



# Trends in Turkish Education Studies

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine trends in the subject areas, methods, data collection tools, data analysis methods, and sample types used in recent studies on Turkish education, published in journals from 2000-2011. A total of 558 articles from 44 journals were selected from databases by the purposive sampling method and examined using the "Turkish Education Publication Classification Form" (TEPCF). The method used in the study was content analysis. The data was analysed using the SPSS 16.0 program. The findings were that "survey" studies were the most common with regard to method, "quantitative research" methods were most commonly used, data were mostly gathered by "document and questionnaire," and "descriptive analysis" was the most commonly used data analysis method. Also, "Elementary school" students were the most commonly used sample group, the sizes of samples most commonly ranged between 31-100 participants, and "convenience sampling" was the most common sampling technique. Regarding Turkish education research areas, studies with titles referring to "mixed skills areas" which covered more than one skill and studies on "reading education" formed the majority.

## Key Words

Turkish Education, Turkish Education Studies, Research Trends, Content Analysis.

It is a known fact that Turkish academic publications on Turkish education are relatively new (Güzel, 2003). However, studies on language education and teaching are regularly published. There is a variety of research subjects in the field, and so it is useful for scholars working in specific areas to understand the broader literature. For this purpose, the methods used in these studies can

be analysed collectively. Inadequate trend analysis studies for the area of Turkish education research exist at present: The very specialized study of Şahin (2010), which specifically examined trends in graduate theses that focused on reading education among elementary school first-grade students, and the trend analysis study of Coşkun, Özçakmak, and Balcı (2012).

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In other areas of education, many general trends studies have been conducted by means of meta-analysis and content analysis methods. For example, Sözbilir and Kutu (2008) examined articles published in Turkey on science education; Çalık, Ünal, Coştu, and Karataş (2008) examined theses on science education in Turkey; İncekara (2009) examined geography education studies in Turkey; Ulutaş and Ubuz (2008) examined math education studies; Karadağ (2009) examined doctorate theses on education science in Turkey; Göktaş, Hasançebi et al. (2012) examined studies in Turkish education journals indexed in SSCI and ULAKBİM databases; Arık and Türkmen (2009) examined articles in journals on education that were published in Turkey and were indexed in SSCI; Yalçın, Bilican, Kezer, and Yalçın (2009) examined articles that were published in the *Hacettepe University Journal of Education*; Yıldız (2004) examined graduate theses submitted to Boğaziçi University and Ankara University from 1978-2001; Göktaş, Küçük et al. (2012) examined education technology studies in Turkish journals, which were indexed in the SSCI database; Şimşek et al. (2009) examined Masters theses on education technology; Şimşek et al. (2008) examined doctorate theses on education technology submitted to four universities in Turkey (Anadolu, Ortadoğu Teknik, Hacettepe, and Marmara Universities); Erdoğan and Çağiltay (2009) examined Turkish Masters and doctorate theses on computer and education technologies; and Uzunboylu and Özçınar (2009) examined studies on computer assisted language teaching published between 1990-2008.

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the methodological trends in Turkish education studies published from 2000-2011. The survey covered 44 journals that are indexed in the SSCI and ULAKBİM Social Sciences databases in Turkey. The research questions that guided the study were:

- 1- Where have Turkish education studies been published? What is the distribution of these studies according to years?
- 2- Which areas and subjects have been most researched in Turkish education studies?
- 3- What trends can be found regarding methods and designs in the Turkish education studies, by research areas and subjects?

- 4- What are the sample selection methods, sample levels (i.e., grades of research subjects, e.g., elementary grades 1-5, etc.), and sample sizes used in Turkish education studies?
- 5- What data collection tools are used in Turkish education studies?
- 6- What data analysis methods are used in Turkish education studies?
- 7- How many authors are listed in these articles?

### Method

The content analysis method was used to categorize articles according to certain topics, to apply a coding process, and to quantify, analyse, and report the data. Content analysis is used extensively in qualitative studies to group similar data according to certain concepts and themes, and to organize and interpret the data.

### Scope of the Research

The focus of this study was published research studies on Turkish education in journals indexed within the SSCI (n=5) and ULAKBİM Social Sciences (n=39) databases. Articles were selected by the purposive sampling technique (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2009, p. 91). In total, 558 Turkish education articles in 44 journals published from 2000-2011 were selected for analysis (see the Appendix).

### The Collection of Data

The "Turkish Education Publication Categorization Form" (TEPCF) was used as a data collection tool. The TEPCF was constructed by reorganizing the form used in Sözbilir and Kutu's (2008) study, according to the purpose of this study. Opinions from 3 experts in the Education Sciences and Language Science areas, were consulted to ensure the validity of the form. The TEPCF consisted of nine basic parts:

- 1- Identification of article, 2- Type of article, 3- Area of the article, 4- Topic of the article, 5- Method used in the article, 6- Data collection tools used in the article, 7-Sample used in the article, 8-Data analysis method used in the article, and 9- Additional part for the researcher to comment and offer his/her opinions.

## Results

The findings of this study are sorted according to the research questions above.

- 1- *Milli Eğitim Dergisi* (National Education/ Journal of Education and Social Sciences) was the journal in which the most studies were published. *Türklük Bilimi Araştırmaları Dergisi* (Journal of Turkology Research) and *Dil Dergisi* (*Language Journal*) were the other journals that included most of the Turkish education articles.
- 2- The distribution of articles by years and their areas of focus were as follows. The highest number of articles were published in 2010 (n=135), and the years with the smallest numbers were 2000 (n=6) and 2001 (n=4). By subject area, the highest numbers of articles were on *reading education* (n=119) and *mixed skills* (n=93), which contain at least two basic language skills. The areas of *listening education* (n=12) and *multilingualism* (n=3) had the smallest number of articles.

Regarding subjects, *learning* (n=157) and *attitude/ status/ interest/ view determination* (n=123) were the most common; the smallest numbers were on the subjects of *teaching/ education technologies* (n=11) and *scale/ test development* (n=8).

- 3- Regarding methods and designs, *quantitative* studies (49.64%) were the most popular, with surveys (48.79%) composing the bulk of those studies (this is a non-*experimental* design). Among the qualitative studies, *critical studies* (32.84%) and those featuring a *grounding theory* (24.38%) were the most common. The least preferred method and design was *mixed methods* (2.51%).

Regarding the frequency of certain methods according to subjects of the articles, in the *quantitative* studies the *reading education* (n=83) and *mixed skills* (n=41) areas were the most preferred. Among the *qualitative* studies, articles on *mixed skills* (n=38) were the most common. Among the *literature review* and *mixed method* studies, the most common subject was again reading education (n=16 and n=4, respectively).

When the methods of articles according to subjects were examined, among the *quantitative* studies, studies on *attitude/ interest/ view/ status determination* (n=98) and *teaching* (n=71) were the most common. *Teaching* was the most preferred article subject in the *qualitative*, *literature review*, and *mixed method* articles (n=63, n=15, n=8).

*Measurement and assessment*, *teacher education*, *teaching/ education technologies*, and *scale/ test development* studies were the least common subjects among all the methods.

- 4- Regarding sample selection methods, convenience sampling was preferred more than other selection methods, and the use of a census was the least preferred.

Regarding sample levels, *elementary school grades 1-5 students* (n=95), *Elementary school grades 6-8 students* (n=85), and *undergraduate students (in Education)* (n=76) participated the most in these studies. Data was collected less from teaching staff, management, guardians, and graduate students.

Regarding sample sizes, those including 31-100 (n=100) and 101-300 (n=80) participants were the most common. Sample sizes of more than 1000 (n=11) were the least common.

- 5- The most widely used data collection tools were *document* (28.95%) and *questionnaire* (23.07%).
- 6- Regarding data analysis techniques, *quantitative data analysis* (75.21%) techniques were the most common, and among these quantitative techniques, *descriptive analysis* (59.94%) was the most preferred one. Among the *qualitative data analysis* techniques, the most used one was the *document analysis* (45.25%) technique.
- 7- Regarding the number of authors, single-authored (66.7%) and double-authored (25.6%) studies were the most common. Studies done by more than two authors were less common.

## Discussion

The reason that National Education/Journal of Education and Social Sciences published most of the articles might be that this journal prioritizes Turkish language skills in its publication policy. National Education/Journal of Education and Social Sciences is also an education-oriented ministry journal with a long publication history. The articles published in the *Türkçe Öğretimi Özel Sayısı* (*Turkish Teaching Special Volume*) of the Journal of Turkology Research in Spring 2010 made this journal the publisher of the second-highest number of these articles. Additionally, university journals had published most of these articles, and a clear majority were found in the ULAKBİM indexed journals. While there were 495 publications in total in the ULAKBİM database, only 63 publications were found in the SSCI database.

Regarding the distribution of articles by years, article numbers are fewer when looking backward in time from the year 2009. The increase of Turkish education publications in recent years might be a sign of the development of Turkish education as a science and/or the result of a larger number of people studying in this area. The hardness of application and involvement of observation within assessment may be reasons for the lower number of publications on audial and verbal education compared to studies on other skills.

The high number of articles on teaching might be explained by the continuing need for improvements in education methods in elementary schools, where the graduates of Turkish education departments generally work. This article analysis indicated that quantitative studies were preferred as a research method, and non-experimental designs were the most widely used in quantitative studies. Additionally, descriptive and survey methods were very popular. Şahin (2010), Şimşek et al. (2008), Alper and Gülbahar (2009), and Arık and Türkmen (2009) obtained similar results in their studies. This result shows that studies on Turkish education in our country are being done in order to determine current situations.

Qualitative studies were less preferred than quantitative studies. This might be due to the difficulty of conducting qualitative studies. Also, the requirement that the research subject must be found in its natural environment (Ekiz, 2009, p. 31) necessitates that more time and effort be spent on that type of research. Regarding mixed method studies, it is an accepted fact that quantitative and qualitative research methods each have their own advantages, but when these methods are used together more reliable data are usually obtained. Alper and Gülbahar (2009) emphasized this in their study. However, the least common research studies among the Turkish education publications in this analysis were those of mixed method design.

In these articles, sample groups of between 31-100 participants and 101-300 participants were the most preferred. Regarding sample levels, Elementary school first stage and second stage students mostly participated in these studies. Ulutaş and Ubuz (2008) similarly determined that Elementary school students are the study group from whom most data are gathered. Based upon this finding, it can be suggested that researchers prepared their research questions specifically for these groups, and that accessing these groups might be easier than accessing other sample groups.

Convenience sampling was the most common sampling technique in these studies. Şimşek et al. (2008) and Arık and Türkmen (2009) both offered similar results.

In the examined articles, documents and questionnaires were most commonly used as data gathering tools. Ulutaş and Ubuz (2008) also found that the questionnaire was the most used data gathering tool. The reasons why questionnaires are mostly used might be that questionnaires are easy and fast data gathering tools, their cost is low, and they are suited to extensive participation (Baş, 2006). Documents may be preferred because they are suitable for systematic examination, collective assessments, and other techniques.

In the examined articles, the descriptive analysis method, with frequency and percentage tables used as sub-techniques, and t tests for inferential analysis were mostly used. Document analysis was the most preferred of the qualitative data analysis methods. Şimşek et al. (2008) also found that descriptive techniques (% , f, SS, etc.) were mostly used as data analysis methods. Thus, the findings of these two studies agree with each other. Arık and Türkmen (2009) and Yalçın et al. (2009) also support this finding.

Regarding the number of authors in the articles, single-authored studies were the most common. Alper and Gülbahar (2009) also stated this to be their finding. The reason for this situation might be that researchers do not want to encounter an obstacle during their Associate Professorship exams. More than three authors in the examined articles was least common. The reasons for this might be difficulties associated with group studies, time management, division of labour, and coordination.

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## Appendix/Ek

Yıllara Göre Dergilerdeki Makale Sayısı

Dergi Adı	Verti tabanı	Yıllar											Toplam	
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010		2011
Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi	U	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	3	1	1	3	11
Ahi Evran Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi	U	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	3	3	4	1	14
Aile ve Toplum Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi	U	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	4
Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi Dergisi	U	-	-	2	2	1	3	1	2	1	2	-	-	14
Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	3	4	3	1	1	6	2	1	21
Balikesir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi	U	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	3
Bilgi	S	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	1	2	7
Çağdaş Eğitim Dergisi	U	-	-	1	1	2	-	5	-	4	3	3	3	22
Çukurova Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi	U	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	6	2	1	12
Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Dil Dergisi	U	-	-	-	6	4	2	4	6	6	6	3	-	37
Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	2	4	1	4	14
Eğitim Araştırmaları	S	-	-	-	-	1	2	3	9	2	-	2	1	20
Eğitim ve Bilim	S	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2	1	2	3	10
EKEV	U	-	-	2	1	-	1	2	-	-	7	-	-	13
Elektronik Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	4	-	9
Erzincan Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	4
Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	6
Gaziantep Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	2	7
Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	3
Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi	S	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	2	1	-	-	6
İlköğretim Online	U	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	2	3	1	2	3	14
İnönü Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	8
Kastamonu Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi	U	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	1	3	4	3	15
Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi	S	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	3	3	10	20
Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Yönetimi Dergisi	U	-	2	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	7
Marmara Ü. Atatürk Eğitim Fakültesi Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	3
Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	4
Mersin Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	3
Milli Eğitim Dergisi	U	6	1	1	1	4	3	9	12	9	13	14	7	80
Milli Folklor Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2
Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	7	8	6	6	28
Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	-	1	1	2	-	9
Pamukkale Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi	U	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	2	1	10
Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	3
Şüeyman Demirel Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
TurkishStudies	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	13	30
Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Türk Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	1	4	5	3	2	19
Türkiye Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
Türklük Bilimi Araştırmaları Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	45	1	49
Uludağ Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi	U	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	2	3	-	1	10
Toplam		6	4	14	13	32	29	43	42	69	97	135	74	558

U: ULAKBİM (n=495)

S: SSCI (n=63)