, foreign words, terms, abstract and concrete words (Ateşman, 1997: 171-174).

When the studies conducted are examined, it is generally observed that the averages of syllable, word, and sentence counts have been considered as variables in measuring readability. Researchers have established proportional values based on these three variables. Among the prominent scholars who have utilized these variables in their studies are Flesch, Dale-Chall, Spache, and Fry (Goldbort, 2001: 41). Ateşman adapted the Flesch readability measure into Turkish in order to determine the readability of Turkish texts (Temur, 2003: 177).

### Bezirci and Yılmaz Readability Measures

Developed in 2010 by Bezirci and Yılmaz, the basis of the readability measure is explained according to the education system in Türkiye. The readability score obtained from the measure is interpreted according to the classification of the education system in Türkiye. According to the classification of the education system in Türkiye, Primary education is for grades 1-8, high school for grades 9-12, undergraduate for grades 12-16, and academic level for grades 16 and above. There are two important features in the measure: one is the average sentence length, and the other is the number of syllables. The high number of words in a sentence and the high number of syllables in words affect and reduce readability (Bezirci & Yılmaz, 2010: 58-60).

### Methodology

#### Samples

This research is a quantitative research design study. In order to examine the readability levels of the informative content about SMA, a Google search was conducted using the words "social media addiction". Commercial, advertisement,

forum, magazine, slide, survey, sites containing only pictures or videos, sites with less than 10 sentences, and academic articles on SMA were not included in the review. Among the Turkish websites, new media environments that share content about SMA from the websites of public and private health institutions, educational institutions, and personal and expert blog pages that meet the analysis criteria were selected as samples and examined. The limitation of the study is its temporality. Due to the constant addition of up-to-date data and information on the Internet, there would be no such thing as going to the beginning or end of the subject. Therefore, a retrospective scanning was conducted starting from the first page that appeared between November 1 and 10, 2024, considering the timeliness. 79 sites within the sample selection were reached, and informative texts on SMA were analysed as a result of approximately a 50-page scan.

### Data Collection and Analysis

In the study, based on the question "What is the readability level of the texts on Turkish websites containing information on SMA according to Ateşman and Bezirci &Yılmaz measures?" and the informative texts and contents on SMA selected for the study were calculated according to Ateşman and Bezirci &Yılmaz readability measures. In addition, grouping of the sites according to their characteristics, diagnosis, definition, characteristics, symptoms, causes, harms, treatment and coping-prevention methods related to the subject of SMA, whether it contains information about social media channels such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, whether there is an author/editor and whether the site includes audio, visuals and videos on the subject of social media addiction were evaluated.

The informative texts on the 79 sites included in the study were imported one by one into the Microsoft Word program. The extension addresses, links, and author names of the sites were removed to avoid affecting the evaluation results. This way, the texts were transferred into the digital space, with Ateşman, Bezirci & Yılmaz readability scores,

as well as the average number of words with 4 syllables or more, and the average number of syllables of words were calculated.

In the statistical analysis, categorical data are presented as frequency and percentage [n (%)], and continuous data are presented as mean ± standard deviation. Whether the data were normally distributed was evaluated by the Shapiro-Wilk test. An Independent Samples t-test was used for the comparison of normally distributed independent groups, and a Chi-square test was used for the comparison of categorical data. All tests were performed with a 95% confidence interval, 5% significance, and pairwise. The IBM SPSS 25.0 program was used for data analysis.

### Findings

Of the 79 sites analysed in the study, 68 (86.1%) were classified as the first group and 11 (13.9%) as the second group. The first group included the websites of private institutions and organizations, news websites, personal and expert blog pages, and the second group included the websites of public institutions and organizations.

Comparison of the readability parameters of the study groups is shown in Table 1. There is no statistically significant difference between the readability parameters of the groups included in the study, namely the average number of syllables in words (p=0.869), the average number of words with 4 syllables or more in a sentence (p=0.679), Ateşman readability score (p=0.564), and Bezirci & Yılmaz readability score (p=0.510).

Ateşman found the average readability score to be 45.94±11.63, while Bezirci &Yılmaz found the average readability score to be 13.20±4.00. The readability ranges of the sites included in the study is "difficult" according to the Ateşman scores and at "undergraduate" level according to the Bezirci & Yilmaz scores.

**Table 1**

Comparison of Readability Parameters of Study Groups

| | 1. Group n=68(%86,1) Avg±SD | 2. Group n=11(%13,9) Avg±SD | Total n=79 Avg±SD | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Average number of syllables in words | 2,90±0,11 | 2,92±0,11 | 2,91±0,11 | 0,869 |
| Average number of words with 4 syllables or more in a sentence | 4,22±1,31 | 4,20±1,07 | 4,22±1,28 | 0,679 |
| Ateşman readability score | 45,74±12,06 | 47,15±8,93 | 45,94±11,63 | 0,564 |
| Bezirci-Yılmaz readability score | 14,22±4,14 | 13,33±3,00 | 13,20±4,00 | 0,510 |

*Note.* Independent Samples t-Test

**Table 2**

Comparison of Study Groups According to Ateşman Readability Intervals

|  | 1. Group<br>n= (%)<br>68(86,1) | 2. Group<br>n= (%)<br>11(13,9) | Total<br>n= (%)<br>79(100) | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very difficult + difficult | 45(%66,2) | 5(%45,5) | 50(%63,3) | 0,194 |
| Medium + easy | 23(%33,8) | 6(%54,5) | 29(%36,7) |  |

*Note.* Chi-square test

**Table 3**

Evaluation of the Content of SMA Texts

| SMA Content | n | % |
|---|---|---|
| Diagnosis and definition | 77 | 97,5 |
| Symptoms | 60 | 75,9 |
| Causes | 65 | 82,3 |
| Harms | 65 | 82,3 |
| Suggestions for treatment or coping strategies | 55 | 69,6 |
| Social media channels such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc. | 36 | 45,6 |
| Image | 62 | 78,5 |
| Author | 58 | 73,4 |
| References | 11 | 13,9 |

Comparison of the study groups according to Ateşman readability intervals is shown in Table 2. According to Ateşman, 50 (63.3%) of the websites were found to be "very difficult + difficult" and 29 (36.7%) were found to be in the "medium + easy" group. There were no websites in the very easy group.

Of the informative texts on SMA on the websites, 77 (97.5%) contain information on definition, 60 (75.9%) on symptoms, 65 (82.3%) on causes, 65 (82.3%) on harms, 55 (69.6%) on treatment suggestions, 36 (45.6%) on social media types such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, 62 (78.5%) on images, 58 (73.4%) on authors and 11 (13.9%) on references.

It was observed that there was sufficient information about SMA in the content, but the rate of references and citations was low, and there was no information about the reading time in the majority of the texts, and only a few of them indicated the reading time as (1min-3min-6min). Again, it should be noted that only one website had the option of listening to the text aloud.

## Conclusion and Discussion

Due to the increase in the use of internet and social media in recent years and the fact that this situation has become addictive, it is seen that there are many studies on SMA in the literature. It can be observed that informative texts on SMA are found on the web pages of public and private health institutions and organizations, personal web pages containing individual and corporate expertise, web pages of universities and educational institutions, and new media environments such as newspapers, magazines, and news pages that make digital publishing on the internet. However, since there is no study on the extent to which these publications and their contents on SMA, which is now seen as an important disease of the age, almost as much

as substance addiction, are readable by the reader or the target audience, in other words, the level of readability, this research was conducted as an original study that associates these two concepts.

The findings of the study revealed that the informative texts about SMA, which are shared on Turkish websites to benefit the readers from different media environments, are at a "difficult" level according to Ateşman and "undergraduate" level according to Bezirci & Yılmaz in terms of readability. Since this result is above the average education level of the population in Türkiye, it shows that the content on SMA in websites and new media environments should be prepared more carefully and professionally in terms of readability.

When we look at the research on readability, it is seen that the concept of readability is mostly related to printed educational materials, books, and educational subjects, since it is related to education. However, technological developments in the internet and new media tools have now digitalized services in many areas, including education. Therefore, in addition to face-to-face and printed publications, digital publications on these platforms, such as reading e-books on digital media, as well as buying and reading books or getting information about a health-related issue on the internet instead of going to a doctor for information, have already taken their place in the field. The Internet has become a panacea for users and an important reference tool for obtaining information as a guide, saviour, and already an expert.

Among the studies in the literature on the readability of texts on websites, similar to the result obtained in this study, in the studies on low back pain, substance addiction, obesity, osteoporosis, and smoking cessation, readability levels were found to be "difficult" according to Ateşman (Çiftci et al., 2020; Akdere et al., 2024; Eryılmaz et al., 2022; Solak et al., 2021b; Yılmaz et al., 2023).

In the literature, as in this study, there are studies on cancer, COVID-19, and substance addiction, which

are among the health topics where the readability rate of the content is at the "undergraduate" level according to Bezirci & Yılmaz (Çiftci et al., 2020; Solak, 2019; Solak et al., 2021a).

The National Institutes of Health, regarded as the primary health authority in the United States, has stated that health-related texts are more difficult to read than general reading materials and, therefore, should be written at a level approximately two grades below the average educational attainment of the population. (Lyden, 2017; Schmitt & Prestigiacomo, 2013).

In a study conducted by Eyüboğlu (2023) on health literacy through websites, the readability level was found to be of medium difficulty, while the quality and reliability of the content were deemed insufficient. Similarly, Yılmaz & Karpuz (2023) determined that informational texts on amputee rehabilitation published on websites following the February 6, 2023, earthquakes were difficult to read. The quality and reliability of these texts were found to be highly inadequate. The researchers emphasized that the content of online informational materials intended for the public should be of high quality to help ensure preparedness for future disasters.

Grohol & colleagues (2014) examined online texts on mental health in terms of quality and readability and reported that, although the quality was good, readability was low. Felipe & colleagues (2020) analyzed online English texts on vestibular disorders and found the average readability level to be difficult. In another example from the international literature, Alioshkin Cheneguin & colleagues (2020) determined that the quality of fibromyalgia-related texts on Spanish websites was very low. Most studies emphasize the importance of the quality and readability of online texts and highlight the need to improve readability levels.

The readability measures developed for Turkish by Ateşman (1997), Bezirci & Yılmaz (2010), Çetinkaya & Uzun (2010), and Sönmez (2003) were originally designed for printed materials but have also been widely applied to online informational texts

in recent years. However, it is now recognized that new digital readability measures need to be developed for content in digital media. The historical development of these criteria can be considered to lag behind the advancements of the digital age.

In a recent study examining research trends in articles on readability in Türkiye, Kavun & Maden (2024: 47) analyzed the distribution of studies by topic. Of a total of 89 articles, 24 focused on the readability of texts in Turkish textbooks, while 13 addressed internet texts, which ranked second. This finding indicates an increasing trend in readability research on online texts. However, it is argued that new digital readability measures should be developed rather than applying those designed for printed materials to digital texts. Although the scoring systems of existing criteria are considered reliable and possess a certain level of validity, as noted by Yılmaz & Karpuz (2023), employing newly developed scales to assess the readability and comprehensibility of online content would be more appropriate in terms of accuracy and relevance. Therefore, investigating the readability of digital materials through the use of updated digital readability measures could yield more meaningful and diverse results.

It is believed that this interdisciplinary study, conducted to determine the readability of internet content related to SMA, which is an important topic within the fields of communication, media, and psychology, has made a valuable contribution to the literature.

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## Genişletilmiş Özet

Okunabilirlik seviyesi ölçümlerine yönelik birtakım formüllerin oluşturulduğu ve hem yabancı hem de Türkiye'de yapılan araştırmalarda bu ölçütlerin kullanıldığı görülmektedir. 1980'li yıllara kadar

okunabilirlik ile ilişkilendirilebilecek 1000'in üzerinde çalışma yayınlandığı ve istatistikî yönden güvenilirliği ve geçerliliği kabul edilen 100 kadar okunabilirlik ölçütünün geliştirildiği belirtilmektedir (Dubay, 2004, aktaran Çoban, 2014: 98).

Türkiye'de okunabilirlik üzerine yapılan çalışmaların sürecine bakıldığında ilk çalışmaların 1997 yılında yapılmaya başlandığı görülmektedir. Bu ilk çalışma, Ender Ateşman'ın 1997 yılında Türkçe metinlerin zorluk seviyelerini araştırarak tanımladığı ve kategorilere ayırdığı çalışmadır. (Yılmaz & Temiz, 2014). Dolayısıyla Türkçe metinlerin okunabilirlik seviyesinin ölçülmesinde, daha çok Ateşman ile Yılmaz ve Bezirci'nin okunabilirlik ölçütleri kullanılmaktadır (Ateşman, 1997: Bezirci &Yılmaz, 2010).

Ateşman tarafından formüle edilen okunabilirlik kavramı, bir metnin anlaşılırlık düzeyinin kolay ya da zor olması durumunu tanımlamaktadır. Metnin okunabilirliğinde kolaylık ya da zorluk, okuyucu düzeyine uygunluk ile ilişkilidir. Okunabilirlik değeri ve okunabilirlik düzeyi arasındaki puanlama, 90-100 çok kolay, 70-89 arası kolay, 50-69 arası orta güçlükte, 30-49 arası zor ve 1-29 arası çok zor şeklinde gruplandırılmıştır (1997: 58-74). Anlaşılabilirlik kavramı ise hece sayısı, kelime sayısı, kelime grupları, zor kelimeler, yabancı sözcükler, terimler, soyut ve somut kelimelerle ilgilidir (Ateşman, 1997: 171-174).

2010 yılında Bezirci ve Yılmaz tarafından geliştirilen okunabilirlik ölçütünün esası ya da karşılığı ise Türkiye'deki eğitim sistemine göre açıklanmaktadır. Formülden elde edilen okunabilirlik puanı Türkiye'deki eğitim sistemi sınıflandırmasına göre yorumlanmaktadır. Ülkemizdeki eğitim sistemi sınıflandırmasına göre: 1-8 arası sınıflar için ilköğretim, 9-12 arası sınıflar için lise, 12-16 arası sınıflar için lisans, 16 ve sonrası sınıflar için de akademik düzey şeklinde gruplandırma yapılmıştır. Formülde iki önemli özellik bulunmakta olup bunlardan birisi cümle uzunlukları ortalaması, diğeri de hece sayılarıdır. Cümle içerisindeki kelime sayısının fazlalığı ve kelimelerdeki hece sayısının fazlalığı okunabilirliği etkilemekte ve azaltmaktadır (Bezirci & Yılmaz, 2010: 58-60).

Nicel araştırma deseni ile yapılan bu çalışmada Google arama motorunda "sosyal medya bağımlılığı" sözcükleri ile arama yapılmıştır. Bu sitelerin taranması sonucu ortaya çıkan ticari, reklam, forum, magazin, slayt, anket, yalnızca resim ya da video içeren, cümle sayısı 10'dan daha az olan siteler ve SMB ile ilgili yapılmış olan akademik makaleler incelemeye dâhil edilmemiştir. Türkçe internet siteleri evreninde analiz kriterlerine uygun olan resmî ve özel sağlık kuruluşlarının, eğitim kurumlarının internet sayfaları ile kişisel ve uzman blog sayfaları gibi yeni medya ortamlarındaki SMB metinleri örneklem olarak seçilerek incelenmiştir. 2024 yılı 1-10 Kasım tarihleri arasında ilk çıkan sayfadan başlayarak geriye doğru tarama yapılmıştır. Yaklaşık 50 sayfalık bir tarama sonucu örneklem seçimi dahilindeki 79 siteye ulaşılarak SMB konusundaki bilgilendirici metinlerin Ateşman ile Bezirci ve Yılmaz formüllerine göre ortalama 4 hece ve üstü kelime sayısı ile kelimelerin ortalama hece sayısı değerleri hesaplanmıştır.

Araştırma kapsamında incelenen 79 siteden 68 (% 86,1)'i birinci grup 11 (% 13,9)'u ikinci grup şeklinde sınıflandırılmıştır. Birinci gruba özel kurum ve kuruluşlara ait siteler, haber siteleri, kişisel ve uzman blog sayfaları dahil edilmiştir. İkinci gruba ise kamuya ait resmi kurum ve kuruluşların internet siteleri dahil edilmiştir.

Araştırmaya alınan grupların okunabilirlik parametreleri olan kelimelerin ortalama hece sayısı (p=0,869), cümlede ortalama 4 hece ve üstü kelime sayısı (p=0,679), Ateşman okunabilirlik değeri (p=0,564), Bezirci ve Yılmaz okunabilirlik değeri (p=0,510) arasında istatistiki olarak anlamlı fark yoktur. Ateşman okunabilirlik değeri ortalaması 45,94±11,63 olarak Bezirci ve Yılmaz okunabilirlik değeri ortalaması da 13,20±4,00 olarak bulunmuştur.

Araştırmaya alınan sitelerin Ateşman'a göre okunabilirlik aralıkları 50 (% 63,3)'si "çok zor + zor" 29 (% 36,7)'u ise "orta + kolay" grupta bulunmuştur. Çok kolay grupta ise hiç bir site olmadığı görülmüştür. Çalışmaya dâhil edilen sitelerin Ateşman formülüne göre okunabilirlik aralığı "zor", Bezirci ve Yılmaz formülüne göre ise "lisans" düzeyindedir.

Türkiye'deki internet sitelerindeki metinlerin okunabilirlikleri ile ilgili yapılan çalışmalar arasında; bel ağrısı, madde bağımlılığı, obezite, osteoporoz sigara bırakma konularındaki araştırmalarda bu çalışmada elde edilen sonuca benzer şekilde Ateşman'a göre okunabilirlik düzeyleri "zor" bulunmuştur (Çiftci et al., 2020; Akdere et al., 2024; Eryılmaz et al., 2022; Solak et al., 2021; Yılmaz et al., 2023).

Alan yazında bu çalışmada olduğu gibi Bezirci veYılmaz'a göre içeriklerin okunabilirlik oranın "lisans" seviyesinde bulunduğu sağlık konularından kanser, Covid-19 ve madde bağımlılığı, konuları üzerine yapılan çalışma örnekleri mevcuttur (Çiftci et al., 2020; Solak, 2019; Solak et al., 2021). Uluslararası literatürde yapılan bazı çalışma örnekleri arasında da, Grohol ve arkadaşları (2014) ruh sağlığı konusundaki internet metinlerini kalite ve okunabilirlik açısından incelemiş ve kalite düzeyi iyi olsa da okunabilirlik düzeyinin düşük olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Felipe ve arkadaşları (2020) tarafından vestibüler bozukluklarla ilgili internetteki İngilizce metinler incelenmiş ve okunabilirlik ortalamasının zor düzeyde olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Bir başka yabancı literatür örneğinde Cheneguin ve arkadaşları (2020) İspanya'da internet sitesindeki fibromiyalji metinlerinin kalitesini çok düşük düzeyde bulmuştur. Yapılan çalışmaların çoğunda internetteki metinlerin kalite ve okunabilirlik seviyesinin önemine vurgu yapılarak okunabilirlik düzeyinin yükseltilmesi gerektiği ifade edilmiştir.

Türkçe için geliştirilen okunabilirlik ölçütlerinin Ateşman (1997), Bezirci ve Yılmaz (2010) Çetinkaya ve Uzun (2010) ve Sönmez (2003) tarafından basılı mateyallerin okunabilirliği üzerine oluşturulduğu, son yıllarda yapılan internet üzerindeki bilgilendirme metinlerinde de yaygın olarak kullanıldığı görülmektedir. Ancak günümüzde artık dijital ortam üzerindeki içeriklere yönelik yeni dijital okunabilirlik formüllerinin geliştirilmesi gerektiği öngörülmektedir. Zira bu ölçütlerinin tarihsel sürecinin dijital çağın gerisinde kaldığı söylenebilir.

Kavun ve Maden (2024: 47) tarafından Türkiye'de okunabilirlik ile ilgili yayımlanmış makalelerin araştırma eğilimlerinin incelendiği güncel bir araştırmada makaleler konu bazında incelenmiştir. Toplam 89 makaleden 24'ü Türkçe ders kitaplarındaki metinlerin okunabilirliği ile ilgili bulunurken ikinci sırayı alan internet metinlerinin sayısı 13 olarak bulunmuştur. Bu sonuç da internet metinleri üzerine yapılan okunabilirlik çalışmalarının artma eğiliminde olduğunu göstermektedir. Ancak basılı materyaller üzerine oluşturulan okunabilirlik ölçütlerinin dijital ortamlardaki metinlerde kullanılması yerine artık yeni dijital okunabilirlik ölçütler geliştirilmesi gerektiği düşünülmektedir. Kullanılan ölçütlerin puanlaması güvenilirlik açısından kabul görmüş geçerlilik payına sahip olsa da, Yılmaz ve Karpuz (2023) tarafından da belirtildiği gibi internet ortamındaki çevrimiçi içeriklerin okunabilirliklerinin ve anlaşılabilirliklerinin saptanmasında yeni geliştirilen ölçeklerin kullanılması doğruluk ve güncellik açısından daha uygun olacaktır. Böylece dijital materyallerin okunabilirliği üzerine yapılan yeni çalışmalar, yeni okunabilirlik ölçütleri ile araştırılarak daha anlamlı ve farklı sonuçlar elde edilebilecektir.

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