

Investigation of Historical Characters in Republic of Turkey Revolution History and Kemalism Course Books (1993-2012)

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Abstract

T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism courses have a crucial function in our educational system in terms of making people embrace governmental ideology, teaching them recent national history, and constituting citizenship acquisition. In constituting the acquisition of behavioural and cognitive changes in these three target areas, the topics that are covered in T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism course books, and format and presentation of these topics have altered in time, whilst the existence of historical characters have not changed. This study is a qualitative study, and the data were gathered through document analysis. The study presents important data about historical characters that take place in T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism course books published in 1993-2012. The results of the study show that the number, frequency and use of historical characters in each book are different.

Keywords: historical characters, revolution history, course books

1. Introduction

National history teaching includes the important events within a wide range of time which starts from the composition of a community as a nation to the current time zone. Teaching the history of recent time to the young generations is one of the priorities of every state in the field of history teaching, especially at this time. This priority is met in the courses of T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism in our country.

Lots of materials have been used from past to the present in these courses. However, the place of the course books is distinct. Yanpar (2006, p. 114) has stated that “*course books are one of the instructional materials as a resource for the learning experience of the students to fulfill the aims of the education*” and they are used commonly in the process of education, and “*they are sometimes the only material in some situations*”. Even the magazines and assistant materials are frequently used besides course books in the process of education, the course book is emphasized as the main material of the process of education with the circular letter of “the topics will be studied via course books and assistant educational materials cannot be substituted with the course books” published in 2004 (Meb, 2004). Safran (2006a, p. 182) has emphasized that the course books “*have been the most important materials to reach the desired goals of the history teaching from the past*” and has detected that the problems in teaching history have been searched in the course books with the following statement “*the issue of teaching history has been reduced to make people write course books*”. In this context, from the reality that each teaching field has unique problems Safran (2006b, p. 99) has stated that the problems experienced in T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism courses are largely caused by the content, and the debates should focus on what to teach.

Historical character statement is used to define the people who lived in the past, but there is not clear information which characters have been included for this statement. When an analysis is conducted in the dimension of the characters placed in the course books, we think that it will not be right to call these people as historical characters who have an effect on the events in the history directly or indirectly; in other words, the people whose

existence is a need to understand a historical event.

However, there is not any regulation published by the Ministry of Education on which characters should be included in the course books. The most important element to determine the use of the historical characters in the books is the beliefs of the writer(s) that the “historical character” should be included in that topic. This present study has aimed to detect the historical characters in the course books of the “T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism”. The inclusion of the characters in some revolution history books which were taught in the primary and secondary education levels during previous education periods have been investigated to have a valid analysis. And, they have been compared with “T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism” course books which were taught in 2012-2013 school year.

2. Method

“Case study” which is one of the qualitative methods has been used in this research study. Case study is about studying an event intensely (Glesne, 2012, p. 31) and investigating one event or several events in a detailed way (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006, p. 77). Case study has been preferred since the inclusion of the historical characters in T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism course books has been analyzed in a detailed way.

Critical case sampling which is one of the sampling techniques used in the qualitative research designs has been used in this research study. The idea behind this sampling technique is to study all situations which meet a range of criteria determined before (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006, p. 112). Descriptive technique which is one of the qualitative data analysis techniques has been used because what the collected data in the research study has indicated regarding the research problem or which results have been reached from the collected data would be emphasized (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006, p. 222). Revolution history course books written by Şahin (1998), Kurt (2006), Palazoğlu and Bircan (1993), and Kara (1998) taught in primary and secondary schools belong to the Ministry of Education during previous education periods and “T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism” course books written by Başol et al. (2012a, b), Komisyon (2012), and Gamsız (2012) taught in 2012-2013 school year have been analyzed within the scope of the study.

Everybody included nominally in these analyzed course books have been evaluated as “history character”. When the numbers of the historical characters are calculated, the texts, preparation and evaluation questions, picture explanations, newspaper reports, reading texts, maps, tables and the historical characters in the information boxes within the unit have been considered, but the names given as bibliography have not been included. Characters have been considered as mentioned once in the units for the total numbers of the historical characters, because some historical characters are included in different units.

That’s why; the total result will be different from the total resulting from the calculation of the “historical characters” in the units. The same practice has been implemented while getting the total numbers of the historical characters in the T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism 8th grade course book (Başol et al., 2012a) and work book (Başol et al., 2012b) taught in 2012-2013 school year. When the historical characters mentioning the same historical characters have been detected, they have been calculated as one historical character in the entire study. For instance, Mustafa, Mustafa Kemal, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, Veteran Pasha, Veteran Mustafa Kemal, Kemal Atatürk, Veteran Mustafa Kemal Atatürk describing Atatürk have been included when the calculation of historical character of Atatürk have been fulfilled.

3. Findings

It has been tried to detect the inclusion of the historical characters in T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism course books taught in previous education periods by taking samples from those course books so that it would be easier to understand the place of the historical characters in those course books. The historical characters included in the 8th grade T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism course books taught in 1998-1999 (Şahin, 1998), 2006-2007 (Kurt, 2006) and 2012-2013 (Meb, “Tebliğler Dergisi”, 2012, p. 53, 66; Başol et al., 2012a, 2012b) school years and their frequencies have been shown in the Table 1.

3.1 The Historical Characters Included in the 8th Grade T. R. Revolution History and Kemalism Course Books

Table 1. The historical characters included in the 8th grade T.R. revolution history and Kemalism course books and their distributions according to the units

| | | Şahin, 1998 | Kurt, 2006 | Başol et al., 2012a | Başol et al., 2012b |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Introduction | Number of Historical Character | 10 | 5 | | |
| | Repetition Number | 15 | 16 | | |
| The 1 st Unit | Number of Historical Character | 3 | 7 | 22 | 7 |
| | Repetition Number | 13 | 21 | 186 | 44 |
| The 2 nd Unit | Number of Historical Character | 12 | 7 | 52 | 8 |
| | Repetition Number | 23 | 25 | 165 | 41 |
| The 3 rd Unit | Number of Historical Character | 13 | 8 | 38 | 8 |
| | Repetition Number | 170 | 211 | 165 | 32 |
| The 4 th Unit | Number of Historical Character | 35 | 18 | 28 | 4 |
| | Repetition Number | 170 | 159 | 295 | 60 |
| The 5 th Unit | Number of Historical Character | 16 | 17 | 17 | 1 |
| | Repetition Number | 117 | 193 | 327 | 38 |
| The 6 th Unit | Number of Historical Character | 1 | 1 | 8 | 1 |
| | Repetition Number | 7 | 9 | 62 | 28 |
| The 7 th Unit | Number of Historical Character | 3 | 3 | 10 | 1 |
| | Repetition Number | 15 | 30 | 26 | 3 |
| The 8 th Unit | Number of Historical Character | 2 | 3 | | |
| | Repetition Number | 86 | 128 | | |
| The 9 th Unit | Number of Historical Character | 15 | 4 | | |
| | Repetition Number | 77 | 71 | | |
| The 10 th Unit | Number of Historical Character | | 7 | | |
| | Repetition Number | | 28 | | |
| Total | Number of Historical Character | 117 | 81 | 175 | 30 |
| | Repetition Number | (84) | (54) | (140) | (24) |
| | Repetition Number | 693 | 891 | 1226 | 246 |

When the historical characters are calculated from the course book of Şahin (1998), 117 has been reached as the total number. However, the total number has been detected as 84, since some historical characters have been included more than one, and they have been calculated as one historical character. When the same technique has been applied to the course book written by Kurt (2006), the total number of the historical characters has been found as 54, and the repetition number of the historical characters has been found as 891. When the historical characters written by Şahin (1998) have been analyzed, it has been observed that Atatürk has been included 548 times in the book. Two characters in the eight chapters called Kemalism have been repeated 86 times in the book. Among these historical characters Atatürk has been included 85 times and Ziya Gökalp has been mentioned once. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk has been included 734 times in the entire book which was prepared by Kurt (2006) and taught in 2006-2007 school year. Atatürk has been mentioned 128 times and the other characters (Selim III and Mahmut II) have been included once in the 8th unit in which three historical characters mentioned. *İsmet İnönü* has been included 27 times and *Celal Bayar* has been mentioned once in the entire book.

The total numbers of the historical character are 175 and 30 in the course books written by Başol et al. (2012a) and work books (2012a), respectively. The total numbers of the historical characters have been detected as 140 in the whole course book and 24 in the student work book as the existence of the different characters in the units as once forms an essential for the calculation. Atatürk has been included 165 and 902 times in the 5th unit of T.R. Turkish Revolution History and Kemalism course book (Başol et al., 2012a) and the entire book, respectively. The following statement shows the historical characters that have been included closely in terms of number in the book: *İsmet İnönü*: 22, *Kazım Karabekir*: 18, *Ali Fuat Cebesoy*: 15, *Mehmet Akif Ersoy* and *Mustafa Fehmi Kubilay* have been mentioned 10 times. Atatürk has been used 215 times in the work book (Başol et al., 2012b), and the closest historical characters in terms of numbers are *Mustafa Fehmi Kubilay*: 5, *Kazım Karabekir*: 4, *Şerife Bacı*: 3, and *İsmet İnönü*: 1. Atatürk is the “only” character in the 7th chapter called Turkey after Atatürk: The 2nd World War and after it.

3.2 The Historical Characters Included in T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism Course Books Prepared for the Upper Secondary Schools

The historical characters included in T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism course books taught in the secondary education in 1993-1994 (Palazoğlu & Bircan, 1993), 1998-1999 (Kara, 1998) and 2012-2013 (Gamsız, 2012; Komisyon, 2012) school years; and their frequencies have been shown in the Table 2.

Table 2. The historical characters included in T.R. revolution history and Kemalism course books of secondary education and their frequencies according to the units

| | | Palazoğlu & Bircan, 1993 | Kara, 1998 | Gamsız, 2012 | Komisyon, 2012 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|--------------|----------------|
| Introduction | Number of Historical Character | 24 | | | |
| | Repetition Number | 64 | | | |
| The 1 st Unit | Number of Historical Character | 28 | 35 | 27 | 28 |
| | Repetition Number | 60 | 215 | 267 | 238 |
| The 2 nd Unit | Number of Historical Character | 33 | 1 | 39 | 42 |
| | Repetition Number | 302 | 11 | 180 | 180 |
| The 3 rd Unit | Number of Historical Character | 131 | 7 | 36 | 71 |
| | Repetition Number | 712 | 26 | 140 | 197 |
| The 4 th Unit | Number of Historical Character | | 1 | 33 | 32 |
| | Repetition Number | | 80 | 290 | 244 |
| The 5 th Unit | Number of Historical Character | | 8 | 38 | 29 |
| | Repetition Number | | 72 | 389 | 296 |
| The 6 th Unit | Number of Historical Character | | | 9 | 3 |
| | Repetition Number | | | 82 | 35 |
| The 7 th Unit | Number of Historical Character | | | 12 | 8 |
| | Repetition Number | | | 94 | 76 |
| Total | Number of Historical Character | 216(179) | 52(46) | 194(151) | 213(170) |
| | Repetition Number | 1138 | 404 | 1442 | 1266 |

When the historical characters in the course books prepared by Palazoğlu and Bircan (1993) have been calculated, the total number has been found as 216. On the other hand, the total number has been detected as 179, because some historical characters have been included more than one in different units, and they have been

calculated as one historical character in the book. When the historical characters have been calculated in the course book written by Kara (1998) 52 has been reached. On the one hand, the total number has been detected as 46, because some historical characters have been included more than one in different units, and they have been calculated as one historical character in the book.

It has been found that Atatürk has been included 502 times when “T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism” course book prepared by Palazoğlu and Bircan (1993) and taught in 1993-1994 school year in the 1st grade of Upper Secondary School has been analyzed. (19 in the introduction part, 10 in the 1st unit, 244 the 2nd unit, 229 in the 3rd unit). To give example for the most repeated historical characters after Atatürk *İsmet İnönü*: 32, *Ali Fuat Cebesoy*: 17, *Kazım Karabekir*: 10, and *Fethi Okyar* have been included 4 times. Atatürk name has been used 304 times in the whole “T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism Upper Secondary School II” course book written by Kara (1998) and published by Önde Publishing. And, İsmet İnönü having the closest number in terms of frequency of repetition has been included 26 times. Only Atatürk has been included as a historical character in the 2nd chapter (Turkish Army and National Defense) and in the 4th chapter (Kemalism, The Principles on which The Turkish Revolution Based and the Qualities of Turkish Revolution).

The total numbers of the historical character are 175 and 30 in the course books written by Başol et al. (2012a) and work books (2012a), respectively. The total numbers of the historical characters have been detected as 140 in the whole course book and 24 in the student work book as the existence of the different characters in the units as once forms an essential for the calculation. Atatürk has been included 165 and 902 times in the 5th unit of T.R. Turkish Revolution History and Kemalism course book (Başol et al., 2012a) and the entire book, respectively. The following statement shows the historical characters that have been included closely in terms of number in the book: *İsmet İnönü*: 22, *Kazım Karabekir*: 18, *Ali Fuat Cebesoy*: 15, *Mehmet Akif Ersoy* and *Mustafa Fehmi Kubilay* have been mentioned 10 times. Atatürk has been used 215 times in the work book (Başol et al., 2012b), and the closest historical characters in terms of numbers are *Mustafa Fehmi Kubilay*: 5, *Kazım Karabekir*: 4, *Şerife Bacı*: 3, and *İsmet İnönü*: 1. Atatürk is the “only” character in the 7th chapter called Turkey after Atatürk: The 2nd World War and after it.

The total number of the historical characters is 194 in the units of the book written by Gamsız (2012) and published by Netbil Publishing and the number is 213 in the book written by Komisyon (2012). However, the numbers of the characters have been calculated as 151 in the course book of Gamsız (2012) and 170 in the course book written by Komisyon (2012) as the existence of the characters in the units once constitute an essential for the calculation of the historical characters. *Atatürk* 1031, *İsmet İnönü* 39, *Ali Fuat Cebesoy* 18, *Kazım Karabekir* 18, *Veled Çelebi* 10, *Zübeyde Hanım* 9, *Ziya Gökalp* and *Rauf Orbay* have been included 8 times in Secondary Education T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism Course book (Gamsız, 2012) published by Netbil Publishing. Atatürk has been used 845 times in the book written by Komisyon (2012) with the demand of the Ministry of Education. Other historical characters in order in terms of number: *İsmet İnönü*: 35, *Kazım Karabekir*: 16, *Ziya Gökalp*: 15, *Ali Fuat Cebesoy*: 9, *Rauf Bey*: 7, *Zübeyde Hanım*: 5 times, and *Veled Çelebi* has not been included.

4. Results and Discussion

“Historical characters” and the “repetition numbers” of these characters are different for each course book which has been analyzed. The reason behind is that which “historical character “will be included in the phase of the construction of educational attainment and writing course books according to these course books. Initiative is up to the writers of the books. This situation will cause problems for the students who are in the same educational level but study different course books in their classes. The students will never hear some historical characters in their whole life. Therefore, we believe that some characters who are seen as very important should be included in the course books without giving harm to the autonomy of the authors. Presenting those historical characters as one dimensional should also be impeded.

The “historical characters” included in T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism course books have a secondary importance under the personality of Atatürk because of the aim of injecting the ideology of Kemalism. To explain this with an example, Atatürk has been included 902 times in the 8th grade of T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism course book and 215 times in the work book of the same course, and Atatürk has been mentioned 845 times in Secondary Education T.R. Revolution History and Kemalism course book, and the total number is 1962.

Of course, Atatürk will be mentioned more than other historical characters. However, while the closest historical character in terms of number (İsmet İnönü) has been mentioned (primary education course book and work book and upper secondary education course book) 58 times, these kinds of characters will serve increasing the aim of

inspiration to the historical character of Atatürk. This kind of understanding is quite normal when it is considered the aim of the course. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that this will not be enough to be understood the greatness of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who is the founder of our country by our students. His greatness will be understood more clearly when his attitude to the events is compared within the attitudes of other characters.

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