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# Analysis of the Activities in the Primary School Turkish Textbooks in Terms of Creative Thinking Skills

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## Abstract

In this research, it is aimed to examine the activities in the primary school Turkish textbooks in terms of creative thinking skills (fluency, originality, flexibility). The document analysis method was used in this research, which was designed with a case study, one of the qualitative research methods. Primary school Turkish textbooks approved by the Ministry of National Education constitute the basic documents/data sources of the research. In this study, in which the data obtained were subjected to descriptive analysis, the activities in the textbooks were examined in detail in terms of whether they were related to creative thinking skills and which sub-dimension of creative thinking skill. For this purpose, a "creative thinking skill activity form" was developed by the researchers. In the research, it was determined that there are 905 activities in primary school Turkish textbooks, only 120 of these activities are related to creative thinking skills, the majority of the activities determined are for the flexibility sub-dimension, there is no systematic situation in the distribution of activities in terms of number and content, and the activities are original and up-to-date. It has been determined that they are not sufficient for gaining and developing creative thinking skills.

**Keywords:** Turkish Course, Turkish Textbook, Creativity, Creative Thinking Skills, Activity

## 1. Introduction

Creativity; it is defined as developing a new idea, presenting an original product and producing solutions to problems (Argun, 2012; Emanuel & Challons-Lipton, 2012; Hançerlioğlu, 2004; Isbell & Raines, 2003; Temizkan, 2011; Yazıcı & Topalak, 2013;) is defined as. Creativity, which is also defined as being sensitive to problems, faults, deficiencies and seeking solutions to them (Torrance, 2018), also means putting forward ideas and solutions in the face of any problem or negative situation. Creativity is a way of thinking that includes idea generation, flexible approach and original processes to produce solutions to problems with imagination and an innovative perspective (Dilekçi & Karatay, 2022). It includes creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects to achieve goals (MEB, 2019).

Creativity is the ability to imagine something that does not exist, to do something in different ways than anyone else, and to develop new ideas. In other words, creativity is seeing something that everyone sees in the same way and has similar thoughts about, and being able to produce different thoughts about it. Creativity, which expresses being able to go beyond the existing patterns (Sağlam, Erbasan & Çiftçi, 2022), is to look at events, situations and objects differently and to exhibit a different approach. Creativity is to look critically and make new suggestions, to be different, to be new, original and extraordinary, to see the problem and to draw new conclusions from different solutions (Emir, 2001; Emir & Bahar, 2003; Gök & Erdoğan, 2011).

Creative thinking can be defined as thinking that leads to new ideas by considering various possibilities and possibilities as a game, carefully, without any pressure and without giving importance to the benefit of the moment (Özcan, 2000). Creative thinking skills, including the ability of individuals to change, combine, reuse a basic idea and product in different environments, or to produce new and different products and information based on their own thoughts, to look at events differently, to make inventions, to develop detailed ideas, to develop unique and unique solutions to problems It includes sub-skills such as finding ideas and solutions, looking at an idea or product from many different angles (Bal, 2014). Creative thinking means that predictions or inferences are new, original, ingenious, clever and rare for the individual (Arık, 1990). Creative thinking skills, which are based on exhibiting meaningful and productive behaviors instead of learned and repetitive behaviors, enable individuals to develop their problem-solving and decision-making abilities.

Fluency, flexibility and originality can be considered as sub-dimensions of creative thinking skills. Fluency; multi-idea generation, flexibility; developing different perspectives on the subject, originality; It refers to presenting a unique, original idea that has not been put forward before (Torrance, 2018). In this case, it can be said that creative thinking has the flexibility to focus on the purpose and adapt appropriate ways of thinking, the originality to produce a different way of thinking, and the fluency to produce plenty of thoughts, solutions and alternatives on the subject being studied. In this case, creativity can be assessed by proficiency in these three skills. Creative thinking consists of preparation, data collection, incubation, enlightenment and validation stages. Preparation refers to the stage when the problem is realized, data collection is the stage where information and tools related to the problem are collected, the cognitive issue is processed for the solution of the incubation problem, enlightenment refers to the stage where an idea suddenly appears in the cognition about the solution, and verification is the stage where the solution idea is tested and its validity and reliability are decided for the solution of the problem (Aytaç, 2005).

Educational systems are of great importance for individuals to acquire creative thinking skills. Education-teaching process structured with correct and sufficient approaches, teaching environments with wide and rich opportunities, teachers who are aware of the importance of creative thinking skills, the richness and diversity in the methods and techniques used, lessons aimed at improving students' reading and research habits, solving problems, and producing new things. The existence of programs has an important place in the development of creative thinking skills (Yenilmez & Yolcu, 2007).

The individuals of the 21st century are productive, open to new ideas, enterprising, flexible and adaptable, who can think critically, have creative thinking, can solve the problems they encounter, cooperate with others, have high communication power, provide access to information by using technology effectively, have advanced social and cultural skills. They are expected to be (Eryılmaz & Uluyol, 2015). Today, the primary goals of education systems are to raise individuals who can adapt to different conditions, have a flexible mindset and questioning ability, are creative, warm to criticism and multi-dimensional thinking, and can produce effective solutions to the problems they encounter (Kutlu & Schreglmann, 2011). In order to achieve this goal, it is important to train students with creative thinking skills and to prepare an environment for the development and use of this skill.

In the examinations made on the curricula; in the 2006 Turkish Course Curriculum, creative thinking is among the basic skills (MEB, 2006); in the 2015 Turkish Course Curriculum, it is aimed to raise individuals who think creatively (2015); in the 2018 Turkish Course Curriculum, there are achievements to develop creativity skills (MEB, 2018); in the 2019 Turkish Course Curriculum, it is understood that originality and creativity are the basic skills expected from teachers (MEB, 2019). It can be said that raising individuals who can think creatively and

produce creative solutions in accordance with the needs of the age and society is among the primary goals of education systems, and that creative thinking skills are included in curricula and practices. Because curricula are very important elements of the education process that directly affects the development and development of a country, determines its future, fuses people's traditions and contemporary values in harmony, and focuses on all developed and developing countries with great sensitivity. In accordance with the trends of the age we live in; The desire to raise a generation that is better equipped in terms of social, cultural and technological aspects ensures that curricula are at the center of the education process (Taş & Minaz, 2022).

The materials used in teaching students the knowledge, skills and values in the curriculum are very important. It is known that the most used resources in the learning and teaching processes in schools are textbooks (Adıgüzel, 2010; Karaca, 2011; Kılıç & Seven, 2002). The textbook can be defined as one of the basic elements that explains the contents of the curriculum in a plan and order, directs the students to the objectives of the course and informs them (MEB, 2008). Textbooks; They are important because they present the content of the curricula according to the teaching principles and they are the most used and the easiest materials. Textbook; It is defined as a printed work that includes various examples, exercises, texts and other learning-related activities, facilitating the acquisition of gains and information that make up the content of the course (MEB, 2012). The ability to maintain their functions in educational environments by being easily updated in the light of developments makes textbooks indispensable resources that are frequently used in educational environments (Güzel & Şimşek, 2012).

Textbooks, which are one of the most widely used tools of the learning-teaching process, have managed to be at the center of many educational activities of teachers, as they maintain their place in teaching environments despite today's technological materials (Önal & Kaya, 2006). The fact that most teachers make arrangements regarding learning-teaching activities according to textbooks increases the importance of textbooks (Kızılcıoğlu, 2003). The fact that they allow students to see as a whole what they will learn and what they will teach and how they will teach, and that they are easy to use and accessible reinforce the indispensability of textbooks. In addition, the most preferred educational material of the books is that the acquisitions in the program are found collectively, the activities related to the acquisitions are determined, the methods, techniques and approaches related to the transfer of the acquisitions are explained, the acquisitions are supported with texts and visuals, measurement-evaluation methods and forms are included (Taş, 2022).

In the literature, pre-school, primary, secondary and secondary school students (Akıllı, 2012; Akkanat, 2012; Albayrak, 2005; Aydoğan, 2008; Baltacı, 2013; Erol, 2010; Kılıç, 2011; Konak, 2008), teacher candidates who continue their education at university (Aktamış & Can, 2007; Gülel, 2006; İşler & Bilgin, 2002; İşlenen & Küçük, 2013; Zeytun, 2010), teachers of various branches (Aish, 2014; Benckenstein, 2016; Edinger, 2008; Kurnaz, 2011; Merriman, 2015; Scott, 2015) there are many studies on identifying and developing creative thinking skills. The absence of studies revealing the distribution of activities in primary school Turkish textbooks in terms of creative thinking skills (fluency, originality, flexibility) adds importance and originality to this study. Textbooks (Ulusoy, 2015), which are indispensable for the education and training process and the most used educational resource by teachers and students in this process, convey many skills through the texts, activities and visuals they contain (Kurtdele-Fidan & Gedik, 2019). For this reason, it is important to reveal the extent and how creative thinking skills take place in the textbooks that teachers and students use as the main source (Kuş, Meray & Karatekin, 2013).

Using textbooks as primary resources by teachers and students and trying to teach students basic skills mostly through the activities included in these books; It makes it important to determine the situations in which the activities in the textbooks enable the creative thinking skill, which is one of the important skills of today, to be determined. It is thought that this research is important in terms of realizing the training of gaining creative thinking skills in a more effective way and demonstrating the effective usability of Turkish textbooks in terms of gaining/developing creative thinking skills. This importance enabled the activities in the primary school Turkish textbooks to be handled multidimensionally in the context of creative thinking skills. In this study, the activities in Turkish textbooks aimed at improving creative thinking skills were determined, and the activities determined were examined in detail and the distribution of the activities according to the fluency, originality and flexibility sub-dimensions of creative thinking skills was revealed.

In this study, which aims to reveal the distribution of the activities in Turkish textbooks in terms of creative thinking skills (fluency, originality, flexibility), answers to the following questions were sought:

1. How many activities aimed at gaining/developing creative thinking skills are included in the primary school 1st grade Turkish textbook, and how is the distribution of these activities according to the sub-dimensions of creative thinking skills (fluency, originality and flexibility)?
2. How many activities aimed at gaining/developing creative thinking skills are included in the primary school 2nd grade Turkish textbook, and how is the distribution of these activities according to the sub-dimensions of creative thinking skills (fluency, originality and flexibility)?
3. How many activities aimed at gaining/developing creative thinking skills are included in the primary school 3rd grade Turkish textbook, and how is the distribution of these activities according to the sub-dimensions of creative thinking skills (fluency, originality and flexibility)?
4. How many activities aimed at gaining/developing creative thinking skills are included in the primary school 4th grade Turkish textbook, and how is the distribution of these activities according to the sub-dimensions of creative thinking skills (fluency, originality and flexibility)?

## **2. Method**

### *2.1. Research Model*

This study was designed with a case study, one of the qualitative research methods. Case study; it is an in-depth and longitudinal examination of the data obtained and analyzed through observation and document review (Glesne, 2015). In this research, primary school Turkish textbooks were analyzed as documents in order to examine the activities in the primary school Turkish textbooks in terms of gaining/developing creative thinking skills.

### *2.2. Data Collection*

The document analysis method was used in this study to determine the distribution of the activities in Turkish textbooks in terms of creative thinking skills (fluency, originality, flexibility). Document analysis can be used as a stand-alone information source that creates all the data, or it can also be used as an additional data source that contributes to the main data collection method (Mertkan, 2015). Written materials are considered as documents; photographs, pictures and videos also make up the documents (Güzel-Candan & Ergen, 2014). Textbooks can also be used as data sources in educational research (Kurtdele-Fidan & Gedik, 2019). In this context, 1st Grade Turkish Textbook (MEB Publications), 2nd Grade Turkish Textbook (Ada Publications), 3rd Grade Turkish Textbook, which has been decided to be used as a textbook for five years since 2018 by the Ministry of Education Board of Education and Discipline. (MEB Publications) and 4th Grade Turkish Textbook (MEB Publications) constitute the basic documents/data sources of the research.

### *2.3. Analysis of Data*

The data obtained from primary school Turkish textbooks were subjected to descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis is a technique based on the systematic and clear description of the data obtained within the framework of predetermined themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Since it is stated in the literature that the creative thinking skill consists of three sub-dimensions, namely fluency, originality and flexibility, in this study, the activities in the primary school Turkish textbooks were examined in detail in terms of whether they are related to the creative thinking skill and if so, which sub-dimension they are related to. For this purpose, a "creative thinking skill activity form" was developed by the researchers. In the form, criteria that reveal the relationship between activities and creativity are presented. It has been determined that the activities aimed at generating ideas, developing different perspectives or producing an original product are aimed at improving the creative thinking skills of the students. In the form, the activity related to the creative thinking skill was coded in which theme, which text it was related to, and which activity it was, and it was also determined which sub-dimension of the creative thinking skill of the activity was coded. In these coding with numbers, the first number represents the theme, the second number represents the text, and the third number represents the activity. For example; 2.3.7. icons mean the 7th activity of the 3rd text of the 2nd theme.

#### 2.4. Validity and Reliability

In order to ensure validity in qualitative research, data is recorded in detail, the process is explained in detail, and the results are reported carefully (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The activities in the Turkish textbooks were analyzed and coded according to the criteria in the "creative thinking skill activity form." In order to preserve the impartiality of the researcher, the coding process was made by 2 different experts and it was aimed to reach a consensus on which of the activities in the books are aimed at gaining/developing creative thinking skills and which sub-dimensions of these activities are related to creative thinking skills. This transaction was revealed with the agreement percentage formula and a consensus was achieved at the rate of 91%. This result is accepted as a sufficient result to ensure reliability (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2020). Codes that did not overlap with each other were re-evaluated, discussed and agreed upon. The overlap of the analyzes made by the experts shows that the results obtained are reliable.

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1. Findings regarding the examination of the activities in the primary school 1st grade Turkish textbook in terms of Creative Thinking Skills

Table 1 shows the activities in the primary school 1st grade Turkish course book aimed at gaining/developing creative thinking skills and the distribution of these activities according to the sub-dimensions of creative thinking skills (fluency, originality and flexibility).

Table 1: Distribution of activities related to creative thinking skills in the primary school 1st grade Turkish textbook

Efficiency	Fluency	Originality	Flexibility
5.1.1.	X		
5.1.5.		X	
5.2.1.			X
5.3.2.	X		
5.3.5.			X
5.4.4.			X
6.1.1.	X		
6.1.3.			X
6.2.3.		X	
6.3.2.			X
6.3.6		X	
6.4.2.	X		
6.4.6.			X
7.2.1.			X
7.2.7.	X		
7.3.5.		X	
7.4.4.	X		
7.4.5.		X	
8.1.4.			X
8.2.3.			X
8.3.7.			X
8.4.5.	X		

In the examination made on Table 1; 22 of the 149 activities in the primary school 1st grade Turkish textbook are for creative thinking skills; it is understood that 7 of these activities are for fluency, 5 for originality and 10 for flexibility.

### 3.2. Findings regarding the examination of the activities in the primary school 2nd grade Turkish textbook in terms of creative thinking skills

Table 2 shows the activities in the primary school 2nd grade Turkish course book aimed at gaining/developing creative thinking skills and the distribution of these activities according to the sub-dimensions of creative thinking skills (fluency, originality and flexibility).

Table 2: Distribution of activities related to creative thinking skills in the Primary School 2nd Grade Turkish textbook

Efficiency	Fluency	Originality	Flexibility
1.1.1.			X
1.1.4.		X	
1.3.4.			X
1.4.4.		X	
2.1.1.	X		
2.2.5.			X
2.3.2.			X
2.4.6.	X		
3.1.1.			X
3.2.2.	X		
3.3.1.		X	
4.1.1.			X
4.2.4.	X		
4.4.2.		X	
5.1.5.			X
5.3.4.		X	
6.1.5.			X
6.3.3.		X	
6.3.5.			X
6.4.4.	X		
7.3.2.	X		
7.3.6.			X
7.4.2.		X	
8.1.2.	X		
8.2.5.			X
8.4.1.	X		

In the examination made on Table 2; 26 of the 177 activities in the primary school 2nd grade Turkish course book are about creative thinking skills; it is understood that 8 of these activities are for fluency, 7 for originality and 11 for flexibility.

### 3.3. Findings regarding the examination of the activities in the primary school 3rd grade Turkish textbook in terms of creative thinking skills

Table 3 shows the activities in the primary school 3rd grade Turkish course book aimed at gaining/developing creative thinking skills and the distribution of these activities according to the sub-dimensions of creative thinking skills (fluency, originality and flexibility).

Table 3: Distribution of activities related to creative thinking skills in the primary school 3rd grade Turkish textbook

Efficiency	Fluency	Originality	Flexibility
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1.1.3.			X
1.2.7.		X	
1.3.2.	X		
2.1.4.			X
2.1.8.		X	
2.2.3.	X		
2.2.7.			X
2.3.7.		X	
2.4.4.	X		
3.1.3.			X
3.2.4.		X	
3.3.4.	X		
3.3.5.			X
3.4.6.		X	
4.1.6.			X
4.2.2.			X
4.3.6.		X	
4.4.3.	X		
4.4.4.			X
5.2.3.	X		
5.2.3.	X		
5.3.6.			X
6.1.5.	X		
6.3.6.			X
7.1.7.			X
7.3.3.			X
7.3.8.	X		
7.4.1.	X		
8.1.3.		X	
8.1.7.			X
8.2.3.	X		
8.3.3.	X		

In the analysis made on Table 3; 32 out of 257 activities in the primary school 3rd grade Turkish textbook are related to creative thinking skills; it is understood that 12 of these activities are for fluency, 7 for originality and 13 for flexibility.

#### 3.4. Findings regarding the examination of the activities in the primary school 4th grade Turkish textbook in terms of creative thinking skills

Table 4 shows the activities in the primary school 4th grade Turkish course book aimed at gaining/developing creative thinking skills and the distribution of these activities according to the sub-dimensions of creative thinking skills (fluency, originality and flexibility).

Table 4: Distribution of activities related to creative thinking skills in the primary school 4th grade Turkish textbook

Efficiency	Fluency	Originality	Flexibility
1.1.3.	X		
1.1.4.		X	
1.3.7.			X
1.3.8.		X	
2.1.3.	X		
2.1.4.		X	



2.2.3.			X
2.2.6.			X
2.3.5.		X	
2.4.4.		X	
3.1.4.			X
3.2.3.	X		
3.2.5.	X		
3.3.7.		X	
3.3.8.			X
3.4.1.	X		
3.4.8.			X
4.2.5.	X		
4.2.8.			X
4.3.4.	X		
4.3.8.			X
4.4.6.			X
5.1.6.	X		
5.1.8.			X
5.2.9.			X
5.3.6.	X		
5.4.6.		X	
5.4.9.			X
6.1.4.	X		
6.1.6.		X	
6.2.5.			X
6.4.3.	X		
7.1.4.			X
7.1.8.		X	
7.2.4.	X		
7.3.4.			X
7.4.7.		X	
8.1.3.	X		
8.2.9.		X	
8.3.4.	X		

In the analysis made on Table 4; 40 of the 322 activities in the primary school 4th grade Turkish textbook are related to creative thinking skills; 14 of these activities are for fluency, 11 for originality and 15 for flexibility.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

In the study, it was determined that there are 905 activities in total in primary school Turkish textbooks, and only 120 of these activities are related to creative thinking skills. This shows that the activities related to gaining and developing creative thinking skills in the primary school Turkish textbooks meet approximately 13% of the total activities in the books. It has been determined that this rate is approximately 14% in the first grade Turkish textbook, approximately 15% in the second grade Turkish textbook, approximately 12% in the third grade Turkish textbook, and approximately 12% in the fourth grade Turkish textbook. In addition, it was determined that the majority of the activities identified were for the flexibility sub-dimension of creative thinking skill, and the fluency and originality sub-dimensions were not sufficiently taken into account in terms of activities.

It has been understood that there is no systematic situation in the distribution of the activities related to creative thinking skills in the books, both in terms of number and content. The results obtained in many previous studies also support our research findings. In the study conducted by Dilekçi and Karatay (2022), it was determined that the activities in Turkish textbooks do not have the characteristics of systematically improving creative thinking

skills. In the studies conducted by Bayrak-Özmutlu and Kanık-Uysal (2021) and Temizkan (2014), it was concluded that the activities in the textbooks differ from each other in terms of number and quality, and that these activities do not fully contribute to the development of creative thinking skills. Boyraz and Türkcan (2022), in their research, reached the conclusion that the materials and activities used in transferring the content of Turkish textbooks do not prompt students to think; Esemen and Sadioğlu (2021) and Doğan and Özgür (2019) concluded in their studies that there are very few activities to support critical reading skills in primary school Turkish textbooks. In the studies carried out by Sağlam, Erbasan and Çiftçi (2022), and Sarıkaya (2021), it was concluded that the learning outcomes and activities in the context of creative thinking skills were rarely included in the textbooks, which supports our research findings.

In the research, it was understood that the activities in the primary school Turkish textbooks were similar in content and were not original. Therefore, it has been revealed that activities related to creative thinking skills generally concentrate on the flexibility sub-dimension of creative thinking skill, and originality sub-dimension is the least considered sub-dimension. The conclusion that the activities in the books are similar to other studies (Bayrak-Özmutlu & Kanık-Uysal, 2021; Çeçen & Kurnaz, 2015; Dağ, 2007) supports our research results. In the research, similar activities in the textbooks were used to predict the content of the text based on the visual and title of the text, to find the title of the text, to predict the continuation of the text, to find the unknown words, to write the text based on the visual, to interpret the visual, to sort the mixed sentences, to find the synonyms and antonyms of the words. Finding, using words in sentences, writing on any subject, rewriting the text/poem in the notebook, writing beautifully, paying attention to the rules of spelling, completing the unfinished text/poem, designing a game, producing solutions to social problems, animating the text. . In the studies conducted by Dilekçi and Karatay (2022) and Barası and Erdamar (2021), it was determined that there was no consistency in the distribution of the activities, that the activities were similar to each other, that they were less interesting and not up-to-date. In the studies conducted by Bayrak-Özmutlu and Kanık-Uysal (2021) and Ungan and Buçan (2022), it was determined that uniformity, similarity and unbalanced distribution in activity types are among the obstacles to creative thinking skills.

Turkish lessons based on creative reading improve students' creative thinking skills (Yurdakal, 2018), creative reading and writing increase students' ability to generate ideas, provide them with a flexible perspective and provide original ideas (Hızır, 2014), and using intelligence games in lessons improves creativity. (Terzi, 2019), it is clear that both the teaching methods and the contents of the textbooks should be prepared, planned and applied in a way that supports this skill. It is important that the activities in Turkish textbooks are prepared based on the creative thinking approach (Öztürk, 2007), the thinking-based inquiry method (Tok, 2008) and the cooperative learning method (Soysal, 2019) as a teaching method. According to Dilekçi and Karatay (2022), traditional teaching methods should be abandoned and textbooks should be reviewed in terms of this skill in order to develop creative thinking skills.

It can be said that education systems generally prioritize content teaching, transfer of academic knowledge and exams instead of improving students' skills, preventing the development of students' creative skills (Aslan, Aktan, & Kamaraj, 1997). The perception that creativity is a special talent that is not found in everyone can also negatively affect the process of gaining and developing this skill (Dilekçi, 2021). The main thing is the fact that creative thinking is a skill that can be developed in all children (İşler & Bilgin, 2002). Therefore, it is important to carry out activities based on creative thinking and to engage in such practices in order to improve students' creativity. Considering that textbooks are the most used teaching material in schools, it is important that textbooks are prepared with a creativity-oriented approach in terms of content and activities.

## 5. Recommendations

1. Activities in Turkish textbooks should be revised in the context of creative thinking skills, and this skill should be distributed in a proportional and balanced way.
2. The activities in the textbooks should be reconsidered in terms of content and visuality in the context of gaining creative thinking skills.

3. In order for children to acquire and develop creative thinking skills, book contents and activities should be enriched in terms of teaching methods and techniques.
4. The activities in the textbooks should be designed in a way that balances fluency, flexibility and originality skills.
5. The activities should be differentiated in the context of creative thinking skills and students should be enabled to think effectively in order to produce solutions for different situations.
6. The activities in the textbooks should be prepared in a multidimensional way that will develop the creative powers, interests and imaginations of the students.
7. In line with the opinions of field experts, activities that will enable and develop creative thinking skills should be increased in number and type.
8. It is thought that the studies in which the reading texts in Turkish textbooks are examined in terms of giving students creative thinking skills and the studies that reflect the views of classroom teachers on the activities in Turkish textbooks to help them gain creative thinking skills are thought to contribute to the field.

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