

Research Article

## Analysis of Turkish Curriculum at the Middle School Level Prepared during the Republican Era

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### Abstract

This study examines Turkish Curriculums during the Republican Era, focusing on objectives, learning outcomes, content, teaching-learning processes, and evaluation dimensions. Analyzing 11 curriculums (1924, 1929, 1931-32, 1938, 1949, 1962, 1981, 2006, 2015, 2017, and 2019), we obtained five primary sources and accessed the remaining sources through the examination of 289 previous studies. Through document analysis, we present changes in components, objectives, domains, themes, methods, and assessment in the programs. Although there were no significant modifications from 1949 to 1981 and from 1981 to 2006, the Ministry of National Education has continuously changed programs. Findings reveal various approaches to Turkish language education, with significant changes after 2006, particularly in reading and comprehension skills. These changes reflect evolving educational goals and global trends. The study emphasizes the need for continuous development and adopting contemporary educational approaches in Turkish Curriculums to meet changing needs and ensure progress in the education system.



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### Introduction

The curriculum is a guide that includes the objectives, topics to be taught, distribution of lessons to classes, and teaching methods for various classes and subjects within a particular educational level (Büyükkaragöz & Çivi, 1997; Yılmaz, 2013). The curriculum encompasses elements such as rationale, objectives, program outcomes, content, learning outcomes, and connections for each subject (Ardahan, 2020; Arı & Keskin, 2016). These elements, either individually or collectively, can be influenced by changes, developments, and significant events in the political, economic, academic, and other domains worldwide or in specific countries. For example, World War II, one of the most destructive and tragic events in human history, gave rise to the existentialist philosophy. The sufferings caused by

the war, including death, destruction, and inhumane practices carried out by unquestioning individuals, led people to contemplate existential issues (Dindar, 1987). The existentialist approach in education encourages students to acquire values such as freedom, responsibility, the search for meaning, and social awareness (Malik & Akhter, 2013). Embracing a student-centered approach, existentialism promotes individuals to express their thoughts, develop critical thinking skills, and guide their own learning processes. It also supports students in understanding their relationships with others and their social responsibilities (Çoşkun & Taneri, 2021). As evident from this example, the existentialist educational philosophy emerged as a response to the devastation caused by individuals who could not challenge authority, aiming to prevent the recurrence of such tragic events, and it has subsequently influenced curriculum design.

When designing or updating curriculum, experts consult various sources to ensure that the curriculum is current and effective. These sources include the current curricula of different countries, academic studies, constitutions, legislation, development plans, government programs, council decisions, reports and documents prepared by civil society organizations and research institutions. Additionally, experts evaluate the Ministry of Education (MoNE) survey result reports, review committees' reports, and evaluate education faculties' reports on a subject-specific basis. Then, they initiate the implementation of the programs, and make necessary updates. This approach aims to utilize various sources to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and effective.

Generally, MoNE prefer the spiral teaching approach in the preparation of middle school level programs. We determined that this approach is adopted in Turkey and implemented in middle school programs. The spiral approach encourages students to learn in a more in-depth and holistic manner by using their previous knowledge (Maviş, 2015). While the aim is to achieve learning outcomes in a single iteration, there is also a focus on holistic learning outcomes. This allows students to gain knowledge and skills from a broad perspective (MoNE, 2020). Furthermore, the curriculum is designed to support students' individual abilities and interests, aiming for meaningful and personalized learning experiences (Erdamar & Barası, 2021). When we examine the programs prepared by the MoNE, we observed that there is coherence among the programs. Additionally, the programs consider students' physical, emotional, and psychological development with the aim of fostering their progress (MoNE, 2020). According to MoNE (2020), the fundamental

goal of the education system is to cultivate individuals who possess integrated knowledge, skills, and behaviours aligned with values and competencies. The prepared curriculum encompasses a set of principles aimed at instilling values. Additionally, the programs address core values such as justice, friendship, honesty, self-discipline, patience, respect, love, responsibility, and patriotism, with the purpose of imparting these values. The competencies included in the programs aim to develop individuals with knowledge, skills, and abilities integrated with the education system. The competencies specified in the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) are communication in the native language, communication in foreign languages, fundamental competencies in mathematics and science/technology, digital literacy, learning to learn, social and citizenship competence, taking initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression.

Turkish lesson, as one of the fundamental subjects in the Turkish education system, holds great importance in terms of using the Turkish language correctly and effectively, expressing and understanding our thoughts. The Turkish lesson helps students improve their language skills and express their thoughts accurately and effectively. From this perspective, the Turkish lesson is designed to provide students with language, literature, and communication skills. Turkish language is one of the most essential skills that students will use throughout their lives. Therefore, the Turkish Curriculum (TC) should be continuously and effectively implemented. For this reason, the Turkish education system has always valued the quality of Turkish curriculums. The TC has been modified and developed over time. It is designed to improve students' language skills and express their thoughts correctly through grammar, reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The Turkish curriculum adopted in 1924 is designed according to the conditions and needs of that period. However, over time, factors such as changes in societal and cultural structure, technological developments, and international standards have led to changes in the TC in 1929, 1931-1932, 1938, 1949, 1962, 1981, 2006, 2015, 2017, 2019. The TC covers topics such as language, literature, grammar, reading comprehension, writing skills, vocabulary, speaking, and listening skills. The TC also aims to develop certain characteristics of students. Additionally, subjects such as Turkish literature, world literature, and Turkish culture can be included in the program. The details of the program may vary depending on the period and scope.

Many changes and innovations have been made in TC since 1924. In 1924, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) began preparations in the field of education to ensure

the success of the National Struggle and to establish a new educational system after independence. One of the most important steps taken for the restructuring of the education system was the adoption of the law on Unification of Education Act (Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu) in 1924 (Canbek, 2017). With this law, the education system and curriculum programs were reorganized with the adoption of a secular and national understanding. Additionally, the aim was to make education a public service and enable all citizens to receive education free of charge. The law also made Turkish the mandatory language of instruction in schools (Aslan, 2011). We consider these changes as a significant step in the formation of Turkey's national identity. The 1924 First Stage Secondary Education Curriculum Program is an important step in the educational reform implemented during the early years of the Republic of Turkey. The program aims to establish the national and contemporary foundations of education in line with the ideals of the Republic and to provide students with fundamental knowledge and skills. The program also places special emphasis on the Turkish language with a separate Turkish lesson included in the curriculum, covering "Kıraat (reading), İnşad (speaking), Sarf ve Nahiv (grammar), İmla ve Kitabet (spelling and writing), and Edebi Kıraat (literary recitation)" (Özbay, 2014). This program was prepared before the language reform of 1928, and thus, it utilizes Arabic letters (Gün & Kaya, 2020). The 1924 Primary Schools Curriculum Program aims to improve the standards and quality of the education system by determining teaching methods and student assessment processes for teachers. In the same year, the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades were designated as the first stage of secondary education. This curriculum program is considered a significant turning point in Turkey's transition to a modern and contemporary education system and is regarded as a document that forms the basis of the Republic's educational policies.

By the year 1927, although changes were made to the 1924 program, there were no changes at the first stage of secondary education. After the language reform of 1928, changes were made to the first stage of secondary education in 1929. One of these changes divided Turkish lesson into three sections: grammar, writing, and reading (Kurudayıoğlu & Soysal, 2016). In 1931-1932, only the content of the grammar course was updated, while the other sections not affected (Menteşe, 2013; A. Şahin, 2009). In 1938, upon the instruction of Atatürk, the rules of the Turkish language were reviewed and revised, leading to updates in the curriculum by removing the grammar sections (Gün & Kaya, 2020). During this period, experts added new grammar rules, spelling, and punctuation marks to the Turkish language

teaching programs. In the years when grammar was excluded, books about grammar were written because of the MoNE's efforts, and in 1949, after being revised, grammar rules were included in the curriculum again (Akyol, 2011). The 1949 TC included specific objectives and teacher behaviours related to the classes, distinguishing itself from the previous programs (Calp, 2005). In addition, the program included sections such as "Objectives, Explanations, Reading, Oral and Written Expression, Grammar, Spelling, and Writing," making it more comprehensive compared to the previous programs (Kurudayıoğlu & Soysal, 2016). In 1949, the program was determined based on the textbook; first, the textbook was written, and then the objectives and goals of the program were established (Girgin, 2011).

The 1960s was a period of significant changes marked by various events in Turkey. After the military coup on May 27, 1960, a military government led to significant political and social changes in Turkey. During this period, important changes also took place in the education system. With the 1961 Constitution, education became free and compulsory, a secular understanding was adopted, and primary education became mandatory (Coşkun, 2012). Despite these changes, they made no modifications to the 1962 middle school Turkish language program. The program implemented in 1949 continued without revision (Canbek, 2017; Doğan, 2022; Kurudayıoğlu & Soysal, 2016). In the 1970s, MoNE made efforts to implement significant changes in education, such as the trial of an eight-year primary education school and program development studies. However, due to political instability, these efforts remained in the trial phase. In 1979, MoNE merged elementary schools and middle schools (Akyol, 2011). Following the military coup in 1980, in 1981, MoNE published the TC, consisting of sections such as "General Objectives, Explanations, Comprehension, Expression, Grammar, Writing, Method, Tools and Materials, Assessment and Evaluation" (Menteşe, 2013). The program covered all subjects from 1st grade to 8th grade in primary and middle schools.

In 2006, the MoNE made many changes in the primary and secondary school levels of the Turkish Curriculum. These changes aimed to make the Turkish lesson more functional and qualitative, improve students' reading and writing skills, the goal was also to enhance students' thinking and expression abilities. To achieve this objective, MoNE added literary texts such as stories, novels, and poems to the curriculum, allowing students to develop skills in understanding, interpreting, and critiquing these texts (Kolaç, 2009). Additionally, MoNE emphasized listening and reading skills alongside written and oral expression (Bulut,

2019). As a result, the Turkish lesson aimed not only at language learning but also at fostering thinking, comprehension, interpretation, and expression skills. MoNE introduced new areas to enhance reading and writing skills, teach effective writing, encourage expression of thoughts, and improve speaking abilities. Furthermore, MoNE facilitated more effective learning of grammar rules. Throughout all these revisions and changes, a constructivist approach replaced the behaviourist approach that had been primarily followed until 2005 (MoNE, 2006).

In the changes implemented in 2015, the impact of technological advancements on education was reflected by incorporating more emphasis on information and communication technologies compared to previous programs (Bayburtlu, 2015). The aim was not only to improve students' understanding of the functions of the Turkish language but also to enable them to relate it to Turkish culture and values, as well as to introduce the richness of the Turkish language and culture. In 2017 and 2019, the focus shifted towards utilizing technology more extensively and fostering digital literacy skills, considering global developments. With these changes, the goal was to acquire skills in accessing, analysing, synthesizing, and sharing information in line with the requirements of the digital age. Accordingly, the Turkish language instruction encouraged students to interact with digital tools, and the use of interactive whiteboards and the Education Information Network (EBA) were integrated into the curriculum. Furthermore, MoNE emphasized the functionality of language, and taught language functions to students that they would encounter in their daily lives (MoNE, 2017, 2019). As a result, MoNE aimed to make the TC more contemporary and functional, aiming to equip students with the skills to thrive in the digital age.

#### *Purpose of the research*

The aim of this research is to examine the Middle School Turkish Language Teaching Programs prepared during the Republican Era in terms of objectives, learning outcomes, content, teaching-learning processes, and assessment dimensions. Additionally, it aims to provide a historical overview to those who are interested in Turkish language teaching programs in Republican era Turkey, and to contribute to the literature by presenting the changes in the teaching programs in a coherent and organized manner. A detailed analysis of the historical changes in this context will provide a comprehensive perspective on the historical evolution of Turkish Language Teaching Programs. We assumed that the examined historical perspective in this study is an important tool to understand the changes

in the Turkish education system. Accordingly, the research question of this study is as follows:

- What changes have been made in the objectives, learning outcomes, content, teaching-learning processes, and assessment dimensions in the Middle School Turkish Language Teaching Programs prepared during the Republican Era in Turkey?

Based on the research problem, the following sub-problem question has been determined:

- What sections, objectives, content, educational situations, measurement, and evaluation methods constitute the Middle School Turkish Language Teaching Programs prepared during the Republican Era?

## Method

### *Research Model and Design*

In this study, we used the document analysis design, which is one of the qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is a method in which data is examined in depth, events are studied in their natural settings, and a realistic and holistic understanding is obtained (Büyüköztürk et al., 2013; Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2013). Data collection methods associated with this method include observation, interviews, and document analysis (Büyüköztürk et al., 2013). The scope of the research consists of Turkish Language Teaching Programs prepared from 1924 to 2023. We chose document analysis as the data collection method for this research, we aimed to identify changes in the objectives, purposes, educational situations, measurement, and evaluation areas in Turkish Language Teaching Programs. Document analysis refers to collecting, reading, questioning, and analysing various documents related to the research topic (Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2013).

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

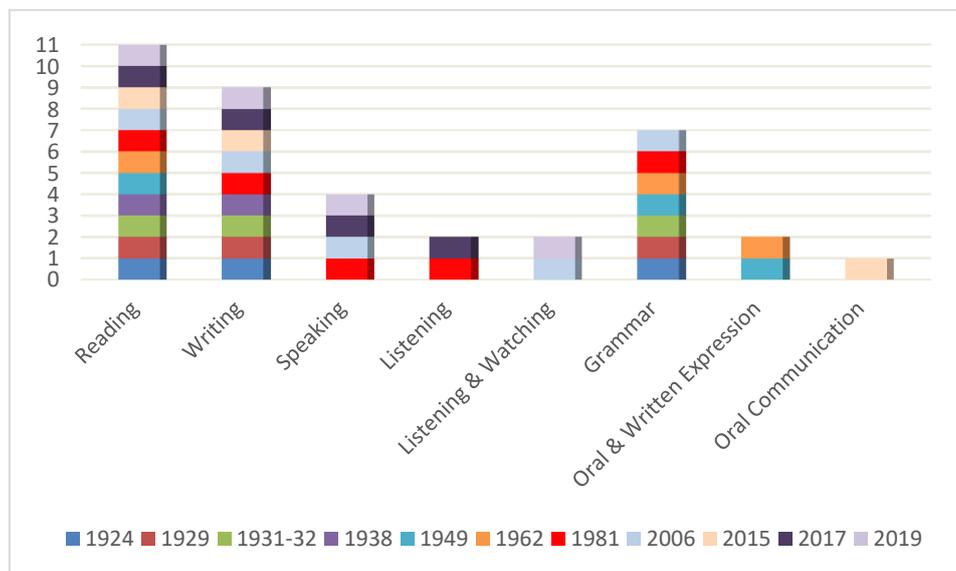
This research examines the changes in Turkish Curriculums from 1924 to 2023, and the data source for this research is documents. In this regard, we searched Google Scholar and National Thesis Center of Turkey websites using the keyword "Turkish Curriculums" and we accessed relevant documents to initiate the research. Among the accessed documents, we obtained primary sources for five out of the eleven versions of Turkish Language Teaching Programs that have undergone changes, while we accessed the remaining sources through the examination of 289 previous studies. Relevant sections of the

289 studies were identified, and based on the analysis, we included 55 of them in the research.

## Finding

Changes in Turkish Curriculums (TCs) have had an impact on the four essential elements that constitute the curriculum: objectives, content, educational situations, and measurement and evaluation components, as well as the sections included in the program. The findings section presents the changes in the four essential elements and program sections that have occurred between 1924 and 2023. In this section, we examined the status of changes in TC over the years, and we present the findings through figures and tables to facilitate understanding and interpretation.

Figure 1 presents the sections related to the four basic language skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and the grammar necessary for the proper application of these skills in TC implemented since 1924 (Altunkaya, 2010; Er, 2007; Gün & Kaya, 2020; Kara, 2022; MoNE, 1968, 2006, 2015, 2017, 2019; Türk, 2022).

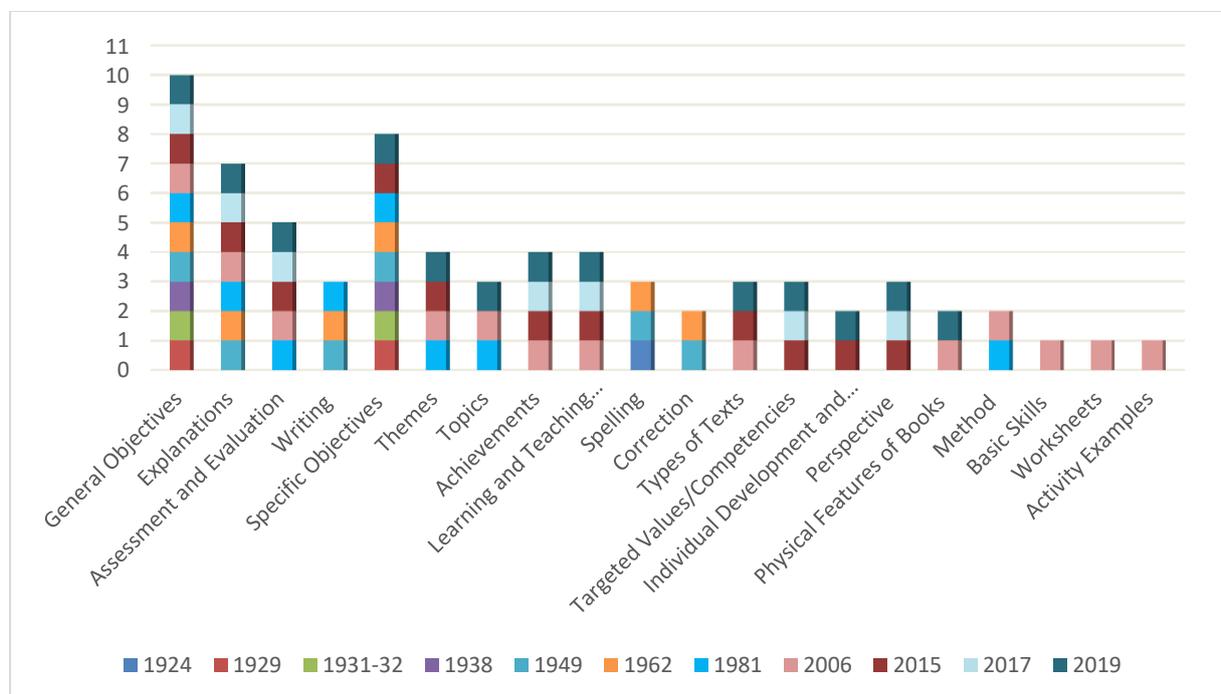


**Figure 1.** Sections Related to the 4 Fundamental Skills in the TC for Middle Schools (Altunkaya, 2010; Er, 2007; Gün & Kaya, 2020; Kara, 2022; MoNE, 1968, 2006, 2015, 2017, 2019; Türk, 2022)

When looking at figure 1, we can observe that the sections included in the TC for the years 1924, 1929, and 1931-32 are the same, including the sections on reading, writing, and grammar. Additionally, in the 1924 program, MoNE dedicated a separate section to literary reading. In the TC of 1938, MoNE removed grammar section. In the TC of 1949, MoNE replaced the section on writing with a section on oral and written expression. The program of 1962 MoNE retained the same sections as the 1949 program without any changes. In the

TC of 1981, MoNE reintroduced the writing section, and for the first time, included sections on speaking and listening. In the 2006 TC, MoNE added a section on listening comprehension, including listening for the first time as a separate section. In the TC of 2015, MoNE replaced the sections on speaking and listening with a section on oral communication and removed the grammar section. In 2017, the TC included sections on the four fundamental skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking, while in 2019, TC included an additional section on viewing alongside the listening section.

In figure 2, we present the sections other than the four fundamental skills in the TC implemented since 1924 (Altunkaya, 2010; Er, 2007; Gün & Kaya, 2020; Kara, 2022; MoNE, 1968, 2006, 2015, 2017, 2019; Türk, 2022).

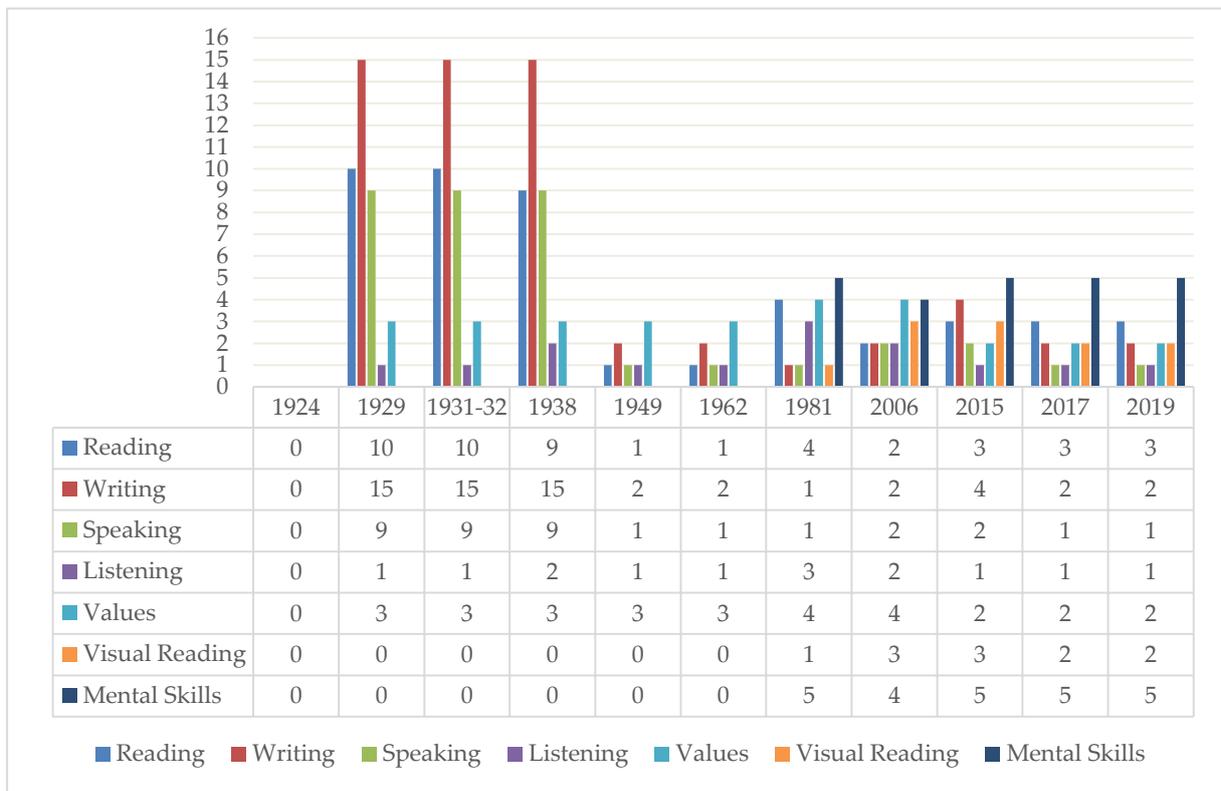


**Figure 2.** Sections Other Than the Four Fundamental Skills in TC for Middle Schools (Altunkaya, 2010; Er, 2007; Gün & Kaya, 2020; Kara, 2022; MoNE, 1968, 2006, 2015, 2017, 2019; Türk, 2022)

According to figure 2, we show the sections other than the four fundamental skills in TC between 1924 and 2023. In 1924 TC, MoNE included only spelling apart from the four fundamental skills. In the programs prepared in 1929, 1931-32, and 1938, MoNE mentioned only general and specific purposes. The 1949 TC introduced sections on explanations, writing, spelling, and correction for the first time. MoNE reissued the 1949 TC as the 1962 TC without any changes to the sections. In the 1981 TC, MoNE included new sections such as methods, themes, topics, and assessment and evaluation for the first time. The 2006 TC was the most comprehensive program until that time, featuring sections on learning outcomes, teaching-learning process/approach, physical features of books, basic skills, worksheets, text

types, and sample activities. In the 2015 TC, MoNE included sections on targeted values/competencies, individual development and teaching programs, and perspective for the first time. Considering the sections included in the program, we found the 2017 TC to be the most narrow-scope TC since 1962. We identified the 2019 TC as the most comprehensive TC among the ones developed between 1924 and 2023.

The goal element, one of the four elements of the curriculum, is the element where the desired characteristics believed to be transferred to the students within the program are determined. The goal element includes information about the "Why?" and the reasons for its implementation. The characteristics included in the curriculum as achievements are habits, knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Akçay & Safalı, 2020). Goals are considered as the most important element of a program. Goals are categorized into three subheadings: distant goals, general goals, and specific goals. Distant goals represent the farthest point that can be reached for a program, while general goals are perceived as concrete steps taken to achieve distant goals (Ertürk, 1982). Specific goals refer to the behaviours that are intended to be acquired by students in relation to a particular lesson (Mutlu, 2012). In figure 3, we present the areas where the specific purposes included in TC from 1924 to the present are located (Balci et al., 2012; Karakuş, 2020; MoNE, 1968, 2006, 2015, 2017, 2019).

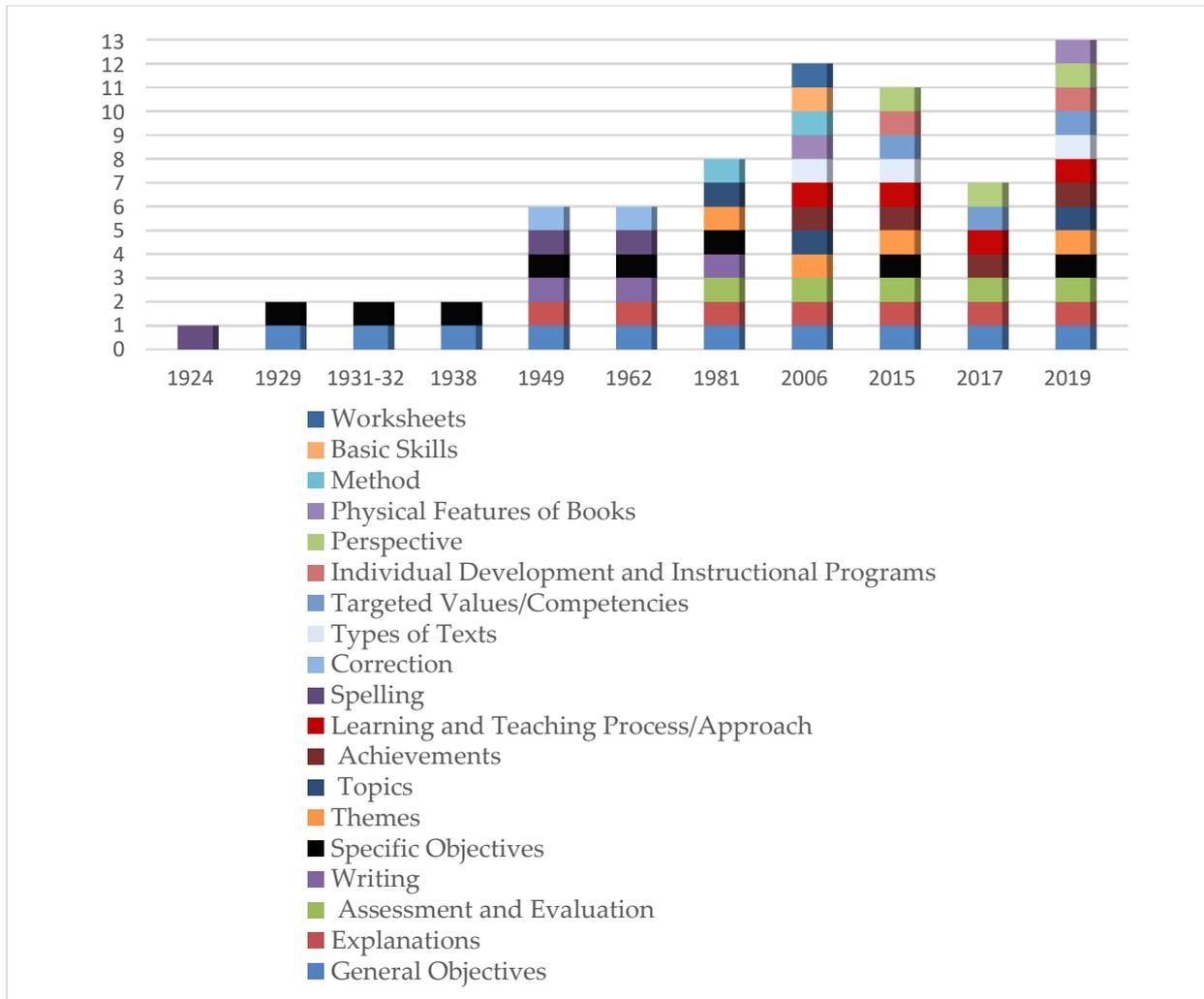


**Figure 3.** Domains of Specific Purposes in TC for Middle Schools (Balci et al., 2012; Karakuş, 2020; MoNE, 1968, 2006, 2015, 2017, 2019)

When we examine figure 3, we can observe that 1924 TC did not include specific purposes. The TCs prepared in 1929, 1931-32, and 1938 show similarities, but in the 1938 TC, MoNE added a purpose related to listening skills instead of the specific purposes related to reading found in the previous programs. In the TCs of 1949 and 1962, there are one specific purpose each for reading, speaking, and listening, two for writing, and three for national values. It is noteworthy that the number of specific purposes decreased in the 1949 TC compared to the previous ones. When we examine the TC prepared in 1981, we determined that visual reading and mental skills are mentioned for the first time. In the TC prepared in 2006, there is an increase in the number of specific purposes related to visual reading, and MoNE preferred a balanced distribution for the fundamental skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening). In addition, there is an increase in the number of specific purposes related to visual reading in the 2006 TC. In the 2015 TC, there is a decrease in the number of specific purposes related to national values, while we observe an increase in writing skills. The TCs prepared in 2017 and 2019 show similarities, but there is a decrease in the total number of specific purposes.

Once the target component is determined, the content component is decided in the curriculum. Content is the element in a curriculum that answers the question "What should we teach?" for achieving the objectives. In an instructional program, the content should be organized according to the prerequisite principle to lead students to the specified targets and at an appropriate level (Demirel, 2010). Additionally, time is an important factor in content selection and that pre-organizers should be strategically used in organizing the content (Demirel, 2010; Senemoğlu, 2013).

When we examine the content dimension of TCs during the Republican era, we present information related to learning domains in Figure 4.



**Figure 4.** Learning Areas Included in the Content Section of Middle School TCs

In Figure 4, we provide information about the learning areas included in TCs (Curriculum for Basic Education). In the 1938 TC, MoNE divided reading skills into two subheadings: oral reading and silent reading. The 1938 TC had the lowest number of learning areas compared to other programs. The 1949 TC described the Turkish lesson as an art course and emphasized the importance of performing reading, writing, and speaking skills beautifully. The 1949 TC also included a separate heading for speaking and writing skills. Furthermore, the program explained aspects to consider when writing under the subheadings of planning, topic, and correction. MoNE republished the 1949 TC in 1962 without making any changes at content section.

The 1981 TC included the monitoring learning area for the first time. The 2006 TC introduced the learning areas of visual reading and presentation for the first time, and the grammar learning area, which was included in all programs except for 1938, was removed. MoNE replaced the listening and speaking learning areas with the oral communication

learning area in 2015 TC. Additionally, a new learning area called listening/watching was introduced in the 2015 TC. MoNE added grammar learning area to the program again in 2015. The 2017 TC incorporated the TQF competencies adopted in 2016 into the learning areas. TQF consists of eight competencies: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competence in science/technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competencies, taking initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression. The 2019 TC appears to be like the 2017 TC.

In addition to the changes in TCs in 2006, there were also changes in textbooks. MoNE organized the textbooks according to a theme-based approach, unlike previous years. In the theme-based approach, a theme is selected for students, and the aim is to provide information related to the theme through various text types. Themes allow students to process and apply the knowledge and skills they have learned in mental processes and daily life (MoNE, 2006). Prior to 2006, the content sections of middle school TCs discussed topics instead of themes. The TCs of 1924, 1929, 1931-32, 1949, 1962, and 1981 prior to 2006 included general statements about:

- increasing students' interest in Turkish,
- making students like Turkish,
- increasing students' desire to read,
- ensuring students' comprehension of what they read,
- addressing topics that encourage students to speak and write effectively (Altunkaya, 2010).

We included the themes addressed in the programs starting from the year 2006 in Table 1 (Bayburtlu, 2015; Kaya & Kardaş, 2020; D. Şahin & Bayramoğlu, 2016).

**Table 1.** Themes Included in the Content Section of Middle School TCs as of 2006 (Bayburtlu, 2015; Kaya & Kardaş, 2020; D. Şahin & Bayramoğlu, 2016)

Years	2006	2015	2017	2019	Total
<b>Themes</b>					
Atatürkism	Compulsory				1
National Struggle and Atatürkism		Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory	3
Love	Compulsory for 6th				1
National Culture	Compulsory for 7th	Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory	4

Social Life	Compulsory for 8th				4
Virtues		Compulsory	Compulsory		2
Reading Culture	Elective		Elective	Elective	3
Communication	Elective		Elective	Elective	1
Rights and Freedoms	Elective		Elective	Elective	3
Personal Development	Elective		Elective	Elective	1
Science and Technology	Elective	Compulsory	Elective	Elective	2
Habits	Elective				1
Time and Space	Elective		Elective	Elective	3
Emotions	Elective		Elective	Elective	2
Nature and Universe	Elective	Compulsory	Elective	Elective	4
Fine Arts	Elective	Compulsory			2
Art			Elective	Elective	2
Concepts and Associations	Elective				1
Us and Our Values		Compulsory			1
Citizenship Awareness		Compulsory	Elective	Elective	3
Health, Sports, and Games		Compulsory			1
Individual and Society			Elective	Elective	2
Health and Sports			Elective	Elective	2
Children's World			Elective	Elective	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>55</b>

2006 TC included a total of 15 themes. While the theme of Atatürkism was compulsory for all grades, MoNE introduced separate compulsory themes for grades 6, 7, and 8. In 2015 TC, there were a total of 8 compulsory themes. In 2017 TC, there were 3 compulsory and 13 elective themes, making a total of 16 themes. MoNE retained the same themes in the 2019 TC without any changes.

According to the 2006 TC, Turkish textbooks designed based on the themes should include 6 themes, consisting of 2 compulsory and 4 elective ones. It was possible for a theme that is compulsory for one grade level to be elective for another grade level. In 2015 TC, it was compulsory for all 8 themes to be included in the textbooks. In 2017 and 2019 TC, MoNE stated that textbooks should include a total of 8 themes for each grade, with 3 being compulsory and 5 elective themes.

From 1924 to 1981, no findings regarding teaching, methods, strategies, and techniques were found in the published programs. Considering that the alphabet reform took place on November 1, 1928, we can assume that the teaching in the 1924 program was highly influenced by Arabic and Persian. The 1929 TC introduced Turkish letters and focused on reducing the influence of Arabic and Persian on the Turkish language. We can infer that grammar instruction was conducted during this period. The 1981 TC included

sections on methods and assessment. According to Karakuş (2020), prior to 2006, TC emphasized the active role of teachers, utilized question-answer technique, and employed discussion and observation techniques, adopting a deductive educational approach. As stated by MoNE (2006), before 2005, a behavioural approach was adopted in the teaching of Turkish and other subjects. In the behavioural approach, language learning was believed to be acquired like other behaviours, and students were presented with rules and expected to constantly practice and occasionally memorize them. In the changes implemented in 2005, MoNE abandoned the behavioural approach, and designed programs based on a constructivist approach, allowing students to be more active and learn by constructing knowledge. Table 2 provides the teaching methods used in TCs since 2006 (MoNE, 2006, 2015, 2017, 2019).

**Table 2.** Teaching Methods and Techniques Included in Middle School TCs as of 2006 (MoNE, 2006, 2015, 2017, 2019)

Year	2006	2015	2017	2019	Total
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Listening/Watching</b>	<b>Oral Communication</b>	<b>Listening/Watching</b>		
Active Participation	x		x	x	3
Passive Participation	x		x	x	3
Note-taking	x	x	x	x	4
Empathy Building	x	x	x	x	4
Creative	x		x	x	3
Selective	x	x	x	x	4
Critical	x	x	x	x	4
Active Listening		x			1
Predictive			x	x	2
Listening in Groups			x	x	2
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Oral Communication</b>	<b>Speaking</b>		
Persuasion	x		x	x	3
Critical	x	x	x	x	4
Active Participation	x		x	x	3
Discussion	x		x	x	3
Empathy Building	x	x	x	x	4
Guided	x	x	x	x	4
Selecting from Word and Concept Pool	x	x	x	x	4
Free	x		x	x	3
Creative	x		x	x	3
Retention	x	x	x	x	4
Summarizing		x			1
Brainstorming		x			1
Unprepared			x	x	2

<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Reading</b>				
Silent	x		x	x	3
Oral	x		x	x	3
Skimming	x		x	x	3
Summarizing	x		x	x	3
Note-taking	x		x	x	3
Underlining (Marking)	x		x	x	3
Predicting	x		x	x	3
Asking Questions	x		x	x	3
Choral Speaking	x		x	x	3
Reader's Theater	x		x	x	3
Memorization	x		x	x	3
Making Connections with Texts	x		x	x	3
Discussing	x		x	x	3
Critical	x		x	x	3
In Groups			x	x	2
Comparing			x	x	2
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Writing</b>				
Note-taking	x		x	x	3
Summarizing	x		x	x	3
Fill in the Blanks	x		x	x	3
Selecting from Word and Concept Pool	x		x	x	3
Free	x	x	x	x	4
Controlled	x	x	x	x	4
Guided	x	x	x	x	4
Creative	x		x	x	3
Text Completion	x		x	x	3
Making Predictions	x		x	x	3
Reconstructing the Text	x		x	x	3
Generating New Text Based on the Original Text	x		x	x	3
Using Senses as a Basis	x		x	x	3
In Groups	x	x	x	x	4
Critical	x	x	x	x	4
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>165</b>

According to Table 2, in the 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade TC published in 2006, there are a total of 46 activity types related to skills. In the 2006 TC, the skill with the highest number of activities is writing with 15, followed by reading with 14, speaking with 10, and the skill with the least number of activity types, listening/viewing with 7 (MoNE, 2006).

We determined that in the 2015 TC, there are not as many activities as in 2006, and the speaking, listening/viewing skills have been combined under the heading of oral communication skills. In the 2015 TC, the program emphasizes the teachers' role in

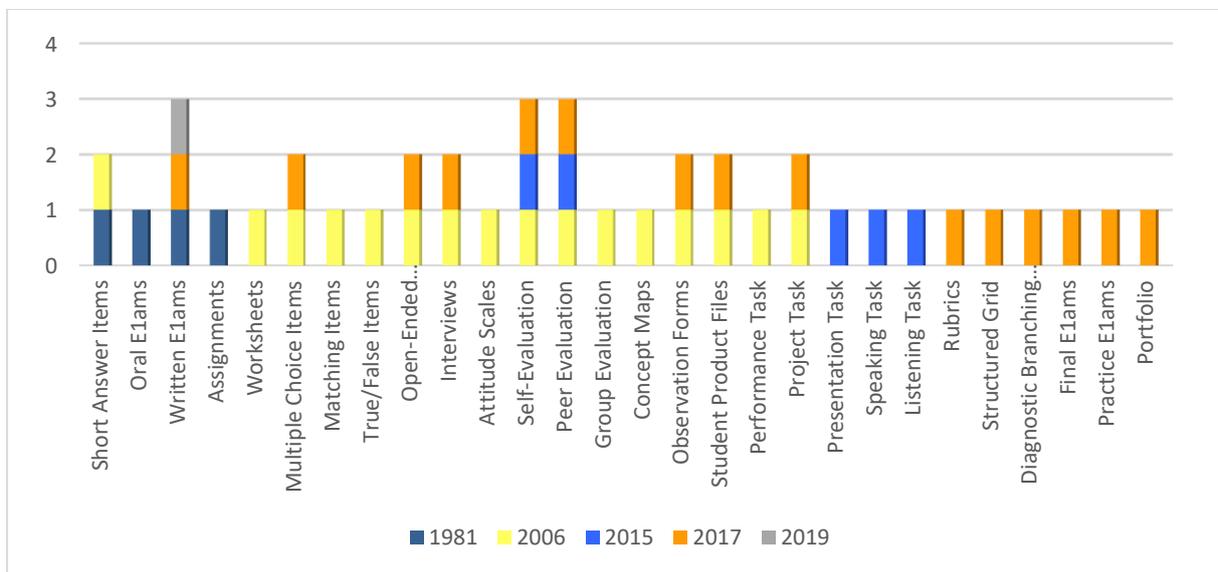
employing the necessary methods, strategies, and techniques to help students develop their Turkish language skills, without specifically mentioning activities (MoNE, 2015). The activities marked in Table 6 are inferred from the sentences in the program. When looking at the activity types in the 2015 TC, we understand that out of the 12 activity types under the heading of oral communication skills, five are related to listening/viewing skills and seven are related to speaking skills. However, there are no activity types specifically related to reading skills in the same program, while five activity types are included for writing skills. Furthermore, in the 2015 TC, MoNE stated that it would be beneficial for the teacher to determine the type of writing in which the student has aptitude and direct the student towards writing in that genre. Additionally, unlike other programs, the 2015 TC emphasizes a process-oriented writing model. In the process-oriented writing model, the teacher aims to provide students with all the necessary skills related to writing, primarily focusing on the preparatory stage (MoNE, 2015).

According to Table 2, we determined that the activity types and numbers in the 2017 TC and 2019 TC are the same. In both programs, MoNE emphasized that teachers should use methods and techniques that enable students to actively participate and enhance their learning, considering students' readiness levels and individual differences (MoNE, 2017, 2019). The competencies section of these two programs includes explanations under certain competencies, which provide suggested methods, techniques, or strategies to be used when implementing the competencies (Çağlar, 2019). Therefore, the activities marked in Table 6 for the 2017 and 2019 TC are marked based on the information obtained from the explanations section.

In the published curriculum programs, after the elements of objectives, content, and educational situations, the element of assessment and evaluation follows. According to MoNE (2015), assessment and evaluation are essential components of the teaching and learning process that should be included in curriculum programs. The assessment and evaluation element helps determine how closely the predetermined objectives are being approached in a program, identify any deficiencies in the programs, and facilitate the identification and remediation of these deficiencies. According to MoNE (2006), assessment and evaluation can be carried out in three ways: at the beginning, during, and at the end of the instructional process. Assessment conducted at the beginning of the instructional process can measure students' readiness levels, attitudes towards the lesson, and their performance

in grammar and language skills using various assessment tools. Assessment conducted during the instructional process can evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and identify learning deficiencies. The purpose of assessment conducted at the end of the instructional process is to determine students' achievements at the end of the teaching process.

When examining the assessment and evaluation dimension of the Turkish Curriculums during the Republican era from 1924 to the present, no findings regarding assessment and evaluation were found in the TCs published in 1924, 1929, 1931-32, 1938, 1949, and 1962. We provide information regarding the assessment and evaluation element included in the TCs published in 1981, 2006, 2015, 2017, and 2019 in figure 5 (Çaylar, 2007; Girgin, 2011; Karaman, 2018; Kurudayıoğlu & Soysal, 2016; MoNE, 2006, 2015, 2017, 2019).



**Figure 5.** Activities Included in the Assessment and Evaluation Section of Turkish Curriculums (Çaylar, 2007; Girgin, 2011; Karaman, 2018; Kurudayıoğlu & Soysal, 2016; MoNE, 2006, 2015, 2017, 2019)

When looking at figure 5, we indicated that written exams and self- and peer-assessment tools should be utilized the most in the programs. Additionally, according to figure 5, MoNE published the TC that includes the most assessment and evaluation tools in 2006, while MoNE published the TC that includes the least assessment and evaluation tools in 2019. The 1981 TC was the first program to suggest the use of short-answer items, assignments, oral and written exams as assessment and evaluation tools. The 2006 TC appears to be the program that extensively addresses the assessment and evaluation section, with a total of 16 assessment and evaluation tools included. Furthermore, MoNE provided detailed explanations and sample forms for activities in the program (MoNE, 2006).

In the 2015 TC, MoNE stated that assessment and evaluation activities should be included at the beginning, throughout, and at the end of the teaching-learning process. The explanations regarding assessment and evaluation in the program emphasize the importance of measuring the achievements of oral communication, reading, and writing skills. Additionally, the 2015 TC introduces the measurement of presentation, speaking, and listening skills for the first time (MoNE, 2015). The 2017 TC emphasizes the importance of conducting assessment and evaluation before, during, and after the process, with corresponding explanations provided. Furthermore, the 2017 TC recommends the use of structured grids, diagnostic branching trees, portfolios, end-of-term exams, and practical exams as assessment and evaluation tools.

In the assessment and evaluation section of the 2019 TC, MoNE mentioned only written exams as assessment tools, while the program discusses the desired characteristics of assessment and evaluation tools. The desired characteristics of assessment tools in the 2019 TC include being compatible with the diversity and flexibility approach, aligning with the elements of the program, complying with technical and academic boundaries, being process-oriented, being tailored to individual differences, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, and being prepared considering multidimensional evaluation. The program also emphasizes the trust in teachers' originality and creativity in relation to assessment and evaluation tools (MoNE, 2019).

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Education systems worldwide have undergone various changes from the 1960s to the present day. These changes include the adoption of an integrated approach in educational programs, the proliferation of information and communication technologies, the development of student-centered approaches, and performance assessment. The changes made in the United States, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, have led to the adoption of a different paradigm in education. The influences of pragmatism philosophy have also permeated education, with progressivism and learner-centered constructivist approaches playing a role in curriculum changes. In the 2000s, countries like Japan and South Korea achieved great success in education, while Finland's education system became a globally recognized model (Aslantaş, 2017).

According to the findings of the research, many changes have been made in the Turkish National Curriculum from 1924 to the present day. The establishment of the

Republic of Turkey and the determination of Turkish as the mother tongue have been influential factors in these changes. When looking at the changes made in the 1960s and 1970s, we can observe that the military coup of the time resulted in a greater emphasis on concepts like Turkish nationalism and Turkism in the curriculum (Coşkun, 2012). The changes made in 1981 led to the adoption of a new perspective in curriculum development and brought about a different approach to teaching Turkish. In the 2000s, the motivation behind the changes stemmed from low student performance in reading comprehension in international exams (Menteşe, 2013). The changes made in 2006 aimed to improve students' Turkish language learning by reorganizing the curriculum. The changes implemented in 2015 aimed to develop students' creative thinking and critical reading skills, considering the impact of technological advancements worldwide (Akmugan, 2019).

To sum up, education systems worldwide have experienced various transformations over time. Similarly, the Turkish National Curriculum has undergone multiple changes since its inception, driven by factors such as the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the emphasis on Turkish as the mother tongue, political events, and the need to improve student performance. These changes have aimed to adopt new perspectives, address specific educational goals, and respond to evolving global trends in education.

This article presents a historical perspective on Turkish Curriculums. Initially established in 1924, TC focused on national culture and language consciousness but underwent changes over time due to different ideological and pedagogical approaches. In 1938, Atatürk initiated research on reviewing the grammar rules of the Turkish language and purging it from foreign words, which resulted in the removal of the grammar section from the TC published in the same year (Aldemir, 2013). The grammar section was reintroduced in the 1949 TC, along with the inclusion of a section on oral and written expression for the first time. The 1949 TC underwent minor changes and was republished in 1962, remaining in use until 1981. During these 32 years, no significant modifications were made, except for simplification of the language used in the program. The lack of changes in the curriculum over the years indicates a lack of emphasis on education and insufficient prioritization of the curriculum. It also suggests that the curriculum may not be up to date with current needs and developments.

The 1981 TC, on the other hand, was the most comprehensive program developed until that time. It included sections on speaking, listening, assessment and evaluation,

general objectives, specific objectives, themes, topics, and teaching methods. In addition to these sections, the program incorporated specific objectives for visual reading and cognitive skills, aligning with the conditions of the time and the findings of educational research, indicating its adaptation to current academic knowledge. Moreover, 1981 TC changes were influenced by the 1739 Basic Law of National Education that enactment of the law in 1973 (Toprakçı et al., 2010).

MoNE replaced the 1981 TC, which had been implemented until 2005, with the 2006 TC, which designers based on the constructivist educational approach. (Çaylar, 2007). The 2006 TC had the highest number of sections, totalling 18, among all the TCs developed during the Republican era. It included 16 activities in the assessment and evaluation section, making it the most comprehensive TC. MoNE emphasized the importance of language skills and oral expression with the changes introduced. Considering the rapid proliferation of the internet, the 2006 TC placed significant emphasis on visual reading. Additionally, for the first time in the content section of the 2006 TC, MoNE made Atatürkism theme mandatory for each grade level, while provided separate mandatory and elective themes for grades 6th, 7th, and 8th, indicating flexibility in theme selection.

Despite the steps taken to improve Turkey's low scores in international exams through the changes made in 2006, Batur and Ulutaş (2013) point out that the achievements fall short in elevating students to higher cognitive levels. Öрге Yaşar (2008) concludes that the fifth-grade Turkish language textbook does not serve upper cognitive levels based on the assessment and evaluation analysis. Metin and Demiryürek (2009) highlight that the assessment and evaluation approach expected to be implemented in the 2005 TC was not fully understood by teachers. İşeri (2007) states that the sixth-grade Turkish language textbook does not align with the program's objectives and behaviors. Mentеше (2013), in a study examining teachers' views on TC, found that teachers lack sufficient knowledge about the program, textbooks are inadequate, and there are problems due to students' individual differences. However, Mutlu (2012) found in his study that teachers have a high sense of self-efficacy, and this sense has a positive relationship with the transfer of achievements to students. Uysal (2009), in a study analyzing TC and Turkish language sample books in the context of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, concluded that the books are compatible with the common framework.

In the 2015 revisions, TC was expanded to include literacy skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, and language learning strategies. The 2015 TC allocated space for 20 specific objectives, making it the most comprehensive program in this regard. Since all the themes included in the content section of the 2015 TC are mandatory, it is not a flexible program, and all the themes need to be covered in lessons. Bayburtlu (2015) reached the conclusion that the 2015 TC, although simpler compared to 2006, eliminates the confusion in the program.

In the 2017 and 2019 TC, a total of 16 themes were included in the content section, with three of them being mandatory and 13 of them being elective. It was stated that each grade should cover 8 themes. The 2017 and 2019 TC stand out as the most comprehensive programs in terms of the included themes and the total of 51 methods and techniques. The 2017 TC included 15 activities in the assessment and evaluation section, while the 2019 TC only included one activity. The reason for this, according to the MoNE (2019), is to encourage teachers to be creative in assessment and evaluation rather than limiting them. With the changes made in 2019, TC was approached with a more holistic perspective, aiming to develop students' creative and critical thinking skills in the language learning process.

In the studies we conducted on the implementation of programs in the literature, we reached the following findings. Arcagök (2021) states that the sixth-grade Turkish language textbook needs to be reorganized according to TC. Süğümlü (2021) concluded that there is very little emphasis on self-assessment activities in middle school Turkish language textbooks. Türkben (2022) suggests that Turkish language teachers need to undergo comprehensive in-service training regarding their in-class assessment competencies. Özkaya (2020) found that the grammar questions in the books did not adequately assess upper cognitive levels. However, considering that the proportion of achievements exceeds one-fourth, we assume that the latest program assesses upper cognitive levels more than the others. According to Göçer and Arslan (2019), they concluded that grammar achievements were arranged according to student levels.

In conclusion, when we look at the changes and transformations undergone by the TCs, it is evident that TCs are constantly striving to renew and improve themselves. Another important aim of the changes in TCs is to develop students' creativity and critical thinking skills. Thus, the goal is for students to acquire skills that they can benefit from not only for exam preparation but also throughout their lives. In this regard, recent changes have aimed

to enable students to adapt to technological advancements, access information more quickly, and interpret that information correctly.

In other words, latest TCs aim to equip students as competent individuals in line with the requirements of the digital age. New programs include various activities and assignments where students can use digital tools to gather information from different sources, analyse it, and present it. As a result, students' interaction with the digital world will increase, and they will acquire digital literacy skills to adapt to the requirements of the digital age. Additionally, MoNE considers TCs important for students to enjoy the Turkish language lessons more, be able to think freely, and unleash their creativity. MoNE make these changes in accordance with the students' needs, societal requirements, and the evolving technological opportunities of the era. Due to all these reasons or any of them, TCs are continuously updated, indicating that they are dynamic, up-to-date, and rational processes.

Additionally, the changes in TC have been shaped in parallel with the education system and societal structure in Turkey. Throughout history, these changes reflect different approaches to Turkish language teaching. Especially in recent years, the changes indicate an approach aimed at improving students' reading and comprehension skills. When examining the changes made globally, we can say that all these changes are proportional to the evolving goals and needs of educational systems over time. TC has been continuously reshaped to align with these changes. We believe that Turkey's education system still has significant potential for development. Therefore, it is necessary to adapt and improve Turkish language teaching programs in accordance with the changing requirements of the time and embrace contemporary educational approaches. Our recommendations for future changes are provided in the recommendations section.

#### *Suggestions*

Based on the findings obtained from the research, we can make the following recommendations to other researchers:

1. Researchers should conduct further studies on TC to gather and evaluate more precise data regarding the effectiveness and success of the programs.
2. As the use of digital technology in education increases, it is important to update the instructional programs to align with these technological advancements and focus on

developing students' skills in using these technologies. Researchers should also develop more effective methods for utilizing these technologies in TC.

3. The programs should be regularly reviewed and updated to meet the needs of students, the experiences of teachers, and the requirements based on the latest educational research.

For faculty members in teacher training institutions, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Faculty members should encourage teacher candidates to adopt student-centered teaching methods. Embracing student-centered teaching methods instead of traditional teaching methods can help students learn more actively. We also recommend that faculty members use these methods in their own courses.

2. Faculty members should provide more opportunities for practical learning to teacher candidates. This can involve offering practical learning opportunities where teacher candidates can develop skills that they can use in real-life situations. This would help teacher candidates apply their theoretical knowledge in practice when they start working in schools.

Based on the findings obtained from the research, the following recommendations can be made to teachers:

1. Teachers should show flexibility in implementing the curriculum, considering the diverse characteristics of students, and design their lessons with a student-centered approach.

2. Teachers and educators should have a greater say in determining and implementing the curriculum and they should be in decision-making processes. This can facilitate the development and implementation of programs based on teachers' feedback, increase their motivation, and positively impact student success.

For education policymakers or decision-makers, the following recommendations can be made:

1. We believe that TC should not be limited to language teaching only but should also be constantly updated to develop students' higher-order cognitive skills such as critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis. It is important for education policymakers to take the lead in implementing these updates.

2. Policymakers can contribute to teacher education by ensuring that Turkish language teachers receive in-service training and that teacher candidates are trained at

universities according to their needs and modern teaching techniques. Therefore, it is recommended that education policymakers improve teacher education programs to equip teachers and teacher candidates with modern teaching techniques and pedagogical methods.

3. By increasing students' access to technology and promoting its use in education, policymakers can enable students to be more effective and efficient in the learning process. Therefore, it is recommended that policymakers invest more in the use of technology in education and develop infrastructure and programs that allow students to use technology more extensively in the learning process.

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#### *Author Contribution Statement*

**Cengiz AĞLAR:** *Conceptualization, literature review, implementation, data analysis, translation, and writing.*

**Aysel ARSLAN:** *Conceptualization, literature review, methodology, implementation, data analysis, and writing.*

**Ahmet Furkan ŞAHBAZ:** *Conceptualization, literature review, implementation, data analysis, translation, and writing.*

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