

PART 5

Analysis of Actuality in Social Studies Education

Prof. Dr. Zafer ÇAKMAK
Firat University, Faculty of Education
zcakmak@firat.edu.tr

Assist. Prof. Dr. Cengiz TAŞKIRAN
Mus Alpaslan University Faculty of Education
cengiztaskiran1@gmail.com

Dr. Birol BULUT
Firat University Faculty of Education
birolbulut1@gmail.com

1. Introduction

As science and technology have developed and changed in recent years, societies in our increasingly globalizing world are aware of and influenced by political, economic and social developments instantaneously. Countries that cannot remain indifferent to the positive-negative implications of all these developments need contemporary education-instruction models to identify the steps they should take in response to these changes. It is possible to argue that there is a close correlation between the level of development of a society and the education system and its applications. Today, the developments in the field of education require studies on the new approaches and different choices that could be utilized in instruction of Social Studies and Social Studies. New developments, emerging social, cultural and technological problems, solution proposals, pursued educational policies, new requirements have a significant effect on especially the development of Social Studies curricula and therefore primarily affecting the understanding of Social Studies and curricula, and augmenting the significance of the future provisions (Ocak and Bulut, 2014).

With the update of the Social Studies curriculum, studies were conducted to train individuals with skills, attitudes, values and understanding necessary to develop their research-inquiry, critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills, to become lifelong learning individuals, and to keep their curiosity about their environment and the world alive (MEB, 2006). It is of great importance to pick this knowledge up from everyday life so that the targeted achievements in the education-instruction process could be consistent and utilized in necessary situations. For an individual to be an active citizen, to acquire knowledge about past and present events, and to make inferences about the future, the individual should follow current events and comment on these events reported by news sources such as newspapers, television and magazines.

1.1. The Significance of Textbooks in Education

A textbook is a learning-instruction material that includes texts prepared in accordance with the learning level and developmental features of the students and the principles in the curriculum and presents the students with the information on the course. Textbooks, one of the most extensive material utilized in the instruction process, are an important instrument frequently used by students and teachers and the content of which is designed based on the achievements depicted in the curriculum. The textbook is a printed learning-teaching medium that discusses predetermined information in a planned and organized manner and guides the student towards the target achievements of the course and includes manuscripts and visuals such as pictures and graphs (Keser, 2004).

The textbook is a printed publication that is used in formal and non-formal educational institutions of all types and grades for instructional purposes and prepared based on the curriculum (MEB, 2004). Toprak (1993) noted that textbooks are useful instruction material that present the knowledge related to the course content determined in curricula and provide studying opportunities in line with the objectives set out in educational programs and the speed of reinforcement, preparing for the exams and learning of the students (Demirel, 2009: 40).

Textbooks are among the material that contribute to the development of children's cognitive, emotional and psycho-motor skills the most. Especially during primary education, textbooks play a significant role (Demirel, 2009: 38). The association established by the textbooks with other areas, the teacher's utilization of general culture elements during the instruction of the topics affect the classroom environment positively and result in a pleasant education - instruction. Textbooks assist the teacher to instruct the course in a planned and systematic manner. On the other hand, since they limit the instructed topics at a medium level, textbooks assist the teacher in determination of the limits of the instruction (Tosunoglu and Aslan, 2001). Learning does not occur only in the school environment. The student also needs to learn out-

side the school context. The teachers' task of guidance and counseling are fulfilled by textbooks outside the school (Demirel, 2009: 46).

The textbooks designed based on the adequate instruction principles of students establishing associations between the topics and learning from the tangible to the abstract and from the known to the unknown play a significant role in removing the misconceptions and learning drawbacks by providing retention. Furthermore, textbooks provide the students the opportunity to learn by themselves and repeat what they have learned. In regions where teaching material are inadequate, tools and equipment are limited, family and related support is insufficient and classes are crowded, textbooks help the teacher (Güzel et al., 2009). One of the features that distinguish textbooks from other books is that they are aimed at a field of study, information is presented in a systematic way, it is suitable for the student level and the topics covered are limited to the curriculum (Gökdere and Keles, 2004.) When a book is assigned as a textbook, it means that the content of that book is consistent with the curriculum of the related course for a certain grade. Thus, it means that the textbook is an instrument that could implement the strategies, methods and techniques and suitable for the goals and behavior of the curriculum (Kılıç & Seven, 2008: 19).

The qualifications of textbooks are determined in "Ministry of National Education textbooks and educational instruments regulation" Article 6 as follows (MEB, 2009):

1. The content cannot contain information contrary to the Constitution and current legislation.
2. Textbooks aim to train individuals who are faithful to Atatürk's Principles and Reforms stated in the General Objectives of Turkish National Education included in National Education Law no: 1739 and to Atatürk's Nationalism expressed in the Constitution, who adopt, protect and develop the values of the Turkish Nation, love their family, country, and nation, and always honor the nation, know and fulfill their duties and responsibilities towards the Republic of Turkey which is based on human rights and the basic principles of the Constitution, are they are designed with the Basic Principles of Turkish National Education.
3. They could not be contrary to human rights and could not reflect any kind of discrimination (such as gender, race, religion, language, color, political thought).
4. Textbooks are prepared according to scientific rules and disciplines.
5. Textbooks could not include any form of advertising elements.
6. The reading texts in the textbooks should guide the training of individuals who are

good, respectful, honest, hard-working citizens and know and fulfill their duties and responsibilities towards the Republic of Turkey.

7. Textbooks comply with General Objectives and Basic Principles of Turkish National Education and the objectives of the curriculum and the educational institution.
8. Textbooks contain achievements depicted in curricula about Atatürk principles and reforms.
9. Textbooks contribute to the development of values such as dialogue, tolerance, culture of reconciliation, empathy, respect for differences and human rights, equality, participation, pluralism, and rule of law.
10. Textbooks attract the attention to questioning the knowledge and production of knowledge.
11. Textbooks encourage the contemporary use of information technologies.
12. Textbooks include the knowledge, skills, manners, attitudes, values and competencies that the curriculum aims to provide.
13. Textbooks avoid prejudicial and narrow proposals and include different perspectives related to the topic.
14. Textbooks could not include elements that batter and degrade individuals, institutions and organizations.
15. Textbooks prioritize the student by assigning the role of the guide to the teacher and an active role to the student. They offer a variety of options to satisfy different interests, abilities and needs of the students.

The visual material and their design in textbooks are significant for the teaching-learning process (Koçoğlu, 2017). The visual material used in textbooks are indispensable elements that improve the creative thinking skills of the students, improve their esthetic taste, contribute to their intelligent development and help them to recognize the world. The high quality and aesthetic value of the utilized visual material also increase the perception level of the students. In development of the aesthetic perception of the students and in the formation of the habit of reading books, the influence of textbooks with a strong visual design is significant (Uzuner, Aktaş and Albayrak 2010).

1.2. Characteristics of A Quality Social Studies Textbook

The most significant objective of the instruction Social Studies course in basic education is for the students to acquire “social personality”. The most important characteristic of social personality is to be a good citizen. Based the achievements that the students should acquire, the children are expected to possess critical, creative thinking skills, develop interpersonal relationships, and be aware of their rights and responsibilities. Thus, it is very important that the textbooks that are used as the most important tool in achieving the goals set about the students at school could address the child in the related age group. In this context, it is important to instruct historical topics using little stories and legends to the children in this age group would make the topics more interesting for the children since they are already interested in stories and would learn these topics and would acquire the desired changes in behavior, in other words, learning would be achieved. Social Studies textbooks tackle with basic human needs, ways of satisfying them and social life and behavior. In this context, the students also get to know their duties as citizens, their immediate environment, their country, and other countries neighboring the country, and therefore the textbooks should include current information and be at an adequate level for the students, who are the target audience. Textbooks should include tangible knowledge and steer away from abstract information. In construction of the Social Studies textbook content, it is important to follow target behavior determined by the curriculum and the whole curriculum.

In Social Studies instruction, fundamental changes were implemented in the 2004-2005 academic year and the instruction strategies, techniques and methods utilized in developed countries were adapted. Thus, the Social Studies curriculum and the related course were reorganized based on the constructionist approach. Constructivism refers to the construction of the knowledge by the individual. In constructivism, the knowledge is not instructed directly to the individuals, but individuals re-create the knowledge they acquire. In addition to their existing knowledge, they learn by adapting new knowledge to their own subjective situation (Özden, 2003).

The textbooks based on constructivism are not designed to provide students prêt-à-porter knowledge, instead, they allow students to create their own knowledge by activating pre-learning. The role and function of the textbook author has changed considerably in the course of preparing textbooks based on constructivist approach. The author no longer provides the information in a didactic manner, is rather a guide for the student to access information. Well-designed material used to support instruction and abstract-tangible concepts in the teaching-learning process in Social Studies course generally improve the instruction process and learning (Yalin, 2008: 82). From this perspective, it could be argued that is inevitable that the age range of the user and the pedagogical expectations for the age group should always be taken

into consideration in all processes from the planning stage to the use of the textbooks in the classroom (Kabapınar, 2006: 224).

A quality Social Studies textbook should

- focus on the student in activities under the guidance of the teacher,
- promote active use of information technologies,
- demonstrate how to acquire knowledge by promoting research, and prioritize interests and needs of students when designing and presenting the topics,
- include texts, visuals and activities that would make the students love the national and moral values, traditions and customs of the Turkish society to transfer these values to future generations,
- include universal values such as democracy, liberty, equality, justice, and human rights to train an individual with awareness and integrated with the world,
- exclude unnecessary masses of information when associating topics with other fields during instruction,
- avoid abstract concepts that students experience problems with when instructing real life events.

Social Studies textbook content should be instructed from the simple to the complex, from tangible to abstract, from easy to difficult, consistent with learning principles, and contain actual information that is relevant to everyday life. According to the principle of actuality, it was provisioned that education and instruction activities should be conducted by establishing a relationship between the course content and current events and problems (Özbay, 2009).

1.3. Instruction Principles And Actuality Principle

Principles are relations between concepts that are accepted as valid in all cases (Sene-moğlu, 2004: 533). As an antecedent idea, the principle is the baseline of an activity and guides the activity during the process. Thus, education-instruction principle could be defined as the basic idea that could shed light on the organization and execution of the instruction (Hesapçioğlu, 1998: 147).

There are certain principles that need to be observed and utilized during the instruction of the courses in the education and instruction system and authoring of the textbooks for these courses. These principles and the consistency of the experience with the student's level are the primary requirements. From the known to the unknown principle is the acquisition of new

knowledge and experiences on top of the student's previous knowledge. From the tangible to the intangible principle is realized through the sensory organs; as much as the sensory organs are involved, the learning will be accordingly easier and permanent. Instruction is commenced with the tangible, the objects that sensory organs could perceive, and then directed towards the abstract.

Proximodistal principle: For the child, the immediate surroundings include the home and family, expanding to the neighborhood, school, village, city and country finally encompassing the world. The initial relationship with the physical environment expands to include the socioeconomic and cultural environment. Immediate surroundings are always prominent in the interaction. Thus, the immediate environment is more meaningful for and better known to the people.

Economy Principle: The instruction should be planned so that all education and instruction activities could be conducted within the minimum time and using the minimum amount of energy to obtain maximum productivity.

Clarity Principle: The student should be able to observe clearly the topics covered in the class using different tools and material. If the instruction is conducted with only oral narrative, it should be conducted using sentence structures that could be easily understood by the students and the instruction should be very clear and substantive.

Activity Principle: This is also referred to as the "student action" or "job principle". Perhaps due to the courses and topics it included, the old school did not involve the students in the instruction where the students passively listened to what the teacher instructed. However, in contemporary instructional activities, instead of only comprehending by listening, students actively participate in the class, ask questions, research related topics using their own plans and techniques, systematize and organize their findings, compare, observe, think, conclude and participate in the class activities.

Readiness principle refers to the competence of a learner that includes the skills and knowledge required to teach a new topic. During the learning process, the internal state of learners and their previous knowledge play an important role.

The Verisimilitude Principle: Based on the philosophy that the school is the life itself, this principle attests that the instructional environment should be established parallel to the real life and should not be an artificial environment and the experiences should be presented in a way to represent the real life and to relate with the current reality. Since the school prepares students for life, school instruction should be the life itself. The principle of obedience to authority and freedom (Sociability): One of the most significant objectives of education is to socialize children as conscious as self-confident individuals. Socialized individuals should recognize and respect parents, school administrators and teachers, regulations, laws, the society and spiritual authorities such as religion, ethics, traditions, and customs.

The Principle of Securing Knowledge and Skills: The objective of instruction is to teach individuals and groups knowledge and skills based on target achievements, and to enable them to teach the same to other individuals and groups. In other words, in education, complete and accurate instruction of knowledge and skills should be prioritized as much as the interests of the society and intelligence, talents and interests of the individual.

1.3.1. Actuality Principle:

It could be observed that there is an active set of learners in learning environments that are reorganized according to the constructivist approach. It is an emphasis that the learning is an intellectual process that individuals who are active and in the same social environment construct to define their world parameters. Since learning is also a social process, cognitive development occurs as a result of social interaction. The actuality principle is also called the livability principle. We cannot isolate educated individuals from contemporary events. Education should train individuals who follow current verbal and published media and can adopt the opinions and ideas displayed in the media using a critical approach (Doğanay, 2002: 158).

1.4. The Significance of Actuality Principle in Social Studies Education

Social Studies course is based on the interpretation of the produced knowledge, the skills acquired, the values and attitudes of the past, the changes that occurred on these values and attitudes, and what kind of changes could occur in the future. According to Arın and Devci (2008), to achieve basic goals such as active citizenship training in Social Studies education requires the use of current events that help students to understand the past, present and future. Social Studies course has the responsibility to train individuals who continuously define, recognize and attempt to resolve changing national and global problems. Social Studies curricula should relate to current knowledge representing human experience, culture and beliefs and the social world (Öztürk and Dilek, 2002). Students are exposed to social problems using current events in Social Studies course and they are integrated with social life. Thus, the Social Studies course performs an important function in the formation and development of the child's social personality (Sözer, 1998).

'Students are under the influence of current events and news through the exposure to the written and visual media sonuna (Aydın ve Aydın, 2011). When the minds of the students are busy with the current affairs and when the course planned at the beginning of the semester is not productive, the teacher should act on the "actuality principle" and utilize the opportunities. The students are aware of the fact that they are a part of mankind through the Social Studies course and they are sensitive to the issues that concern their nation and the world (MEB (4-5) Social Studies Curriculum, 2005: 7-9).

Current phenomena and events facilitate the realization of the objectives of Social Studies education that enables the interpretation of the events that take place in the students' country and in the world, the training of active citizens who know their legal rights and responsibilities, the laws and rules, and developing the thinking, critical and inquiry skills of the students, and the conduction of inferences between the past and present (Demirtas and Barth, 1997). The utilization and integration of the use of current events in the Social Studies course, and especially

their reflection in the course at every stage, integrates the school and the society (Kaltsounis, 1987). The actuality principle is also called the livability principle. It is not possible to isolate educated individuals from contemporary events. The education should train individuals who can follow the current verbal and written media and adopt the opinions and ideas displayed in them using a critical approach (Doğanay, 2002: 158). Paying attention to the actuality principle in education and instruction increases the students' interest in the course (Tomal, 2007: 84).

The 5th, 6th and 7th grade curriculum of Social Studies course, which is a wide-range course and incorporates several scientific disciplines, needs to be implemented with an interdisciplinary approach. It is extremely important for students to reflect what they learned in the class and apply it in their daily lives. The students should be instructed the knowledge that they would use in their daily lives with the "school is life itself" motto. Social Studies course, which is the life itself, is among the student-centered dramatized courses where it is easy to relate to everyday events. Thus, the reduction of certain abstract topics and the number of topics in general will make the course even more efficient by rendering the course more student centered and related to everyday life. To make topics more understandable To enable learning by practice.

Current events could be instructed with three main approaches within the context of the Social Studies curriculum (Paykoç, 1987; Kaltsounis, 1987):

- *Instructing current events as a supplement to Social Studies curriculum:* In this approach, the teacher instructs current events using activities such as organizing news maps during the first minutes of the class every day, organizing discussions about the news added to the news notebooks, and using bulletin boards.

- *Instructing current events as a compliment or reinforcement in Social Studies curriculum:* In this approach, the topics instructed in the class are associated with current events when it is appropriate to do so. Examples related to the topics are presented using current events. For example, when earthquakes and fault lines are instructed, the teacher may ask students to discuss current events related to earthquakes in class.

- *Instructing current events as the bases of Social Studies topics:* In this approach, he current events that are identified in daily papers and television are used as the topic in class. For example, a separate topic can be organized with the students using news sources for important social and universal issues such as earthquakes, the content of the amended laws, environmental pollution, health, science and technology, natural disasters, war, and peace, etc.

Activities that could be utilized when using current events can be listed as follows (Paykoç, 1987):

- Instruction of current events that are consistent with the course topic with discussions
- Organizing a news bulletin board
- Utilizing daily papers
- Utilizing television
- Organizing roundtable discussions
- Organizing panels
- Designing posters and mural paintings
- Filing the news in a particular folder or a notebook
- Drawing cartoons about the news
- Preparing radio news shows
- Dramatization of newsworthy events
- Following up certain events on the TV or listening to live radio shows

2. Analysis of Actuality Principle in 4th, 5th, 6th And 7th Grade Social Studies Textbooks

2.1. Analysis of Actuality Principle in Social Studies Textbooks Designed with the New Curriculum

2.1.1. The Topics in 4th Grade Social Studies Textbook Where Actuality Principle was Implemented

According to the new curriculum prepared by the Ministry of National Education (MEB), Social Studies textbooks have been updated to include current topics based on the actuality principle. It could be argued that 4th grade Social Studies textbook addressed the actuality principle as observed in the achievements of the topics of “I know myself,” “I learn my past,” “the place we live in,” and “from production to consumption.”

Under the title of “I know myself,” which is the first chapter of the 4th grade Social Studies textbook, while students learn self-knowledge and self-awareness and how to express their emotions and ideas, actuality principle was adopted with citations from various newspa-

pers, magazines and news sites in the textbook. Initially the topic emphasized the differences of identity between individuals with a magazine article titled “Your Biological Identity Card: The Fingerprint.”

In Chapter 2, under the topic “I learn my past”, the child becomes aware of her or his family history, cultural achievements and that she or he is a cultural ambassador. Early in the topic, an individual conducts an oral history study with a family member. Students are asked to explain this conversation.

“Which objects with sentimental value you have at home?”

“What are the differences between current marriages and this marriage ceremony?”

“Which family heirlooms that are kept meticulously do you have at your home?”

In another section of the same chapter, under the title of Our Cultural Assets, the subject was visualized with photographs of Turkish cultural traditions and revealed the cultural similarities and differences between the past and the present.

In another topic of the same chapter, “Games in Turkish History”, it could be observed that although entertainment tools change and are replaced by technological devices, different games are introduced parallel to communications tools. Although it is not as common as the old times, children still play in playgrounds in their neighborhoods or at school gardens. In this chapter, the Social Studies textbook explains the games that were played in the past with visuals and asks the following questions to the students:

“Do you play the games explained above? If you do, what are the similarities and differences between the games you play and the games explained above?”

In line with the principle of actuality, the aim is to raise awareness among the students about the differences between the games played in the past and today’s games. The final section of the “I learn the past” chapter is titled “From liberation to liberation” and includes a current news item consistent with the actuality principle. In the section entitled “News corner” included two news reports: one was adapted from a report by Ömer Sami Coşar, Kurtuluş, dated June 11, 1919 published in War of Independence Gazette and another was a press report titled “Mustafa Kemal Pasha ar Samsun” dated May 19, 1919.

In chapter 3, under the title “The Place We Live In,” certain current events compiled from the Internet news were presented in the subject “How is the weather today?”

“Snow depth is 30 cm at Yalova.”

“A severe storm is effective in Bandırma.”

“Enjoying the sea in December.”

In the topic titled how ready we are for natural disasters, we observe that the textbook guides the student to investigate a current topic as follows: “Visit www.deprem.gov.tr and do a research on earthquake.”

In chapter 4, from production to consumption section, the students were asked a question related to current events. The question was as follows:

“Think about the news on natural disasters in our country or anywhere in the world. While some of the aid campaigns include monetary aid, some are in the form of material aid. What is the relationship between the contents of the material aid and the basic needs of people? Please explain.”

A magazine article about universal consumer rights was given. Based on the information obtained from <http://www.makarna.org.tr/> internet site under the topic in the same chapter titled “The bread is at our doorstep”, a graph about “Pasta Exports Between 2008 - 2014” was presented. Also on the same page, “cookie production chart between 2006 and 2011” and “cookie exports between 2008 and 2012” were presented. And students were asked ‘what can you say about the contribution of production activities to our country using the above narrative and graphics’, and they were given a chance to infer.

In the “glad to have” section of the 5th chapter and under the topic “telephone,” pictures taken at Ulus neighborhood in Ankara on 1928 and 2014 were presented. The students were then asked questions about these two photographs. The question was as follows:

“If we had a chance to show the second picture to those Ankara inhabitants seen in the first picture, what could they say about the daily lives of today’s inhabitants? Please guess.”

In the section titled “what could cause technological disasters?” in the same section, a current event about the atomic bomb was discussed.

“THE ATOMIC BOMB”

“The first atomic bomb was dropped at Hiroshima on the morning of August 6, 1945, with a bomber plane named Enola Gay. The explosion took as little as one-tenth of a second. The impact of the explosion was one of the world’s greatest technological catastrophes.”

Furthermore, in the same topic, an Internet news article titled “Global warming results in increased humidity as well” was presented.

In chapter 6, in the section “All together,” under the topic called “All together, hand in hand,” the significance of public and civil institutions was discussed and an Internet news article was presented.

“Educational Support for Muş from Europe. Two primary schools will be built in Muş province with the support from Europe within the “Enroll me at the school, father” campaign. Primary schools will be built in two villages in Muş province with the donations of the Europeans who supported the “Enroll me at the school, father” campaign, initiated for the enrollment of girls at school.”

The chapter 7, “People and Administration” unit, “Administration of our neighborhood and village” topic was introduced with a current Internet news article titled “Neighborhood elections are concluded.”

In the topic “Municipalities are with us on our worst days,” the duties of municipalities were emphasized with Internet news articles titled “Flood in Tekirdağ and Edirne” and “Snow removal efforts by Bilecik municipality.”

A current event was discussed using the news article “School administration requested an overpass from the district governor. Anatolian high school administration wants an overpass or an underpass to be built on D400 highway next to the school in Tarsus district in Mersin province under the topic “We can solve any problem if we want to.”

The last section in 4th grade Social Studies textbook; “Friends Abroad,” the topic “World Tour” was introduced with the Internet news article “Koç has started a 2-yearlong campaign” and “A halfway party by Koç” news article. Furthermore, in the same section, there were articles about important days such as mother’s day, world environment day and human rights day.

2.1.2. The Topics in 5th Grade Social Studies Textbook Where Actuality Principle was Implemented

In chapter 1 of the 5th grade Social Studies textbook, in the section “I am Learning My Rights,” the signature of “Convention on the Rights of the Children” adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on the Rights of the Children was discussed and posters, Internet and newspaper articles related to children’s rights were presented. Current campaigns about right to education, one of the basic children’s rights, were mentioned and as mentioned in the newspaper news article entitled “The Most Effective Mobilization”, girls achieving their education rights as a result of various campaigns were stressed.

In chapter 2, “Turkey, step by step” unit, in every stage of education and with studies conducted on education, in education and instruction, “Annual schooling figures (1923-1938)” were stated using graphs based on MEB data.

In chapter 3, “Let’s get to know our region” unit, a current table, “The provinces with the highest population in regions (2014)” based on TSI 2014 data was presented.

Following these current news article, questions such as the following were asked to the students within the framework of actuality principle:

“How does the climate of the region where you live affect human activities?”

“Which areas have the highest population in the region where you live?”

In the same unit, three current projects were also discussed.

“Atatürk Dam, built within the framework of Southeastern Anatolian Project (GAP), generates power as well as providing agricultural irrigation.”

“Bolu Mountain has been the most difficult passage on Ankara-Istanbul highway for many years. Especially during winter season, the highway has been closed to traffic due to snow, but with the construction of Bolu Mountain Tunnel, the highway was shortened and the transportation was facilitated.”

“Ordu-Giresun airport that was put to service in 2015 could be given as an example for that. With the introduction of the airport that was planned for several years and will be built on reclaimed land, the transportation between Ordu and Giresun and other provinces and the world became speedier.”

In the same unit, the attention of the students was brought to the topic of natural disasters with a newspaper article published in 2004 titled “Avalanche followed the flood”. Furthermore, on natural disasters, the traumatic impact of earthquakes on social life was explained with a poem by Ibrahim Simsek written about Izmit August 17 Earthquake. In this topic, a current internet news article about the earthquakes was presented. The news article was as follows:

“Istanbul is under the risk of earthquakes sue to the fault lines that pass through the southern province. A significant earthquake in these fault lines could result in important loss of life and property. This is due to the wrong applications that could extend the damages caused by an earthquake. This condition creates a great risk for Istanbul as mentioned in the article below:”

In the section called “Our products” in chapter 4, under the topic “Occupations and Economic Activities,” the following questions were posed to the students:

“What are the most common occupations in your region? Why do you think these occupations are more common than others?”

“Which economic activity areas are more common in newspaper job postings?”

Furthermore, a visual news article related to newspaper ads was presented.

Also under the topic “We produce with my peers” in the same section, the indications or certain current science and project festivals were identified as follows:

“Students from every corner of the country participate in science and project festivals organized by TUBITAK and Ministry of National Education. Participating students exhibit the projects they conducted to facilitate human life.”

In chapter 6, “Those who work for the society,” under the topic “Needs and Institutions,” the work conducted by an institution to meet current needs were discussed.

“TOKI built 65000 residences in 17 different areas at Kayaşehir. A portion of the residences were delivered to families, fulfilling the housing needs of 325000 individuals. In addition to residences, school, health center, police center buildings were constructed to meet the basic needs of the society.”

“Seventeen health center buildings with 2324 beds were constructed at Kayaşehir.”

In the same section, under the topic “The institutions belong to us all,” a current event was narrated as follows:

“One day before the class, our teacher asked us to learn how the needs of earthquake victims were met after the 2011 Van earthquake. We all studied on the assignment before the class. After our teacher explained the topic, I had the first right to speak. After me, Elif, Beyza, Semih and Sinem shared their views.”

In the topic “civil society, contemporary society,” it was stated that forestation projects were conducted to create productive forests and increase the afforested land. “The ‘oak project’ conducted by TEMA aimed to prevent erosion and afforest the country.” After these statements, the students were asked about the significance of the project conducted by TEMA and an attempt was made to reinforce non-governmental organizations with a current event.

In the introduction of the chapter 7, “One Nation, One Flag,” the students were asked the question “what could be the reason for the designation of indoors as non-smoking areas?” In the same chapter, the benefits of a current council were discussed under the topic of “Central Administration.”

“Prime Ministry implements the BIMER (Prime Ministry Communications Center) system for rapid, active and easy communications between the citizens and the state. Using the

toll-free number 150, citizens could communicate their wishes, views and complaints to district governorates, governorates and the ministry.”

In this chapter, under central administration topic, the views of current Internet sites of the ministries are presented to provide information about the duties and the activity areas of the ministries to the students.

In the final chapter of 5th grade textbook, “It’s our world,” several current visuals about movies, music, dance, sports and books that would unite children of the world with universal values were utilized. Under the topic “International Trade” in the same chapter, an Internet news report with important information on Turkish exports was presented. Furthermore, based on this information, the students were asked to infer by answering the question “what can you infer about Turkish exports?” The newspaper article titled “Turkey considers maritime transport important in reaching USD 1.2 trillion trade volume that it targeted in 2023” was presented.

World heritage lists were stressed using a current topic: “As seen in the article below, inclusion of Cumalı Kazık in Bursa and Multilayered Cultural Landscape Area in Izmir was a significant step in recognition of the common heritage and Izmir and Bursa.”

The fact that tourism was extremely important in recognition of the common heritage was stressed as seen in the Internet news article: “Hagia Sophia church was the most visited venue in Turkey in 2014. In the tourism show organized in Istanbul (EMITT), the cultural and touristic values of our country was introduced to over 70 countries.”

“The convergence between Kaş (Antalya) and Kastelorizo (Greece) could be given as an example for the role of tourism in international relations. Increasing relationships between Kaş and Kastelorizo enhances the collaboration in culture, arts, trade and sports as could be seen in the visual below.”

2.1.3. The Topics in 6th Grade Social Studies Textbook Where Actuality Principle was Implemented

Current affairs were often mentioned in the 6th grade Social Studies textbook within the context of actuality principle.

In chapter 1, “I learn Social Studies,” under the topic “I could not cross the bridge,” a story narrated by a student named Elif in a current news article was presented.

“Hi, my name is Elif Güvendik. We live in Gazi neighborhood. I am a 6th grade student in Maltepe Primary School. I took the school shuttle that day like any other. As we approached the Gazi bridge, the traffic slowed down. We learned that it was due to a bus stuck on the bridge last

night. In the morning, my father had noticed the news about an accident on TV. I realized that the road has been closed due to the accident reported in the news and was still closed to traffic.” In the same chapter, information that could assist the evaluations of the children about their environmental sensitivity perspectives were stressed with current news resources titled “Snap Inspection of Public Transport Vehicles” dated April 13, 2013 and titled “The Environment is Entrusted to Children” dated February 24, 2011.

In chapter 2 titled “Life on Earth,” under the topic “Alone with Nature,” climate events that occur in life and natural events such as earthquakes and floods were explained with an Internet news report titled “THAILAND STRUGGLES WITH THE LARGEST FLOOD IN FIFTY YEARS.”

In chapter 3, “Turks on the Silk Road,” under the topic “The Weddings of the Past,” a table found in aregem.kulturturizm.gov.tr web site that compares the past and present weddings was mentioned and the similarities and differences and the past ceremonies were instructed to the students.

In chapter 4, “Resources of Our Country,” under the subtopic “Our mines,” under the topic “Our resources and economy,” “Annual production figures of certain mines” based on TSI 2012 data, the Internet news article “FORESTRY PRODUCTS ARE PROCESSED IN BUCAK” under the subtitle of “Forest,” “The tourists that visited Turkey between 2008 and 2012” based on TSI 2012 data under the subtitle of “Nature and Economy Merge,” and “Tourism Income in Turkey Between 2009 and 2011” were reinforced using graphs and quotes from current data. In the same chapter, the following question was posed to the students:

Questions such as “In your opinion, the state provides services to the citizens in areas other than those mentioned above? Please investigate. Can taxes prevent unemployment, famine and poverty? Please discuss” were asked to focus on current issues. Furthermore, in this chapter, the fact that environmental problems could be resolved with social solidarity and the students should not feel despair on these issues was stressed with the news reports titles “Tonight, the lights will be turned off for one hour,” and “Do these and save the world.” The topic titled “Being useful” aimed the students to learn about the social projects using newspaper articles on “Standard for shoot pickles,” and “Robot Warden,”

In chapter 5, “Our Country and the World,” under the topic “Economic Relations,” 2012 Import and Export figures in Turkey based on TSI 2012 data were provided and the following questions were asked to the students: “Germany is the leading importer of Turkish goods. Why? Turkish exports are mainly agricultural products. Why? Why there are mainly European countries among the five countries that import and export the most to Turkey?” Furthermore, the students were asked “what could be the reasons behind environmental pollution,” which is

a global problem and “how pollution affects living organisms?” Collected newspaper articles on current news such as “The World Came for Help,” and “They were destroyed by tsunami, we should rush for help.” In the same chapter, under the title “I love people,” the opportunity to understand and giving meaning to today’s world was provided to the students with the following actual news report: “Eleventh European Youth Olympics, organized by the Union of European Olympic Committees was held in Trabzon between July 23-30 2011. In this first Olympics organized in Turkey, 3300 14-17 years old athletes participated from 49 countries.”

In the last chapter titled “Democracy Adventure,” under the topic “We have rights,” the information was instructed with newspaper articles titled “Freedom is our right train comes to a station near you,” and “Turkey in Numbers.” Furthermore, in the same section, it was observed that the students were allowed to comprehend and criticize the universality of human rights within the context of United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and European Convention on Human Rights with “Those who protect us” activity.

2.1.4. The Topics in 7th Grade Social Studies Textbook Where Actuality Principle was Implemented

Current affairs were often mentioned in the 7th grade Social Studies textbook within the context of actuality principle.

On page 29, in chapter 1, “Communications and Human Relations,” under the title “Atatürk and Mass Communications,” the establishment of communication tools are presented with past experiences with a section titled “Anatolian Agency Searches for Its Name,”

In the second chapter of the textbook titled “Population of our country,” statistical information that shows the population and population increase rates between 1927 and 2010 based on TSI data were presented. Furthermore, the graphics for “Distribution of Population Based on Age and Gender,” and “Annual Urban and Rural Distribution in Turkey” based on TSI 2010 data and distribution of employed population based on occupations and literacy rates based on gender based on TSI 2010 data were presented. In the same chapter, under the topic “The Right to Education and Employment,” actuality principle was maintained with a newspaper article titled “Education is a must.” Under the topic “Housing and Voyage,” a section of an Internet news article titled “22 villages under quarantine after wolf attack in Kütahya,” was presented.

In chapter 4 titled “Science in Time,” under the topic “Ancient Civilizations and Technology Exhibition,” a section that talked about the significance of Bodrum Underwater Archaeological Museum was used. Also in the same chapter, actuality principle was stressed with a Sumerian script obtained from TUBITAK.

In chapter 5, “Economy and Social Life,” under the topic of “Foundations in Social Life,” a question was posed to direct the students towards current information. The question was as follows: “What are the social roles of the services provided by Foundations General Directorate? Examine the photograph on the Internet site of the general directorate and explain the slogan. There is the date 1048 on the general directorate logo. What could be the reason for that date? Please explain.”

In chapter 6, “Living Democracy,” current examples of the studies conducted by the state on social state approach were presented with an Internet news article titled “Orphanages become history.” Also in the same chapter, when discussing the significance of non-governmental organizations, current Internet news articles were used to reinforce students’ knowledge and provide retention.

In chapter 7, “Bridges Between Countries,” under the topic “Global Solutions for Global Problems,” United Nations and related institutions that conduct work on diverse fields were introduced and their significance was stressed and Internet news articles titled “1 million people in pain,” “1 billion hungry people project,” and “Preventing waste with smaller loafs of bread” were utilized. In the same chapter, under the topic of “Responsibility of Humanity,” the protection of world heritage list items with international agreements was stressed using current Internet news articles.

3. Results

In conclusion, it was observed in the descriptive analysis of 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th grade Social Studies textbooks based on actuality principle that allow the students to learn the knowledge by experiencing and observation where the data that children could observe and witness every day are used in prominent examples in the instruction and studies were conducted to achieve career awareness that in certain topics in the primary school Social Studies textbooks prepared according to the new curriculum, the requirements for actuality principle were fulfilled. For example, when the topics were instructed, current events and those reported in the visual and printed media were used in conjunction in sections in the beginning or right after the beginning of each section under the heading of “Internet news report, newspaper report, or magazine report.” In the same manner, statistical information based on the data obtained from certain institutions and organizations was utilized. However, only updated information should be included in the Social Studies textbook based on the publication date of the latter.

It was observed that this principle should be used more extensively in textbooks that would be designed for Social Studies course, which is closely related to daily life and current issues constitute a significant part of, especially in 7th grade textbooks.

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