

## **BIOGRAPHY TEACHING IN SOCIAL STUDIES TEXT BOOKS**

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### **Abstract**

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Considering that textbooks are the main sources of education, textbooks have vital functions in transferring of biography knowledge. However, the existence of biographical knowledge alone in textbooks is not enough. Handling and presenting of this knowledge also forms a determining factor in education. The purpose of the present study is defining the handling and presentation of this knowledge in primary school social studies textbooks. The study employed document analysis technique. Two 5<sup>th</sup> grade social studies textbook approved by board of education and discipline were analysed comparatively in terms of four variables as; the identity of the personages included related to the topic, the quality of the biography knowledge included, sources and tools used for the presentation of the information about the studied personage and the activities. According to the findings obtained in the present study, textbooks provide limited information about the personages studied, except for Ataturk and these personages are mostly studied with questions in knowledge and comprehension step.

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### **Keywords:**

Social studies;  
Textbook;  
Biography;

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## 1. Introduction

Throughout the history, education has had the objective of enabling individuals to reach at the ideal knowledge, skills and values integrity. In broader terms, this objective can be defined as “personality development”. Personality model changes and forms in accordance with the conditions, possibilities, needs and ideals of the perceived period. Today, approaches that intend to comprehend persons within their own integrity come to prominence, since the structure and the processing of the relationships network between people constraint by especially the modern life, strongly emphasizes the importance and urgency of the objective of “personality development”. Indeed, constructivist approach, which places students in the centre of learning process and so is consistent with education being a body of human centred activities, includes remarkable emphases on “personality development” with such domains as character education, values education and social skills education.

The previous studies on personality development have mentioned many methods and resources related to the aforementioned objective. However, in terms of especially developing the personality and presenting the integrity of the personality, it is certain that biographic knowledge and therefore literary works of biography genre have a special place. In fact, biographical knowledge is not only included in biographies. However, as they contain systematic and holistic information, biographies form the main resource of biographical information. The use of biographical works in order to provide model personages in personality development becomes of more importance considering both the developmental characteristics of primary school students and the content of social studies courses that aim at adaptation to social life.

The related literature includes some studies related to the use of biographies in social studies courses. Ozturkand Otluoglu presented general information on biography and explained how it could be used through examples in their study [1]. Kaymakciand Er, OrucandErprovided theoretical explanations related to the relationship between biography and education [2]-[4]. Er stated that the subject “Ataturk’s life” in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades should be handles in accordance with student expectations and teacher views and redesigned aforementioned subject [5]. In their studies on the effects of the use of biography in education, Tekgoz, Gencturk and Erdemreported that it increased academic achievement, and OrucandErdemfound that it had a positive effect on

attitudes [6]-[9]. Er studied the biographical elements included in Social Studies (4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grades) and TR Revolution History And Kemalism (8<sup>th</sup> grade) courses curriculums and reported that their quality met student expectations only to a certain extent [10]. Kaya explained the use of biographical knowledge in textbooks within the historical process [11]. Kaymakci reported that biographical knowledge was included in social studies curriculum textbooks, and similarly Kaymakci and Er reported that biographical knowledge was included in 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade social studies curriculum textbooks [12], [13].

The present study, which analyses the biographical knowledge and therefore the biographies, presents a brief information on the characteristics of biography as a genre, its benefits and teaching, then elaborates the presentation of biography knowledge in textbooks, which are important as educational materials. The present study seeks answers to the following questions:

1. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade social studies textbooks examined in the present study, biographies of which personages are included?
2. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade social studies textbooks examined in the present study, what biographical information is presented related to the studied personages?
3. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade social studies textbooks examined in the present study, with which resources and tools is the biographical information related to the personage presented?
4. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade social studies textbooks examined in the present study, with which activities is the biographical information related to the personage presented?

The present study, which employed document analysis technique, examined two 5<sup>th</sup> grade social studies textbooks published by different publishers [14], [15]<sup>\*</sup>. Student workbooks, which are the supplements of textbooks at schools, were also examined, and evaluated together under the title of textbook. It was found that only one to three, and rarely four sentence explanations were provided about the personages in textbooks, except for Ataturk, and all personages, about whom any kind of information is provided, were included in the present study. However, some personages, whose sayings or poems were included without any biographical information, such as Tevfik Fikret (Evren), Arif Nihat Asya (Berkay) were not included in the scope of the present study.

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<sup>\*</sup>From this point on, the expression Berkay for Ozensoy and Aynaci, and the expression Evren for Karabiyik are used according to the publishers of the textbooks.

## 2. Biography and Education

The title of “Biography and education” can be perceived in two ways. First is the use of biographies in education as a literary genre, in which case the work(s) written in biography genre as a main resource to be studied, examined and evaluated. The second perception is the presentation of biographical information about a personage in a way covering the first one as well, and in this case it is possible to make use of many materials of different types, primarily the written and visual resources, and copyrighted works as resources besides biographies and other literary works. The present study on the teaching of biographical knowledge examines the second perception. However, biography as a genre was also mentioned for it presents what kind of information is needed in introducing a personage and provides a sample for the presentation style of this information. Indeed, biography both is the main source of biographical knowledge in education and shows the nature of this information, and also has gained a literary-scientific quality today with the developments in its writing.

### *1.1. Biography as a literary genre and its historical development*

Biography, which is expressed with the concept of *tercüme-i hâl* (life history) in old Turkish, refers to works that “study the lives of important people, who became famous for their living and what they did, based on documents” [16]. The biography written by the author about their own life is called autobiography. Biography doesn’t only mean a chronological presentation or summary of a person’s life. Beyond a background story, biography is a presentation of analyses of information about and characteristics of a personage. Biographies are works that present many aspects of people’s lives. Therefore, biographical works take a person’s life as a whole and try to explain it without damaging its integrity in a narrative manner.

The definitions and characteristics attributed to the genre of biography have matured within time. Historical process shows that some literary genres include biographical information. Indeed, first biographical information dates back to the Greek-Latin period works written in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, and epics, which were verbal literature products and most of which told the lives of ideal

persons, who played important roles in nations' histories, include biographical information: Epic of Alp ErTunga, Epic of OghuzKhagan,etc.<sup>†</sup>.

First known great author of biography genre is Plutarch (46-120), who is believed to have characterized this genre [17]. In his biographical works titled *Parallel Lives*, Plutarch tried to offer ethical conclusions by explicitly comparing the people, whose lives he told, in terms of behaviours and character [17].

In Turkic-Islam literature, works titled siyerkisasu'l-enbiya, tabakat, tezkire, menakibname, velayetname (prophetic biographies) are accepted as biographical works [18]. Siyer, which is also a branch of science, refers to the works, which tell about prophet Mohammed's life. Kisasu'l-enbiya, which tells about prophets' lives and also provides a history of prophets, tabakat, which tells about important and great personages, secere, menakipname and velayetname, along with tezkire, menakib, vefeyat, devha, sefine, tuhfe, hadika, fihrist, silsilename, sairname, gazavatname, which include biographies of more than one personage of the same profession, are all biographical works. The first biographical work of Turkish Literature is Tezkiretu'l-Evliya (collection of biographies of Muslim saints) translated from Feriduddin Attar by Malik Bahsi. First tezkire of Turkish literature, Mecalisu'n-Nefais, was written by Ali Sir Nevai. First tezkire of Anatolia, HestBehist, was written by SehiBey. In accordance with these examples, we can claim that biographical information has been the subject of many different literary works until modern times.

Today, beyond being chronological narratives, biography refers to works that present attitudes, behaviours and values of the personages they tell about based on documents. This closes the gap between modern biography and history. Thus, Dhunpath defined biography as a living history dedicated to the importance of personal experience, which clearly indicates that biography is directly and/or indirectly related with not only literature but also history [19].

However, the most important factor that establishes the relationship between biography and history is that both are based on archive studies [20]. Banner, who believes that there are certain

<sup>†</sup>In terms of the meaning attributed to the hero, Turkic epics divinise the nation, rather than a person or family, unlike other national epics (Sepetcioglu, 1998, p.36).

similarities between biography and history, provides the following information about biography writing in accordance with these similarities; biography combines historical classification and methodology, includes political and theoretical issues, clarifies accuracy and proof issues about complicated matters, presents the person in their environment in historical, literary and geographical contexts, makes use of psycho-history interpretations, emphasizes the power of culture in the formation of personality, emphasizes the sophistication of personality, and has a fluent narration [20]. Accordingly, the qualities of the biographical studies today can be listed as (Oguzkan, 1997, p.142: Sirin, 2000, p.134): being documented, providing subjectivity, using all correct resources possible, introducing the persona with all aspects, presenting the persona in the historical context, and using a clear, simple language and style [16], [21].

### *1.2. The benefits of biography knowledge in teaching*

Presented either from a biographical work, or using various resources and materials, biography is directly or indirectly related with education since it is about human life for its nature.

As a literary work, biography tells about human, like other literary genres and even all social studies. Yet, this telling is a direct and holistic telling. With these aspects, biography has a more maybe not privileged but different place in education.

Above all, biography is a literary genre. Biography, which was seen as a branch of history until modern times, it accepted as a literary genre in the modern times. However, as it uses the documents as the main resource, the bonds between biography and history are not broken, on the contrary stronger. For its both literary and historical aspects, biography serves important functions in acquiring skills related to both fields.

Due to these characteristics, the purpose and benefits of using biography in education is interrelated and inextricable, and additionally it is possible to study it under four titles as; literary work, history teaching, personality development and general.

- As literary works;
  - a. Biographies can provide a rich example for the vocabulary and expressions in a language, and help students know and use the language correctly, strengthen their use of language [22], [21],
  - b. Biographies can teach to enjoy works of art and appreciate what is fine[16], [21],
  - c. Biographies can teach to set the imagination to work [21],

- d. Biographies can develop students' literary culture.
- In terms of history teaching;
  - a. Biographies are valuable sources for case studies related to elements, such as time in history, geographical place, social classes, gender, race and ethnicity [22],
  - b. Biographies can help personifying the history [23],
  - c. Biographies provide students with opportunities to establish mutual bonds between main concepts and broad perceptions. Establishing mutual bonds is not only associating. It raises awareness on the existence of a bigger picture as a way of thinking about the world. Literature can provide students with a both important and simple, effective way for living a historical period [24],
  - d. Biographies can help students know a personage, who lived in a past they can internalize, by establishing a meaningful, affective and mental relationship [25],
  - e. Biographies can raise interest in the past among students[26],
  - f. Biographies can help students explain the structural limitations of their time as they define the structural limitations of the historical period they study [26],
  - g. Biographies can encourage students to read historical literature to learn more about the world they live in by making them more knowledgeable about themselves [26],
  - h. Students can use their knowledge of human as a stepping stone to the issues of a certain historical period and historical events in general [26],
  - i. Studying historical persons can provide a common history perspective by seeing past from a person who really existed [26],
  - j. Biographies can enable students, who consider history as events remote history, that aren't related with them, and aren't interested in history for that reason, to imagine the lives of people who lived in a certain place[23],
  - k. Biographies can develop the concepts of chronology and time,
  - l. Biographies can present the events, dates and meanings, which students need to memorize, as an inventory of a famous person and therefore make them easier to learn for students [27],
  - m. Biographies can enable the comprehension of cause and effect relationships between historical events,
  - n. Biographies can enable the comprehension of the effects of persons, institutions and conditions in historical events,

- o. Biographies can help students realize the historical changes and continuity.
- In terms of personality development;
  - a. Biographies can meet students' need for role models [16], [21], [22],
  - b. Biographies can reveal the fact that culture is primary power in the formation of personality [20],
  - c. Biographies can introduce the national and human values [21],
  - d. Biographies can enable the discovery of high thoughts,
  - e. Biographies can contribute to the realization of common products of humanity in certain areas and the development of these,
  - f. Biographies can provide an environment where students enjoy sharing [21],
  - g. Biographies can provide students with opportunities to be prepared for possible situations they can encounter in the future by making use of life experiences of other people [16],
  - h. Biographies can develop admiration and respect for great people among students and develop their senses of patriotism [16],
  - i. Biographies can stimulate students' needs of success, and engrain senses of courage and confidence in them. In this regard, no other literary work is motivating than biographies [21].
- In general;
  - a. Biographies can provide teachers and students with materials to infer from multiple perspectives [22],
  - b. Biographies can extend the limits of general culture and thinking [16],
  - c. Biographies can enable students to put themselves in the shoes of the person in the biography and this way develop their empathy skills [21], [20],
  - d. Biographies can provide opportunities to go from general subjects and theories to personal and certain experiences of individuals and groups [28],
  - e. Biographies can satisfy the curiosity for different and interesting events and cases,
  - f. Biographies can contribute to the teaching of decision-making and social skills [22],
  - g. Biographies can help in developing positive attitudes for teaching [22],
  - h. Biographies can provide a context for the structure of information[22],
  - i. Biographies can help reinforcing the knowledge learnt in other lessons [16],
  - k. Biographies can help adopting reading habit [21],

l. Biographies can accelerate the transferring of knowledge, which is the key to a successful learning [20],

m. Biographies can help students develop perceptions and produce criticism [20],

n. Biographies can take children out of the symbolic world of tales and get them closer to the reality. It is possible to affect children more with biographies than imaginary works [21].

In addition to the aforementioned benefits, there are some limitations in using biographies in teaching-learning process. That is, a teaching done with biographies only can only provide a learning of independent compartments, the studied personage may not attract students' interest, which may cause students digress from the topic and result in the studying of a limited number of subjects. A person's life cannot be enough to teach all the necessary topics and "it is mostly easier to gather individuals around events, than to gather events around individuals" [5].

### *2.3. Handling of biographical information in textbooks*

Biographies are materials that can be easily integrated to the curriculum [29]. However, it is not possible to read and analyse the whole of these resources within course hours. Because of this limitation, a certain part or parts are chosen from the biographies for the in-class activities and in textbooks.

There are some issues for writing of biographies for children, to use them in classroom activities. While writing biographies for children [16], [21], [19]: the subject must be chosen carefully in accordance with interests of children; the text should mostly include the interesting incidents the person lived, the personal views of the person should be given during the telling of the events without details; social, political and economic conditions that affected person's life and the problems related to these conditions should be explained in the simplest way considering the comprehension levels of children; the events should be presented in their own contexts; positive characteristics of the person, such as the achievements, heroism, humanism, patriotism should be told in a way to set a model (the personality should be described in a positive way), because children cannot handle failure at this period; details about the childhood of the hero should be provided (for instance mischiefs, punishments, etc.), this can help children identify themselves with that person; the facts should be presented in accordance with a theme, and a narrative style should be used.

The use of biographies as a teaching method depends on whether they have the required qualifications to serve the attainments of the course curriculum. Additionally, biographic

information about a personage in textbooks, either cited from a biography or not, must have some elements, which can be listed as: summarized information including chronological information about the personage's life; information about the natural and cultural environment and the period (phenomenon-concept-view-politics, etc.) the person lived in, since that can help understand and assess the personage within the conditions of their of time period; information about the personality of the personage, since knowing the values and behaviours of the personage can have a positive affect on students; memories of the personage; information about the ideas, works and activities of the personage; information about the importance of the ideas, works and activities of the personage for their own period and for today; information about the place and importance of the personage in the history, since the content of this information can enable students to compare the personage with similar people (Turkish-foreign), who lived in the same period, or before or after that personage, and have information about important/famous people's ideas about the personage in the biography.

All this information should be presented in the chronological order, within the historical context, with explanatory examples and supporting sources and tools.

At this point, it should be stated that biography can be taught in two ways; directly or indirectly. The elements mentioned above are for direct biography teaching, which is included in the curriculum and allocated a certain time. Indirect biography teaching refers to the teaching of a biographical knowledge that can support the attainment of the general objectives of the course, within the plan of another lesson, which is not specifically allocated to that personage but to a different subject or person. In other words, the attainments and content of the lesson are actually not related to that personage. Indirect teaching of biography can be more effective on students, since it presents biographical information, in a natural manner without any conditioning. This kind of teaching occurring "spontaneously" can result in positive changes in time in accordance with the attainments, especially among students who have some negative prejudices about historical-political persons. Indirect biography teaching can be included in-class and out-of-class activities, and even in textbooks.

Biographical information in textbooks can be presented through some tools, primarily the source books. These teaching materials can be presented in two groups as; sources and tools. These are; Sources; written sources (archive documents, letters, diaries, epigrams and speeches, various notes and records, etc.), visual sources (photographs, miniatures, portraits, sculptures, maps, plans, etc.), electronic sources (audio, films, etc.).

Tools; written tools (copyrighted works, literary works, encyclopaedia, etc.), visual tools (maps, sketches, plans, pictures, graphs, time lines, diagrams, concept maps created after the period that is studied), electronic tools (CD, DVD, etc.).

Various methods and activities can be used in the processing and evaluating the biographic information in textbooks. However, before methods and activities, some elements, such as special symbols or signs can be used to raise awareness on the personality and the characteristics of the period of the personage in the textbook (also in the worksheets prepared by the teacher). For instance, tughra (signature) of the sultan, a sample from the art of the period, or a drawing of an important incident of the period can be used.

Some of the methods and activities that can be used in the textbook for biographical information are as follows:

Reading: Reading of the selected parts from primarily the biography or various literary works, all kinds of sources and tools. During this activity, students should be asked to pay attention to some elements, such as phenomena, concepts, dates, places and names.

Asking questions: Questions in the textbooks can be classified in accordance with Bloom taxonomy as [30]: 1. Knowledge step includes questions about the elements that students should remember, such as who, what, where and when. 2. Comprehension step refers to students' understanding and interpreting the knowledge, and in this step, students are expected to summarize, explain, exemplify, compare, group, express in another form and discuss the knowledge. 3. Application step requires the students to use the knowledge in a new situation, and they are expected to exhibit such behaviours as building, making sentences, planning, and

dramatizing. Role-playing can be included in dramatizing. This activity, which is very important for biography teaching, enables to concentrate on a specific moment from the extensive history, and reanimates the history [26]. 4. Analysis step requires students to break the whole into its parts and establish the relationships between them, and to draw schemes, research, question, associate, provide evidence and interpret reasons. 5. Evaluation step requires students to defend and prove their own ideas on a specific subject in accordance with certain criteria, define the priorities of a subject and pass judgements. 6. Synthesis step refers to students' combining many elements to present a new idea or a product. Writing essays, letters, poems or reports, making a new plan and proposal, designing posters are activities related to this step.

**Case study:** In this method, an incident about the personage is evaluated. With this activity, prominent phenomena, concepts and issues about the personality and the period of the person can be studied.

**Museum/virtual museum study:** Textbooks can offer suggestions for that kind of activities.

### **3. Findings on the Social Studies Textbooks**

Both textbooks include biographies of personages, who had been successful in similar fields. Biographies of Ataturk, Mehmet AkifErsoy, ZekiUngor, some scientists, artists and entrepreneurs were used in both textbooks. Some names, such as Newton, Da Vinci and Galileo are used in both textbooks. Textbooks mostly included Turkish personages (Berkay: 19/7; Evren: 11/4), yet this rate changes in favour of foreign personages in scientists and inventors (Berkay:3/7; Evren: 2/4).

Textbooks studied in the present study mostly include well-known information about the personages, and provide a general framework for these personages. These introductory information, which is no longer than a few words, mention about personage's the field of activity along with their studies or works and the importance of their ideas. For instance; HezarfenAhmetCelebi was the first person to manage to fly in the sky (Berkay); Newton invented reflecting telescope (Evren). Both textbooks provided the most comprehensive information about Ataturk, his life, ideas and works. For instance, the foundation of Turkish

Republic is based on Ataturk's principles (Berkay), Ataturk tried to create a modern Turkish society (Evren).

In terms of the chronological information provided for the personages, it was found that textbooks included limited information about important dates for the personage, such as dates of birth and data. Berkay includes dates of birth and death of Ataturk and foreign scientist and important dates related to the inventions of the inventors, while Evren only includes important dates in M.A. Ersoy, H.S. Tanrıover, V. Koc and C. Arf's lives, but no other dates about these personages. At this point, Ataturk should be studied separately for both textbooks, because the last days of Ataturk and his reforms are presented as chronological information.

In terms of the importance of works and ideas of the personages, and the features of the periods they lived in, textbooks provide some examples for the information presented about Ataturk (Berkay: The country was in a weak state, Evren: Ottoman State was about to come to an end, and economically in a bad condition). (Berkay: Galileo [was punished by the church] and Marie Curie [in her time, there were very few women in the world of science]; Evren: Hayrettin Karaca's explanation on the reason for the establishment of the foundation).

Textbooks generally include information related to personality features. Especially Ataturk's and some scientists', even in general terms, personality features are stated in textbooks (Berkay workbook asks students to define personality features of the given scientists). In addition to these, some examples on this subject are; that M.A. Ersoy didn't accept the award promised for the Turkish National Anthem and additional information on C. Arf's personality features (Evren). Textbooks include some memories, which can provide more information about the personages included in the textbooks and also enable to establish emotional bond with them. Two memories about Ataturk (Berkay), and one memory about M.A. Ersoy (Evren) can be found in the textbooks.

Several examples of indirect teaching, which is another important practice in biography teaching, were found in both textbooks. For instance, in Berkay, one Kazakstanichild states that he reads Chingiz Aitmatov's books is an example of indirect teaching about Aitmatov, and in Evren, the

statement “where Canakkale Battles, in which Mustafa Kemal showed great success, took place” is an indirect teaching about Ataturk. Evren includes several more examples of indirect teaching about Sultan Aladdin (with a legend), M.A.Ersoy and Ataturk.

Textbooks studied within the scope of the present study, don't include any sayings about the personages and comparisons with similar personages, who lived before, at the same time or after the respective personages. However, Berkay included information on Greek Prime Minister Venizelos's nominating Ataturk for “Nobel Peace Prize”.

Textbooks used some visual resources for the personages, such as photographs and portraits, and additionally Berkay includes a miniature about a subject. The number of Ataturk photos in both textbooks is remarkable (Berkay: 36 [two of them used twice]; Evren: 26 [two of them used twice]) (photographs related to reforms are also associated with Ataturk). Additionally Berkay includes the world map drawn by Mahmud al-Kashgari and a picture of water clock designed by Jazari. Use of written resources is very rare except for Ataturk. In both textbooks, Ataturk's ideas are quoted from Kemalism(C.1,3) books including Ataturk's sayings, and this way they enable students to learn Ataturk's ideas directly from the source (Berkay: 23 sayings [one repeated]; Evren: 29 sayings [four repeated]). Additionally, Berkay includes a newspaper clipping about reforms, Ataturk's identity card, one quotation from DivanuLugati't-Turk (Mahmud al-Kashgari) and one from Kitab-ulHiyel (Jazari); and Evren includes a quotation from Galileo's letters. Textbooks made use of other written tools, which are not of resource quality, even in small amounts. Berkay includes quotations from “Ataturk's Memories” (SabriBabacan) and 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Anthem; and Evren includes quotations from “Anatolian Legends” (Mehmet Onder), “Analysis of Turkish National Anthem and Canakkale Martyrs Poems” (HuseyinUnlu) and New Illustrated Knowledge Encyclopaedia(C. 5). However, these textbooks don't include any references to biographical works about the respective personages. As for visual tools; textbooks include representational pictures (Berkay: 2), graphics (Berkay: 1), a life map (Evren: 1), a time line (Evren: 1) and tables (Berkay: 1, Evren: 3). Additionally, Berkay quoted 3 sayings of Ataturk from the website of an official institution.

Various methods and activities were found in textbooks related to the studied personages. If the material in question is a written material like a textbook, reading and comprehension activities are one of the main activities. Thus, the textbooks studied in the present study include this kind of activities, either directly or indirectly.

The most common method used in the textbooks studied in the present study is the question-answer method, and it was observed that they ask questions at different steps taking Bloom taxonomy into consideration. Most of the questions included in the textbooks are in knowledge and comprehension steps, yet there are questions related to other steps, even few in numbers. Some of the questions included in the textbook are as follows: Knowledge: What reforms were made in our country after the proclamation of the republic? (Berkay), Show four reforms made by Ataturk in the areas of science and technology on the line (numerical axis) (Evren). Comprehension-comparison: Compare the status of Turkish women in terms of their rights before and after the reforms (Berkay). Discuss what you understand from Ataturk's saying "Public and private enterprises are not against, but complements of each other." (Evren). Application: Read the text consisting a long sentence below. Make short sentences about this text (Evren). Analysis: Compare the daily life before and after Ataturk's reforms, in terms of governance, education, economy, law and woman rights (Berkay). What kind of the relationship is there between populism principle and republicanism and nationalism principles? (Evren). Evaluation: What do you think is the importance of republicanism for our country? (Berkay). Write about your ideas of the reforms made in the areas of social life and law (Evren). Synthesis: Design a poster representing the before and after of Ataturk reforms (Berkay). Find photos about incidents and phenomena in Ataturk's life and create a photo album. In this album, include memories from Ataturk's life, the songs he liked and a letter you write to him (Evren).

Only one case study was found in textbooks, which is about Mehmet AkifErsoy in Evren.

It was found that textbooks didn't include other methods and activities, such as impersonation/dramatization/analogy and museum/virtual museum.

#### **4. Conclusion, discussion and suggestions**

The findings of the present study about the place and teaching of biography knowledge in textbooks can be summarized as follows:

1. Textbooks include biographical knowledge, which is in agreement with findings of the studies conducted by Er, Kaymakci and Kaymakci and Er [10], [12], [13].

- Both textbooks include the most comprehensive information on Ataturk, among the personages they study, which is resulted from the curriculum.
- Besides Ataturk, M.A.Ersoy and Z.Ungor, both textbooks include biographical information about scientists, artists and entrepreneurs, most of whom are well-known personages. However, it was found that Berkay also included information about common people, which is consistent with the approach of attaching importance to common people that emerged after World War II.
- Berkay includes information about 26 personages, 19 of whom are Turkish, and 7 are foreign, while 11 of the 15 personages included in Evren are Turkish and 4 are foreign personages. However, as for scientists, both textbooks include more scientists than Turkish scientists, which is not very appropriate for the relevant development stage of the students, when they develop national personality and therefore need national role models. For instance, all personages and groups included in 5<sup>th</sup> grade social studies curriculum in the state of Texas in the USA are important English and/or American personages, who have an importance place in American history [31].

2. Except for Ataturk, the information included in the textbooks about the personages is no longer than a few sentences.

- This information is about the ideas, works and activities of the personages, and their importance. Even short, the existence of this information provides students with a general opinion about these personages. However, this information has certain limitations in attracting and maintaining interest for the mentioned personages, as it doesn't include more special information and especially memories of the personages (except for Ataturk [Berkay] and M.A.Ersoy [Evren]). Similarly, Er found that memories weren't included in textbooks sufficiently [5].
- Textbooks include chronological information about the personages to some extent.
- Generally, textbooks don't provide information about the features periods the personages lived in, except for Ataturk, Hayrettin Karaca, Marie Curie and indirectly Galileo. However, the importance and the place in history of the activities, works and ideas of a personage can only be understood by understanding the features of the environment and the period they lived in.

- Additionally, textbooks include some information about the personality features of Ataturk, and some scientists in general terms.
- Textbooks include some examples of indirect teaching method, which is considered as a kind of spontaneous teaching. It is believed that the use of this method especially in presenting information about Ataturk can be effective.
- Presentation of important people's ideas about the studied personages, and comparison of the activities of the studied personages with other people's activities of in the same area, can enable students to understand the historical importance of the studied personages. However, it was found that textbooks didn't include this kind of information, with a few exceptions.

3. It was found that both textbooks include visual sources for all the studied personages. This provides students with a visual perception of the personages. Additionally, it was found that written resources, which make personages real for students, and enable a more effective teaching, were also used, even a little.

- It was found that textbooks don't include any quotations from biographical works about the personages, whose biographies are studied. Both biographies and other written works used insufficiently. It can also be reported that visual tools, such as tables, graphics and life maps were used, even a little, which is in agreement with the findings of the study conducted by Er[5].

4. The most commonly used method in the textbooks is asking questions, especially the questions of knowledge and comprehension steps. Textbooks don't include any suggestions for analogy and museum/virtual museum tour activities, which can enable the understanding of the ideas and activities of a personage. This finding is also in agreement with the findings of the studies conducted by Er[5], [4]. However, impersonation, dramatizing, production (models, etc.) and tour activities are among the activities that can raise students' interests in the studied personages and enable students to empathize with them.

In accordance with the findings obtained in the present study, following suggestions can be made:

1. Considering its importance, more Turkish scientists should be included in scientists sections.
2. Special memories that can create empathy, information on the period the personages lived in, chronological information, comparative information that can present the historical importance of the personage and sayings about the personages should be included more in textbooks.

3. Literary works, especially written sources and biographical works, and visual tools that can define the works, ideas and activities of the personages, such as concept maps/networks, should be included more in textbooks.
4. Activities should be enriched with studies, such as drawing analogies, museum tours, building models, drawing time lines, etc.
5. Further studies should be conducted to analyse different textbooks of different grades and courses with new practices.

Consequently, textbooks and curriculum can be revised in accordance with the need to include examples of national personages in teaching some subjects in biography teaching.

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