The Examination of the Use of Media Content in Turkey's Social Studies Textbooks in Light of UNESCO's MIL's Curriculum

Erkan Sensekerci[1]

[1] Faculty of Education, Bursa Uludağ Universiy, Bursa, Turkey

Correspondence: Erkan Sensekerci, Faculty of Education, Bursa Uludağ University, Nilufer 16059 Bursa, Turkey.

Abstract

This study aims to analyse the media excerpts found in the officially approved textbooks for the social studies course in Turkey from the perspective of the thematic areas included in UNESCO MIL's [Media and Information Literacy] Curriculum. In the study, the descriptive analysis method was applied and the data were collected using document analysis. In order to determine whether the examined media excerpts contribute to the UNESCO's MIL Curriculum achievements defined for these thematic areas, 11 research questions were prepared. In the first stage of the study, a checklist was prepared based on an examination of the UNESCO MIL's Curriculum. In the second stage, the textbooks to be analysed were selected by the convenience sampling method, taking into account the textbook production policy carried out under the authority of the Ministry of National Education. The study, which examined 6 different textbooks approved for the 5th, 6th and 7th grades of secondary school, revealed that although the media excerpts are sufficient in number, they fail to reflect the diversity in the national and/or regional media. Moreover, these media excerpts are utilised primarily for the specific purposes of the course, and, naturally, they do not make a significant contribution to media literacy education. In conclusion, the reviewed media excerpts hardly meet the criteria for the thematic areas upon which UNESCO MIL's Curriculum is based. Within the context of the findings and conclusions of the study, a set of recommendations has been shared with people and institutions operating in the fields of social studies textbooks and media literacy.

Keywords: media literacy, social studies education, teaching material, textbooks

1. Introduction

We live in an age where individuals are constantly exposed to great information disseminated by numerous distinct sources. The ability to remain selective in the presence of this tremendous amassment of information and to effectively make use of the information selected is crucial both in terms of people's ability to lead a meaningful and consistent life and to take responsibility in the process of democratisation and social peace. This complex equation between humans and anthropic reality can be essentially understood as a relationship where information society and information economy force modern individual to be information literate.

Being a multidimensional competence, information literacy is also in interaction with other types of literacy. Among these different types, however, media literacy has a special and indispensable relationship with information literacy in terms of the knowledge and the set of skills it requires. Several schools of thought have proposed different conceptual interpretations on the nature of this relationship. While some theorists consider media literacy is a part of information literacy (Byerly & Brodie, 1999; Catts & Lau, 2008), some others argue for the complete opposite, interpreting information literacy is a part of media literacy (Hobbs, 1998). Apart from this inclusiveness correlation, there are also views that regard these two competence areas as completely different from each other, or as mutually intersecting (Catts, Lau, Lee, & Chang, 2012; Grizzle et al., 2013; Livingstone, Couvering Van, & Thumin, 2008). As it is well known, the concept of information literacy was defined for the first time in history by Paul Zurkowski in 1974 as a competence for workers employed in the business world to use information in production processes (Moeller, Joseph, Lau, & Carbo, 2011). However, it eventually came to be defined as the ability to find the information needed, to select and evaluate the information accessed, and as the capability to generate and publish information (Frau-Meigs, 2006). With regard to this, information literacy represented a general cognitive competence aimed at a definable purpose (Grizzle et al., 2013). Nevertheless, as communication technologies continued to evolve and develop and as media tools became the main source of information, the term "digital literacy" introduced by Paul Gilster in 1997 (Bawden, 2008) began to be widely

acknowledged in the field.

At the present time, UNESCO unifies the concepts of media literacy, information literacy and digital literacy under one umbrella concept: media and information literacy (Grizzle, Wilson, & Gordon, 2021). In this context, media literacy seems to be currently centered on the world of "new media" where users themselves take on the role of content-producers, as well as on the skills and ethical principles concerning social media (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009). For example, according to the European Commission, media literacy is *"the ability to access the media, to understand and to critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media contents and to create communications in a variety of contexts."* (Moeller, Joseph, Lau, & Carbo, 2011). UNESCO, on the other hand, defines media literacy as *"the ability to understand media functions, evaluate how those functions are performed and to rationally engage with media for self-expression"*, and states that it consists of the following key outcomes/elements (Grizzle & Wilson, 2011):

- Understanding the role and functions of media in democratic societies

- Understanding the conditions under which media can fulfil its functions

- Critically evaluating media content in light of media functions

- Engaging with media for self-expression and democratic participation

- Acquiring skills (including ICTs) required to produce user-generated content

As media literacy education gains worldwide prevalence, its value has been increasingly recognised by governments, non-governmental organizations and academic quarters around the world over the past two decades. As a result of this emerging agenda and increasing interest, UNESCO has developed a non-prescriptive MIL Curriculum framework in recent years that can be adapted to regional, national and global strategies. In order to efficiently adapt the program to different educational and institutional systems and respond to local needs, the integration strategies proposed by UNESCO are "stand-alone course, online course, institutional approach, multi-components integration" (Grizzle & Wilson, 2011).

It can be said that a certain combination of two of these strategies is implemented in Turkey. Namely, the media literacy is still taught as a "stand-alone" and optional course in the 7th and 8th grades of middle school (primary school level 2) in Turkey; however, media literacy is also given an important place in the curriculum of the social studies course, which can be considered as an example of a "multi-components integration" strategy.

Media literacy has been indicated as one of the basic target skills to be acquired in social studies curricula in Turkey. When we look at the suggestions listed under the heading of "Points to be considered in the implementation of the curriculum," we can see that the curriculum recognises media literacy rather as a component of the digital citizenship subject. Regarding this subject, there are, in total, five outcomes specified for the fifth, sixth and seventh grade programs: one outcome for the fifth grade programs and two outcomes for each of the sixth and seventh grade programs. They are as follows (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [MEB], 2018):

- To question the accuracy and reliability of the information accessed in virtual platforms (5th grade).

- To analyze how the media influences administrative resolution process (6th grade).

- To analyze how the media influences national culture by conveying elements from different cultures (6the grade).

- To discuss the role of media in social change and interaction (7th grade).

- To exercise the rights and fulfill the responsibilities while making use of communication tools (7th grade).

Although numerous factors play a role in the success of curricula, textbooks are undoubtedly one of the most prominent of these factors, considering that they constitute one of the most commonly used materials in a teaching environment (Kılıç & Seven, 2007). Many teachers organise and conduct their learning-teaching activities only by referring to the textbooks (Gülersoy, 2013). Furthermore, a textbook is not only a teaching material, but also a tool encouraging children's reading and writing activities and individualized reading programs (Welton & Mallan, 1999).

Textbooks have also been one of the working agendas of UNESCO and the Council of Europe in the past few decades because of their decisive impact on the implementation of the curricula. UNESCO states that textbooks, which fulfil the crucial roles of informing, structuring and guiding learning, should be accurate, precise, topical, objective, oriented towards social objectives, appropriate for conceptual learning, interdisciplinary, and sufficient in terms of providing learning experiences (Pingel, 2010; Seguin, 1989). However, these qualities alone are not adequate enough for textbooks to be pedagogically sound. Considering the heavy price of harbouring prejudices

and stereotypes that our civilisation has paid in the recent past, the content of textbooks and other teaching materials must also be compatible with the principles of peace, human rights and democracy. To this end, UNESCO succinctly recommends that textbooks should (UNESCO, 2014):

- Introduce the different identities in the society equally and in a balanced way;

- raise awareness of international agreements intended for collective problems of humanity;

- support positive views of the 'other' and foster intercultural dialogue;

- encourage international understanding by presenting local and national perspectives within the wider global perspective;

- adopt a comparative approach to the teaching of religions;

- support teachers in their task of providing the learners with appropriate ways of utilising technology to overcome the impact of globalisation on their daily lives.

When it comes to the existing literature on the topic, our review revealed that the use of media content in social studies textbooks seems to be a subject that has never been studied in Turkey. For example, a query on Dergipark archive, a national database of academic publications, returns (as of December 29, 2021) 37 articles that examine social studies textbooks from various perspectives, albeit none of these articles particularly focus on media content analysis. Moreover, the conclusions reached in several meta-analysis studies reviewing scientific papers on social studies textbooks also support the observation obtained from the literature review. In this respect, analysis of media content use is not one of the 13 topics identified in 104 articles reviewed by Aydemir and Erdamar (2018) in terms of their thematic, methodological and statistical tendencies. In yet another study conducted by Ütkür (2018) covering 41 articles, no analysis of media content use was encountered.

The subject that comes closest to the topic of this research is "the use of current events in Social Studies education", and only three articles have been found in the literature focusing on this subject: Taşkın and Memişoğlu (2019), Öztürk and Veziroğlu (2020) and Çelik and Yıldırım (2021). These studies evaluate the usage degrees of contemporary issues in social studies textbooks with regard to class levels and learning areas. Apart from these works, it is also possible to point out parallels between the topic of the present paper and the study conducted by Şenşekerci (2018) on the visual materials in social studies textbooks as the latter attempts to analyse the communicative functions of visual content. Within this framework, Şenşekerci analyses the visual content used in the textbooks from three distinct functional perspectives: decoration function, interpretation/explanation function, and supplementation function.

When it comes to the review of postgraduate theses found in the national literature, 602 thesis titles classified under the disciplinal keyword of "social studies education" in the database of National Thesis Centre of the Council of Higher Education (as of December 30, 2021) were examined; and, it has been determined that no postgraduate thesis has attempted to analyse the use of media content in social studies textbooks. This observation is also corroborated by two theses that investigate the thesis literature based on the meta-analysis method. In the meta-analysis of Erdem (2018), who examined 65 theses written between 2007 and 2017 in the field of media literacy, no study can be found regarding the utilisation of media-based information in textbooks aiming to contribute to media literacy education. Furthermore, there seems to be no exemplary study on this subject as confirmed by Alaca's (2020) meta-analysis, which examined 129 theses on social studies textbooks. Although the research carried out by Çobanoğlu (2019) focusing on the analysis of the use of newspaper clippings can be indicated as the only thesis similar to the topic of this research, he primarily concentrates on the analysis of the use of newspaper clippings in classroom activities, but not on the analysis of the content in textbooks per se.

As for international literature reviewed, there seems to be numerous theses and articles on the use of media elements in learning-teaching activities or on the analysis of visual materials used in textbooks, which cannot be dealt with in detail here; however, no studies were found that particularly focus on the analysis of media content in textbooks. The study conducted by Alshorooqi and Rawadieh (2017) on the textbooks of Arabic Language and Citizenship courses taught in the secondary schools of the Kingdom of Bahrain can be regarded as a work that is highly similar to the present paper in terms of research objectives. In that study, the media effects surfacing in the textbooks were evaluated in light of UNESCO media literacy principles. In addition to this, the study carried out by Bykov and Medvedeva (2020) examining the textbooks of the Introduction to Social Theory course taught from the 6th to 11th grade in the Russian education system is partially parallel to the present study. In their analysis, Bykov and Medvedeva (2020) inquire whether the textbooks contain relevant pieces of information that can contribute to media literacy education, and ultimately reach the conclusion that the current books are seriously

inadequate in terms of media literacy.

2. Purpose

In our modern social and cultural life dominated by the communication industry, trying to control the media broadcasting that adversely affects human behaviour and relations solely through legislative regulations is not an adequate and reliable solution. In light of constantly growing communication technologies and diversifying media resources, it is conspicuous that regulations pertaining to media law can only be operational in a society composed of well-trained and critically thinking media users. To this end, it has become absolutely crucial for our current education system to provide citizens with competencies in this direction. As a matter of fact, numerous international institutions and organizations occasionally publish these competencies under the title of "Competencies needed in the 21st century."

One of these competencies is media literacy, which is now fully integrated with information literacy and associated with many other literacy competencies in consequence of the works carried out by UNESCO. Both UNESCO's curriculum framework and the Media Literacy curriculum in Turkey emphasise the need to link media literacy education with social studies education. Indeed, many of the skills, values, attitudes and knowledge that social studies education aims to promote are also among the objectives of media literacy education. In this context, the social studies course, which is one of the basic courses taught 3 hours a week in secondary school (middle-school) level in Turkey, and the quality of the books and teaching materials used in this course are also highly relevant in terms of media literacy. In particular, with their visual, textual or visuo-textual extracts taken from different media sources, textbooks are valuable education tools constituting an ideal opportunity for the acquisition of media literacy skills.

The aim of this study is to analyse the media excerpts in the officially approved textbooks for the social studies course in Turkey from the perspective of the MIL Curriculum Framework prepared and published by UNESCO. The present study can be considered to be unique as no previous academic study has investigated the media excerpts in the textbooks. Furthermore, the present paper is also meaningful in terms of demonstrating the extent to which the Social Studies course contributes to the acquisition of media literacy competencies. For the media excerpts examined in the study, the main criteria are essentially the thematic areas upon which the UNESCO MIL's curriculum framework is based (Grizzle & Wilson, 2011):

1) Knowledge and understanding of media and information for democratic discourse and social participation

2) Evaluation of media texts and information sources

3) Production and use of media and information

In order to determine whether the examined media excerpts contribute to the UNESCO's MIL Curriculum achievements defined for these thematic areas, 11 research questions were prepared:

1) Does the media excerpt used in the textbook contribute to students' learning about the relationship between the media and democratic communication?

2) Does the media excerpt used in the textbook make students aware of the media's effects on social involvement attitudes?

3) Does the media excerpt used in the textbook contribute to students' knowledge of media law and media ethics?

4) Does the media excerpt used in the textbook contribute to students' learning about the functions and importance of the media?

5) Does the media excerpt used in the textbook contribute to students' knowledge about false or fictional media elements?

6) Does the media excerpt used in the textbook contribute to students' knowledge of media diversity and the importance of multiperspectivity in the media?

7) Does the media excerpt used in the textbook provide students with the opportunity to analyse the media content from different perspectives?

8) Does the media excerpt used in the textbook make students aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding the media use?

9) Does the media excerpt used in the textbook provide students with the experience of utilising legal response to ensure their personal safety and protect themselves from adverse media content?

10) Does the media excerpt used in the textbook provide students with the experience of researching, finding and utilising various media content suited to their learning needs?

11) Does the media excerpt used in the textbook provide students with opportunity to produce their own media content and share them on various media platforms for individual expression needs or for the public interest?

3. Method

Despite the innovations and advances in teaching technologies, the central role of textbooks in learning and teaching environment remains important in Turkey as it does in many countries. This study examines the extent to which media excerpts used in social studies textbooks in Turkey are compliant with the thematic areas upon which the UNESCO MIL's Curriculum Framework is based. Being the best suited method for the subject, the descriptive analysis method was applied in the study, and the data were collected using document analysis. The main purpose of this analysis method is to present the findings to the reader in a summarised and interpreted form (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2003). In the implementation of the method, it is recommended that first a thematic analysis framework be established and the data be organised under this thematic framework. In the next step, the findings are defined, and finally they are interpreted, correlated and explained (Sığrı, 2018; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2003).

In the first stage of the descriptive analysis method, a checklist was prepared based on an examination of the UNESCO MIL's Curriculum Framework along with various studies referring to this program, the content analysis technique developed by Krippendorff (2004) and various content analysis studies on textbooks. The checklist was submitted to the opinion and evaluation of 11 experts working at four different state universities and specialised in educational sciences, media literacy and research methodology, and took its final form with 24 criteria based on their suggestions. Representing the three thematic areas in the UNESCO MIL's Curriculum Framework, the checklist is scored at two levels: (0) Does not comply with the criteria in the checklist, and (1) Comply with the criteria in the checklist.

In the second stage, the basic steps of the document analysis technique were followed: Accessing the documents to be examined, checking the authenticity of the documents, understanding the documents, analyzing and using the data obtained (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2003). For this purpose, first of all, the textbooks that constituted our research objects were selected. This choice was shaped by the convenience sampling method, taking into account the textbook production policy carried out under the authority of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). The MoNE offers teachers and students two textbooks for each grade level and each course: one government publication and one private sector publication approved by the MoNE. These books, which can be downloaded free of charge, are used in all schools in the country. Therefore, the books on this platform which is known as EBA (Education Informatics Network) are also the most up-to-date and widely used books. The chosen books were coded as SS5 (Social Studies 5), SS6, and SS7 for convenience in the research process. The examined media excerpts, on the other hand, were coded with the following abbreviations: Np (Newspaper), J (Journal), WS (Web site), NP (News portal), NA (News agency) and U (Undefined).

In the third stage, the data obtained through the qualitative analysis of the media excerpts were scored by comparing them with the criteria in the check-list, and the scores were first uploaded to electronic data processing tables prepared in the computer, and transferred to the SPSS software. Before the necessary quantitative analyses were made in the SPSS software, the scoring made by the researcher was repeated by three other researchers, an academician who is specialised in educational science, a computer and technology teaching graduate student, and a social studies teacher. Consensus and disagreements between the researcher and contributors were calculated using the formula developed by Miles & Huberman (1994) ($\triangle = C \div (C + \partial) \times 100$) and the analysis was found to be 95,05% reliable.

In the last stage, the findings visualised with tables and graphic presentations were interpreted, discussed in relation to the literature, and suggestions were presented within the framework of the general results obtained.

4. Findings and Discussions

Table 1. Media excerpts used in the social studies textbooks by grade level

Grade level	Textbooks published by the MoNE		Textbooks published by the private sector	
	f	%	f	%
Social Studies 5	43	45.8	61	50.4
Social Studies 6	34	36.2	22	18
Social Studies 7	17	18	38	31.2
Total	94	100	121	100

The present study examined a total of 215 media excerpts from six textbooks, three of which are MoNE and three of which are private sector publications (Table 1). In terms of general frequency distribution, it has been observed that there is no significant difference between the public and private sector textbooks in terms of media content use, and that the private sector publications contain slightly more media content. When it comes to specific grade levels, all 5th grade textbooks contain similar amount of media excerpts. Furthermore, it has been determined that MoNE publication for 6th grades and private sector publication for 7th grades are richer in terms of media excerpt usage.
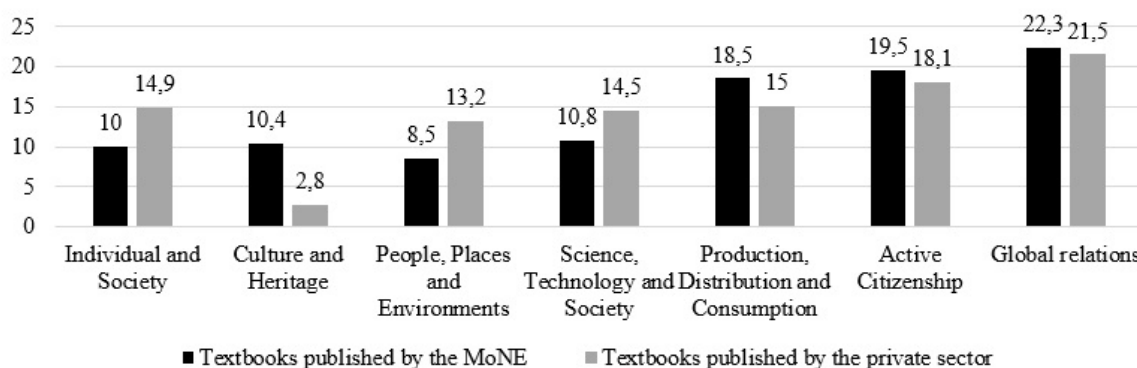

Figure 1. Media excerpts used in the Social Studies textbooks by the learning domains specified in the current curriculum (%)

From the point of view of the learning areas included in the Social Studies' curriculum, it was determined (in Figure 1) that media content is mostly used in "Global Relations" learning area with a total of 50 frequencies, followed by "Active Citizenship" with 38 frequencies and "Production, Distribution and Consumption" with 32 frequencies. In terms of the fundamentals of social studies, the use of media excerpt is mostly preferred to deal with the topics pertaining to international relations, political science and economics. When a comparison is made between the textbooks published by the MoNE and the textbooks published by the private sector, it can be said that they favour somewhat similar approaches to the use of media excerpts in learning areas. While all textbooks published by the private sector give more place to the media excerpts in all learning areas except for one, the textbooks published by the MoNE seem to have some superiority only in "Culture and Heritage" learning area. This can essentially be interpreted as one of the natural and expected consequences of history and culture-centred identity construction policies pursued by nation-states.
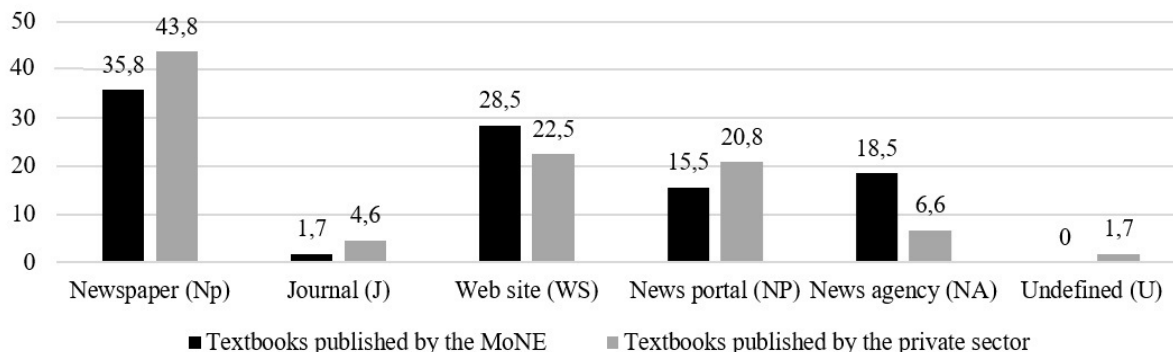
Figure 2. Media excerpts used in the Social Studies textbooks by media types

When we look at the types of media sources where the media excerpts used in Social Studies textbooks were taken from, we can see (in Figure 2) that the newspaper quotes are used most commonly with a total of 87 frequencies, followed by websites with 58 frequencies, and news portals with 43 frequencies. The fact that there are only a few excerpts from scientific journals show that in the use of media excerpts, priority is given to event-based content that serves the purpose of concretisation and visualisation in the teaching process, rather than fact-based information. When a comparison is made between the MoNE publications and the private sector publications, it can be said that they are proportionally similar in terms of the types of media used. It is noteworthy, however, that media excerpts taken from agency sources are used proportionally more in textbooks published by the MoNE. Considering that one of the frequently cited agencies is run by the government, the effective use of the state news agency in the MoNE publications can be considered consistent in terms of the government's own education policies.
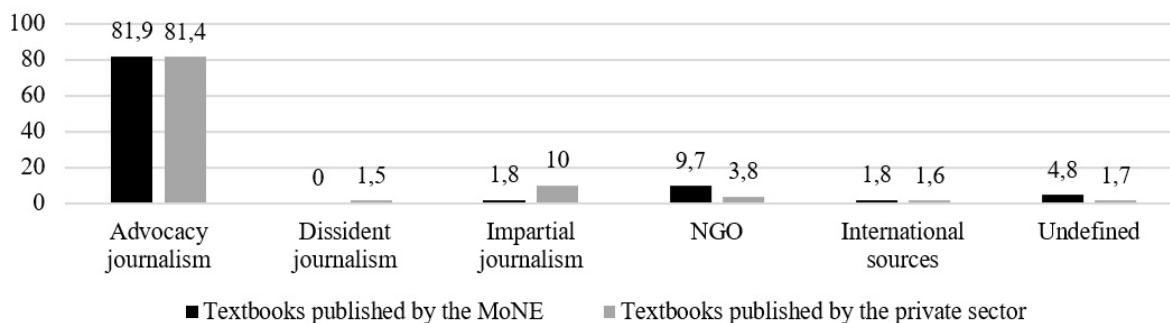

Figure 3. Media excerpts used in the Social Studies textbooks by media diversity (%)

When the media excerpts used in Social Studies textbooks are examined in terms of the media organisations they are published in, the media organisations characterised by advocacy journalism seem to be the most common sources with a total of 169 frequencies, and other media organisations that have alternative perspectives different from the general policies of the government are given almost no place (Figure 3). Although the content originating from advocacy journalism constitutes 81.7% of all the content used, if we include news sources categorized as international sources that are actually affiliated with the government or the cited NGO news legitimising government policies, the actual rate increases to 99%. Therefore, it is apparent that media diversity and multi-perspectivalism are ignored in the utilisation of media excerpts in social studies textbooks. Comparing the MoNE publications and the private sector textbooks, we can also observe that both kinds follow a similar approach. Interestingly enough, the private sector publications seem to include excerpts taken from advocacy journalism even more compared to government textbooks.

Table 2. Distribution of media excerpts in accordance with the Thematic Area No. 1 (TA-1) of the UNESCO MIL's Curriculum Framework titled "Knowledge and understanding of media and information for democratic discourse and social participation"

| Criteria | Textbooks published by the MoNE | | | | | | Textbooks published by the private sector | | | | | |
| | SS5 (43 me) | | SS6 (34 me) | | SS7 (17 me) | | SS5 (61 me) | | SS6 (22 me) | | SS7 (38 me) | |
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
TA1-1	-	0	2	5.9	-	0	-	0	-	0	3	7.9
TA1-2	16	37.2	3	8.8	8	47.1	-	0	1	4.5	17	44.7
TA1-3	1	2.3	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	3	7.9
TA1-4	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	1	2.6
TA1-5	1	2.3	-	0	1	5.9	-	0	-	0	2	5.3
TA1-6	39	90.7	34	100	10	58.8	61	100	22	100	34	89.5
TA1-7	17	39.5	5	14.7	1	5.9	7	11.5	7	31.8	12	31.6
TA1-8	6	14	1	2.9	3	17.6	2	3.3	5	22.7	4	10.5
Total	80	*23.2*	45	*16.5*	23	*16.9*	70	*14.3*	34	*19.3*	76	*25*

In all the examined textbooks, it was determined (in Table 2) that the media excerpts were low in compliance with the thematic area no. 1 in the UNESCO MIL's Curriculum. In this thematic area, the books in both categories clearly complied with criteria 2, 6 and 7, respectively, while other criteria were almost never met. Accordingly, it can be understood that the textbook preparation committees primarily focused on the examples representing the public interest function (TA1-6), the freedom of expression function (TA1-7) and the peaceful use of language (TA1-2) of the media in the selection process of the media excerpts.

Table 3. Distribution of media excerpts in accordance with the Thematic Area No. 2 (TA-2) of the UNESCO MIL's Curriculum Framework titled "Evaluation of media texts and information sources"

| Criteria | Textbooks published by the MoNE | | | | | | Textbooks published by the private sector | | | | | |
| | SS5 (43 me) | | SS6 (34 me) | | SS7 (17 me) | | SS5 (62 me) | | SS6 (22 me) | | SS7 (38 me) | |
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
TA2-1	2	4.7	1	2.9	-	0	4	6.6	-	0	-	0
TA2-2	14	32.6	1	2.9	-	0	6	9.8	-	0	6	15.8
TA2-3	19	44.2	18	52.9	1	5.9	16	26.2	15	68.2	16	42.1
TA2-4	2	4.7	1	2.9	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
TA2-5	1	2.3	1	2.9	2	11.8	3	4.9	-	0	22	57.9
TA2-6	3	7	-	0	2	11.8	-	0	-	0	8	21.1
TA2-7	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	1	2.6
TA2-8	-	*0*	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	1	2.6
Total	41	*11.9*	22	*8*	5	3.6	29	*5.9*	15	*8.5*	54	*17.7*

The examination of the data revealed (in Table 3) that the average compliance of the textbooks published by both the MoNE and the private sector to the thematic area no. 2 within the framework of UNESCO MIL's Curriculum is at 9.2%. In this respect, while the compliance rate of the media content in the textbooks published by the MoNE is 7.8% in total, this rate is 10.7% for the textbooks published by the private sector. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the two categories. In this thematic area, the books in both categories met the criteria 3, 5 and 2 in this order compared to other criteria, which were almost never met. According to this observation, the textbook preparation committees seem to prioritise preparing complementary content that will enable students to make textual (TA2-3) and contextual (TA2-5) analyses on the media content and promote the habit of benefiting from alternative resources apart from media domains during the research process (TA2-2).

Table 4. Distribution of media excerpts in accordance with the Thematic Area No. 3 (TA-3) of the UNESCO MIL's Curriculum Framework titled "Production and use of media and information"

Criteria	Textbooks published by the MoNE						Textbooks published by the private sector					
	SS5 (43 me)		SS6 (34 me)		SS7 (17 me)		SS5 (61 me)		SS6 (22 me)		SS7 (38 me)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
TA3-1	2	4.7	1	2.9	-	0	2	3.3	-	0	2	5.3
TA3-2	3	7	-	0	-	0	1	1.6	-	0	2	5.3
TA3-3	2	4.7	1	2.9	-	0	1	1.6	-	0	1	2.6
TA3-4	2	4.7	1	2.9	-	0	-	0	-	0	5	13.2
TA3-5	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
TA3-6	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
TA3-7	-	0	-	0	1	5.9	-	0	-	0	-	0
TA3-8	-	0	-	0	1	5.9	-	0	-	0	8	21.1
Total	9	2.6	3	1.1	2	1.4	4	0.8	-	0	18	5.9

The collected data show (in Table 4) that the textbooks published by both the MoNE and the private sector are 1.95% in accordance with the thematic area no. 3 within the framework of the UNESCO MIL's Curriculum.
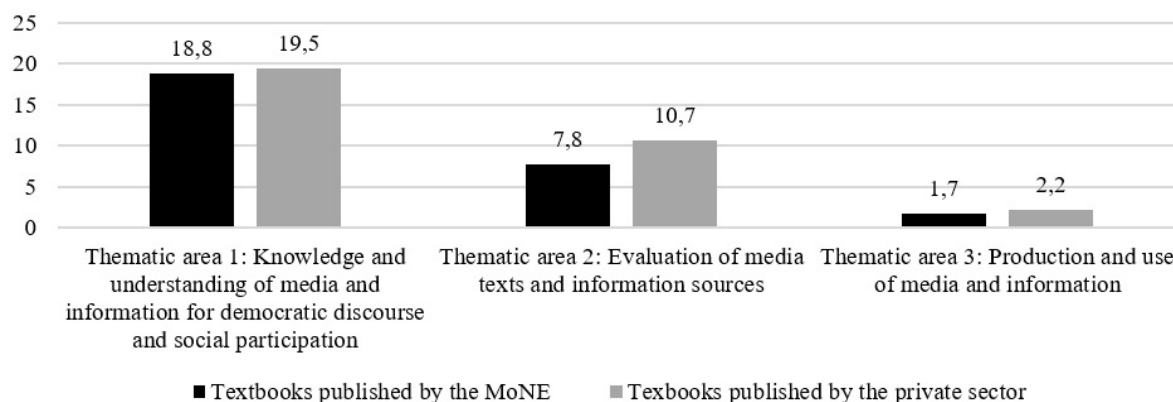

Figure 4. Compliance of the media excerpts used in the textbooks with the thematic areas in the UNESCO MIL's Curriculum Framework (%)

While compliance rate of the media excerpts in the textbooks published by the MoNE is 1.7% in total, the rate in the textbooks published by the private sector is 2.2%. In this regard, there seems to be no significant difference between the two categories. In this thematic area, the textbooks in both categories met the criteria 8, 4 and 1, in this order, compared to other criteria, which were almost never met.

The examination of the data show (in Figure 4) that the media excerpts used in the textbooks published by the MoNE are in compliance with the criteria of the UNESCO MIL's Curriculum framework at 9.4%, while this rate is 10.8% for the private sector publications. For the thematic area no. 1, *"Knowledge and understanding of media and information for democratic discourse and social participation"*, the compliance rates are 18.8% and 19.5% for the MoNE and private sector publications, respectively. For the thematic area no. 2, *"Evaluation of media texts and information sources"*, the MoNE textbooks show compliance at the level of 7.8%, while this level is 10.7% for private sector textbooks. Finally, in the thematic area no. 3 titled *"Production and use of media and information"*, the compliance rate of the media excerpts in the MoNE textbooks is 1.7% and this rate slightly increases in the private sector textbooks to 2.2%.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of the research can be summarized as follows in terms of the findings obtained:

- Compared to the textbooks published in previous years, there is an increase in the inclusion of media excerpts in the textbooks published by the MoNE and the private sector for the Social Studies course, which is a positive development in terms of the didactic effects of using real life examples and current events in teaching.

- It can be said that the media excerpts used show a balanced distribution in terms of the types of media where they originate. However, the fact that the media types used mostly belong to the same media organizations can be considered as a negative approach as far as the presentation of the variety of media sources in the textbooks is concerned. While monopolization in media ownership is regarded as a problem in many disciplines of social sciences, the consequences of this monopoly on textbooks is a subject that needs to be discussed from the perspectives of pluralism and multiculturalism, and principles of democracy. Doğan and Duman (2021), who examined all social studies textbooks published between 1968 and 2018 in terms of multiculturalism, also revealed that the textbooks have neglected the names, traditions, languages, socio-cultural relations, spatial mobility of different cultural groups, and the cultural diversity in the society.

- In general, the textbooks included the media excerpts examplifying the functions of the media for the public interest and as an area of freedom of expression for individuals and institutions. Among these excerpts, however, there are scarcely any examples that can contribute to the understanding of the importance of the media in terms of democracy and social participation.

- The fact that the media excerpts included are often accompanied by questions, activities or research guidelines can be regarded as a didactically positive approach. Nevertheless, it can be observed that all such complementary contents are aimed at the specific objectives of the course and deepening the subject. Therefore, the use of complementary content that encourages students to analyse and evaluate media excerpts in terms of various variables in accordance with the thematic areas in UNESCO MIL's Curriculum Framework, or to produce and share their own content based on the sample excerpt, is almost non-existent. This result of the present study is in line with the findings of multiple other recent studies. Abide and Gelişli (2020) found in their study that current social studies textbooks are extremely inadequate in terms of safe Internet use and online communication risks. Demir and Özyurt (2021), who analysed the activities and questions in the Social Studies textbooks in terms of 21st century skills, revealed that the textbooks generally focused on critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and other skills were largely ignored. Examining the preparatory questions in the Social Studies textbooks, Doğan and Torun (2018) concluded that the questions are insufficient in directing students to research and critical thinking. Çelikkaya and Kürümlüoğlu (2020), who examined the unit evaluation questions in the 4th and 5th grade Social Studies textbooks, observed that the questions in the textbooks are generally at the level of sub-mental processes when viewed from the perspective of Bloom's taxonomy. Considering that media excerpts analysis requires high-level mental processes, it is clear that the unit evaluation questions are not compliant with UNESCO thematic areas. The studies conducted by both Aydemir (2017) and Faiz & Karasu (2018) also support the present research findings as they reveal that social studies textbooks rarely include digital literacy and the use of information Technologies.

In order to see more clearly the contribution of the media excerpts used in the current social studies textbooks to media literacy education in the context of the thematic areas of the UNESCO MIL's Curriculum Framework, it will be useful to show the research findings graphically by matching them with the research questions:
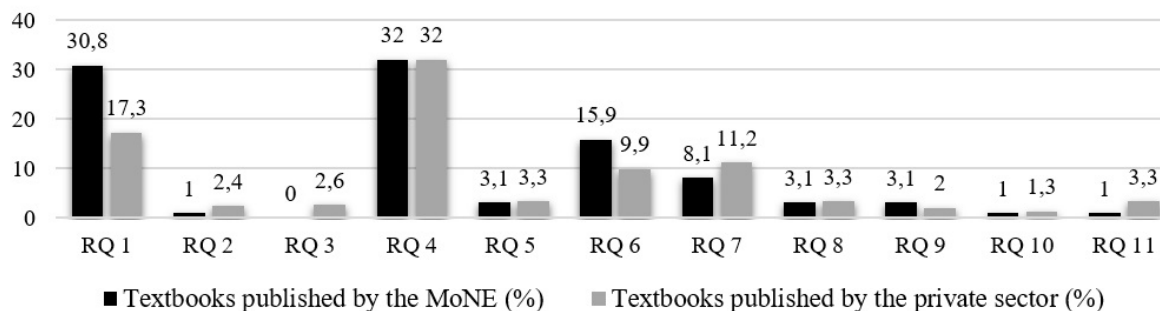

Figure 5. Compliance rates of the criteria answering the research questions (RQ) to thematic areas in the UNESCO MIL's Curriculum Framework (%)

Based on the quantitative findings in the bar chart, the results of the study pertaining to the research questions are:

1) In this study, the framework of RQ1, RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4 questions was employed to question the

compliance of the media excerpts used in Social Studies textbooks to TA-1 of UNESCO MIL's Curriculum Framework titled *"Knowledge and understanding of media and information for democratic discourses and social participation."* In this respect, only 14.76% of the media excerpts used in the textbooks were found to be compatible with this thematic area. When we look at the research questions one by one, the media excerpts were above average in exemplifying the communicative (RQ1) and functional (RQ4) dimensions of the media (Figure 5).

2) When it comes to the *compliance* of the media excerpts to TA-2 of UNESCO MIL's Curriculum Framework titled *"Evaluation of media texts and information sources,"* the research questions were posed within the framework of RQ5, RQ6 and RQ7 questions. As a result, it has been determined that only 10% of the media excerpts used in the textbooks accord with this thematic area.

3) The framework of RQ8, RQ9, RQ10 and RQ11 questions was used to measure the compliance rate of the media excerpts to TA-3 of UNESCO MIL's Curriculum Framework titled *"Production and use of media and information."* Consequently, it has been determined that only 1% of the media excerpts used in the textbooks accord with this thematic area.

4) There is no significant difference between the textbooks published by the MoNE and the textbooks by the private sector in terms of the compliance rates. It was found that while the textbooks published by the MoNE are more compatible with RQ1 and RQ6 compared to the private sector publications, the private sector's textbooks are more compatible with the RQ7 and RQ11 than the MoNE publications.

In the light of the findings and results obtained within the scope of this research, the following recommendations can be shared with people and institutions operating in the fields of social studies textbooks and media literacy:

• In order to build a multi-perspective, pluralistic and multi-cultural content in the textbooks, the utilisation rate of popular science journals as a source for media excerpts can be increased, considering that they can be regarded as more objective and unbiased resources compared to newspapers and news portals.

• To promote the principle of media diversity, the subjects of the course should be covered not only by advocacy media materials but also by the inclusion of the views of local and/or alternative and/or dissident media sources and non-governmental organizations.

• The media excerpts used in the textbooks can be chosen with a more comprehensive approach that aim for setting an example for the communicative function of the media in a democratic society, rather than merely elucidating the subject covered in the book.

• Complementary content based on media excerpts can be supported by the inclusion of questions and activities through which students can critically evaluate the media content, instead of being limited to the better understanding of the subject only.

• Instead of the traditional written assignments submitted to the teacher, research or project assignments based on media excerpts can be considered as media production projects that are prepared utilising media technologies and different media formats, which is shared with the teacher as well as other students and the public.

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