

# An Examination of Reading Texts in a Journey to Turkish A1 and A2 Level Textbooks in Terms of Readability

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## Abstract

*Textbooks, which have a very important place in educational activities, are also a widely used material in teaching Turkish to foreigners. Therefore, the texts in these textbooks play an effective role in learning. For this reason, it is very important to determine the readability levels of Turkish teaching textbooks for foreigners. The aim of this research is to determine the readability levels of the reading texts in the Turkish Journey A1 and Turkish Journey A2 textbooks prepared for teaching Turkish to foreigners. Document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. In the study, the syllable, word and sentence lengths of the reading texts in the textbooks were calculated. The obtained data were analyzed with the Flesch formula adapted to Turkish by Ateşman (1997) and the readability levels of the reading texts were determined. Then, the reading texts in the books were compared in terms of ease and difficulty. According to the results obtained, it has been determined that the reading texts of both textbooks are generally of medium difficulty, easy and very easy. In addition, it was determined that the Turkish Journey A2 textbook and the Turkish Journey A1 textbook consisted of more difficult texts. As a result, it was determined that both books consisted of reading texts suitable for A1 and A2 levels.*

**Keywords:** Readability, Teaching Turkish to foreigners, Readability, Textbook.

## Introduction

Textbooks are a course material that is frequently used in education. At the same time, the textbook is an important course material in that it contains the aims and contents of the education program as well as being a teaching tool (Vural, 2006, p.119). Textbooks, which are widely used in teaching environments, are easily accessible and economical, and the high level of language use can sometimes lead to problems in understanding the content (Söylemez, 2012, p. 128). For this reason, understanding the content of the books, which are important course materials, and preparing them accordingly is an important issue.

Textbooks, which have a very important place in educational activities, are also a widely used material in teaching Turkish to foreigners. Textbooks prepared for the purpose of teaching Turkish to foreigners have been prepared with the aim of developing these skills for those who want to learn Turkish, with the areas of reading, writing, listening, speaking and grammar learning in the foreground. Texts are frequently used in these textbooks, which are prepared to be used in teaching Turkish to foreigners. Therefore, the suitability of the texts in the textbooks for language levels such as A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 is also an issue to be considered. In this direction, studies carried out with reading texts suitable for language levels will contribute to achieving the targeted success in teaching Turkish to foreigners (Biçer and Alan, 2017, p.1131). Readability appropriate to the level is very important especially in the textbooks prepared for teaching

Turkish to foreigners. Readability can be claimed as being easy to read, easy to understand, easy perception of the sentences in the text and easy comprehension of the text content (Ziya, 2019, p.12). In this context, readability is of great importance in reaching the target of the texts and in the implementation of what is intended to be taught. In readability studies, the suitability of the text to the targeted level is determined based on elements such as syllables, words, sentences. Although these determinations do not provide a definite judgment, they can give clues about the suitability of the texts to the levels. Therefore, the main point of readability studies is to make the language, that is, the text, more understandable (Temur et al., 2011).

The readability measure gives information about the difficulty of the text rather than whether the text is good or bad. Readability is related to the level of understanding of the text and the acceptance of its linguistic features by the reader. Therefore, it can be said that the concept of readability is also related to situations such as vocabulary, age level, and psychological development (Baş and İnan Yıldız, 2015, p.53). Various formulas such as Dale-Chall formula, Gunning Fox Index, Frg Readability Chart, Flesch Kincaid formula and Raygor have been developed to determine the difficulty levels of texts (Ulukalın and Koçoğlu, 2017, p.2203). There is also a formula developed by Ateşman (1997). In this formula, the readability of the text can be measured based on the number of syllables, words and sentences in the text. In addition, in the formula developed by Çetinkaya-Uzun (2010), the readability level is calculated based on the average word and sentence lengths. It is seen that the average sentence length and the frequencies of the syllables affect the readability level in Turkish. In this context, the increase in the number of words, which increases the average sentence length, also affects the readability of the text (Bezirci & Yılmaz, 2010). Therefore, it can be argued that the number of syllables, words and sentences in the text have significant effects on the readability of the text. From this point of view, it can be said that giving the average word and sentence lengths in reading texts according to the levels will contribute to more accurate and positive results.

When the relevant literature is examined,

although there are various studies on the readability of the texts (Şimşek and Çinpolat, 2021; Şakiroğlu, 2020; Bora, 2019; Sağlam et al., 2018; Ulukalın and Koçoğlu, 2017; Bolat, 2016; Baş and İnan Yıldız, 2015; Çakıroğlu, 2015; İskender, 2013; Okur and Arı, 2013; Koçağan, 2012; Hızarcı, 2009), the number of studies on the readability of the books and texts in the field of teaching Turkish to foreigners is few. Among these studies, Biçer and Alan (2017) determined the readability levels of the texts in the book *New Hittite Turkish for Foreigners 3* (Yeni Hitit 3) and *Istanbul C1+*, which were prepared for teaching Turkish to foreigners. Again, Zorbaz and Köroğlu (2016) examined the readability levels in the basic, intermediate and advanced set prepared by Gazi University TÖMER, which was prepared to teach Turkish to foreigners. Similarly, Şimşek (2019) examined the readability levels of the texts in the textbooks used in teaching Turkish to foreigners. In the study of Yılmaz and Temiz (2014), the readability status of the texts in the *New Hittite Turkish for Foreigners Textbook 1, 2, and 3* was examined. In addition, Temur et al. (2011) conducted a comparative analysis of the results of the research on the concept of readability in the fields of science and social sciences.

This study is important in terms of determining the readability levels of the textbooks prepared for teaching Turkish to foreigners in the literature and contributing to the Turkish teaching sets that will be prepared from now on. In this study, it is aimed to determine the readability levels of the texts in the A1 and A2 textbooks prepared for Turkish teaching. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

- What are the readability levels of the texts in the Turkish Journey A1 textbook?
- What are the readability levels of the texts in the Turkish Journey A2 textbook?
- Is there a difference between the readability levels of the texts in the Journey to Turkish A1 and A2 textbooks?

## Method

### Model of the Research

The document analysis model was used in this study, which aims to determine the readability

levels of the reading texts in the textbooks used in teaching Turkish to foreigners. Document analysis includes the analysis of written materials containing information about the facts or events that are aimed to be investigated (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008, p.187). The current situation of the reading texts in the textbooks is described with the document analysis method.

### Examined Documents

Journey to Turkish A1 and Journey to Turkish A2 textbooks used in teaching Turkish to foreigners were selected to be included in the study. The widespread use of these books and the fact that they were prepared for Turkish at a basic level were effective in the selection of these books. 30 texts in Journey to Turkish A1 textbook and 35 texts in Journey to Turkish textbook A2 were examined in terms of readability. 6 reading texts at A1 level, which are outside Ateşman's (1997) Readability Level ranges, were not included in the analysis.

### Data Collection

The syllable, word and sentence lengths of the reading texts in the contents section of the Journey to Turkish A1 and A2 Journey to Turkish textbooks were calculated. The syllables were determined according to the syllable determination method of Turkish. The word count includes numbers, symbols, and words

and abbreviations separated by a connecting line. The number of sentences was determined according to their separation with punctuation marks.

### Analysis of Data

In the study, the data obtained from the Turkish Journey A1 and Turkish Journey A2 textbooks were analyzed using the Flesch formula adapted to Turkish by Ateşman (1997) and the readability scores of the texts were determined.

$$\text{Readability Count} = 198,825 - (40,175 \cdot x_1) - (2,610 \cdot x_2)$$

$x_1$  = Average word length in syllables

$x_2$  = Average sentence length in words

**Table 1: Readability Count and Level Ranges**

Readability Level	Readability Count
Very Easy	90-100
Easy	70-89
Medium Difficulty	50-69
Difficult	30-49
Very Difficult	1-29

### Results

The information about the results obtained regarding the readability levels of the texts in the Turkish Journey to Turkish A1 textbook is shown in Table 3.

**Table 2: The Readability of the Texts in the A1 Textbook of Journey to Turkish**

Unit	Text Name	Total Number of Sentence	Total Number of Words	Total Number of Syllables	Average Word Length	Average Sentence Length	Readability Score	Readability Level
1	Günaydın (p.21)	17	36	85	2,361111111	2,117647059	98,44030229	Very Easy
1	İyi Günler! (p.22)	11	27	64	2,37037037	2,454545455	97,18900673	Very Easy
1	Nerelisin? (p.25)	9	16	41	2,5625	1,777777778	91,2365625	Very Easy
1	Haydi Tanışalım! (1) (p.25)	10	29	83	2,862068966	2,9	76,27237931	Easy
2	İstanbul'a Hoş Geldiniz! (p.46)	25	94	213	2,265957447	3,76	97,97655957	Very Easy

3	Benim Ailem (p.55)	36	122	275	2,254098361	3,388888889	99,42159836	Very Easy
3	Hasan'ın Evi (p.71)	22	120	285	2,375	5,454545455	89,17301136	Easy
4	Otobüs Durağında (p.79)	18	58	143	2,465517241	3,222222222	91,36284483	Very Easy
4	Hayat Ne Tatlı! (p.95)	44	208	565	2,716346154	4,727272727	77,35761145	Easy
4	Ülkelere Göre Hobiler (p.101)	12	88	249	2,829545455	7,333333333	66,00801136	Medium Difficulty
5	Türkiye'den Mektup Var! (p.113)	9	62	193	3,112903226	6,888888889	55,7841129	Medium Difficulty
5	Makafui'nin Sevinci (p.114)	21	76	208	2,736842105	3,619047619	79,42665414	Easy
5 5	Makafui ve Wambua Türkiye'yi Öğreniyor (p.123)	33	159	424	2,666666667	4,818181818	79,11621212	Easy
5	Türkiye'yi Tanıyalım (p.126)	21	133	386	2,902255639	6,333333333	65,6968797	Medium Difficulty
6	Makafui Havalanında (p.137)	19	79	231	2,924050633	4,157894737	70,49916056	Easy
6	Makafui Pasaport Kontrol Sırasında (p.138)	15	44	121	2,75	2,933333333	80,68775	Easy
6	Amir Makafui'yi Karşılıyor (p.139)	20	88	208	2,363636364	4,4	92,38190909	Very Easy
6	Yurtta Akşam Yemeği (p.145)	20	109	263	2,412844037	5,45	87,66449083	Easy
6	Lokantada (p.150)	31	144	334	2,319444444	4,64516129	93,51744848	Very Easy
7	Yurtta Gece Vakti (p.158)	17	104	233	2,240384615	6,117647059	92,85048925	Very Easy
7	Amir 112 Acil Servisini Arıyor (p.159)	13	74	187	2,527027027	5,692307692	82,44476611	Easy

7	Makafui Acil Serviste (p.160)	51	295	683	2,315254237	5,784313725	90,71260219	Very Easy
7	Makafui'nin Türkiye Günleri (p.169)	35	190	466	2,452631579	5,428571429	86,12195489	Easy
7	Kantinde (p.170)	19	127	279	2,196850394	6,684210526	93,12074596	Very Easy
7	Hafta Sonu Planı (p.171)	36	223	558	2,502242152	6,194444444	82,12992152	Easy
8	Belgrad Ormanı Hazırlıkları (p.178)	44	259	604	2,332046332	5,886363636	89,77162952	Easy
8	Manavda (p.182)	79	412	896	2,174757282	5,215189873	97,84248064	Very Easy
8	Alışverişe Çıkıyoruz (p.193)	15	64	166	2,59375	4,266666667	83,48509375	Easy
8	Dört Arkadaş Salı Pazarı'nda (p.195)	62	315	758	2,406349206	5,080645161	88,88943676	Easy
Average		26,34482759	129,4827586	317,2758621	2,51698107	4,714911522	85,39936642	

When the Journey to Turkish A1 textbook is examined, it is seen that it consists of 8 units and 30 reading texts. The number of sentences in the reading texts in the book varies between 9 and 79 and the average number of sentences of the texts is 26,34482759. Word counts range from 16 to 412 and the average word count of the texts is 129,4827586. The number of syllables varies between 41 and 896 and the average number of syllables of the texts is 317,2758621. The average word length of the reading texts in the book ranges from 2.174757282 to 3.112903226 and the average word length of the texts is 2,51698107. The average sentence length of the texts varies between 1.777777778 and 7.333333333, and the average sentence length

of the texts is 4.714911522. The readability scores of the texts in the book range from 55.7841129 to 98.44030229, and the average readability score of the texts is 85.39936642. Considering the readability levels of the texts, 12 texts are very easy, 15 texts are easy, and 3 texts are medium difficulty. According to the findings, the most readable text in the book is "Good Morning" in Unit 1, and the most difficult text to read is "There is a Letter from Turkey!" in Unit 5. When the texts in the book are examined, it is seen that there is no order based on the difficulty levels. The ordering of the texts was carried out randomly.

The data on the results obtained regarding the readability levels of the texts in the Turkish Journey to Turkish A2 textbook is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: The Readability of the Texts in the A2 Textbook of Journey to Turkish**

Unit	Text Name	Total Number of Sentence Number	Total Number of Words	Total Number of Syllables	Average Word Length	Average Sentence Length	Readability Score	Readability Level
1	Makafui'nin İstanbul Günlüğü (p.10)	46	217	560	2,580645161	4,717391304	82,83518934	Easy
1	Hamza'nın Cevabı (p.14)	45	232	580	2,5	5,155555556	84,9315	Easy
1	Makafui'nin Haftalık Planı (p.20)	42	190	501	2,636842105	4,523809524	81,08272556	Easy
1	İstanbul'a Gidiyoruz (p.21)	23	110	295	2,681818182	4,782608696	78,60034585	Easy
2	Eğitim İçin Türkiye'ye Geliyorlar (p.28)	31	217	598	2,755760369	7	69,84232719	Medium Difficulty
2	Makafui'yle Röportaj (s.31)	75	377	1039	2,75596817	5,026666667	74,98437878	Easy
2	Sosyal Medya (p.37)	27	243	657	2,703703704	9	66,7137037	Medium Difficulty
2	Facebook'un Tarihi (p.41)	17	131	365	2,786259542	7,705882353	66,77466996	Medium Difficulty
3	Kiralık Ev Arıyoruz I (p.48)	27	125	283	2,264	4,62962963	95,78546667	Very Easy
3	Kiralık Ev Arıyoruz II (p.51)	41	180	404	2,244444444	4,390243902	97,19590786	Very Easy
3	Ege'nin Cenneti: Fethiye (p.57)	27	124	309	2,491935484	4,592592593	86,72482527	Easy
3	Dopdolu Bir Hafta (p.60)	31	150	381	2,54	4,838709677	84,15146774	Easy
4	Akıllı Telefonların Hayatımıza Etkisi (p.68)	34	240	647	2,695833333	7,058823529	72,09636642	Easy
4	Telefonda (p.69)	48	216	600	2,777777778	4,5	75,48277778	Easy
4	Tekno-Gündem II (p.77)	28	200	590	2,95	7,142857143	61,66589286	Medium Difficulty

4	İnernetten Düğün Alışverişi (p.80)	37	168	382	2,273809524	4,540540541	95,62389157	Very Easy
5	Nasrettin Hocayla Röportaj (p.92)	74	502	1203	2,396414343	6,783783784	84,84337811	Easy
5	Nasrettin Hoca Uzmanı Japon Araştırmacı Mitsuko Kojima (p.94)	33	267	737	2,760299625	8,090909091	66,81268982	Medium Difficulty
5	Açıl Sofram Açıl! (p.104)	66	449	1000	2,227171492	6,803030303	91,59247621	Very Easy
5	Tuz Kadar (s.106)	51	351	819	2,333333333	6,882352941	87,12039216	Easy
5	Masal Zamanı (p.108)	28	139	317	2,28057554	4,964285714	94,24609198	Very Easy
6	Frikik Ustası Hakan Çalhanoğlu (p.116)	16	121	321	2,652892562	7,5625	72,50691632	Easy
6	Semih Saygıner (p.117)	19	137	357	2,605839416	7,210526316	75,31592778	Easy
6	Cüneyt Arkın (p.119)	27	184	507	2,755434783	6,814814815	70,33874094	Easy
6	Bazı Kişilik Tipleri ve Özellikleri (p.127)	29	135	372	2,755555556	4,655172414	75,97055556	Easy
6	Mesleğimizi Seçiyoruz (p.128)	35	204	549	2,691176471	5,828571429	75,49441387	Easy
6	Renklerin Anlamları (p.129)	46	320	886	2,76875	6,956521739	69,43394701	Medium Difficulty
7	Yemek Daveti (p.136)	39	186	406	2,182795699	4,769230769	98,68349049	Very Easy
7	Ekmek Nimettir (p.137)	30	169	445	2,633136095	5,633333333	78,3357574	Easy
7	İstanbul Mutfak Günleri (p.145)	49	233	557	2,39055794	4,755102041	90,37351844	Very Easy
7	Michelin Yıldızları (p.146)	16	163	473	2,901840491	10,1875	55,65418328	Medium Difficulty

8	En Çok Mutlu Eden 10 Meslek (p.152)	51	281	687	2,444839858	5,509803922	86,22297048	Easy
8	Geleceğin İçin 3 Önemli Soru (p.154)	20	145	424	2,924137931	7,25	62,42525862	Medium Difficulty
8	Başvuru Bilgisi (p.162)	35	224	583	2,602678571	6,4	77,55838839	Easy
8	Öz Geçmiş Hazırlama (p.164)	37	192	472	2,458333333	5,189189189	86,51767455	Easy
Average		36,57142857	214,9142857	551,6	2,582987452	6,05291254	79,2553773	

When the Journey to Turkish A2 textbook is examined, it is seen that it consists of 8 units and 35 reading texts. The number of sentences in the reading texts in the book varies between 16 and 75, and the average number of sentences of the texts is 36,57142857. The number of words varies between 110 and 502 and the average word count of the texts is 214,9142857. The number of syllables varies between 283 and 1203 and the average number of syllables of the texts is 551,6. The average word length of the reading texts in the book ranges from 2.182795699 to 2.95, and the average word length of the texts is 2,582987452. The average sentence length of the texts varies between 4.390243902 and 8.090909091, and the average sentence length of the texts is 6.05291254. The readability scores of the texts in the book vary between 55.65418328 and 98.68349049, and the average readability score of the texts is 79.25537737. Considering the readability levels of the texts, 7 texts are very easy, 20 texts are easy, and 8 texts are medium difficulty. According to the findings, the text with the highest readability in the book is “Dinner Invitation” in Unit 7. The most difficult text to read is “Michelin Stars” in Unit 7. When the texts in the book are examined, it is seen that there is no order based on the difficulty levels. The ordering of the texts was carried out randomly.

Table 4 shows the comparison of the results obtained regarding the readability levels of the reading texts in the Journey to Turkish A1 and Journey to Turkish A2 textbooks.

**Table 4: The Comparison of Textbooks Journey to Turkish A1 and Journey to Turkish A2 in terms of Readability Levels**

Readability Level	Journey to Turkish A1	Journey to Turkish A2
Very Easy	12	7
Easy	15	20
Medium Difficult	3	8
Difficult	-	-
Very Difficult	-	-
<b>Total</b>	30	35

Journey to Turkish A1 and Journey to Turkish A2 textbooks both consist of 8 units. There are 30 reading texts in Journey to Turkish A1 and 35 reading texts in Journey to Turkish A2. As a readability level, it is seen that there are more very easy texts in Journey to Turkish A1. It is seen that there are more easy texts in Journey to Turkish A2 and there are no difficult and medium difficulty texts in both textbooks.

**Table 5: The Comparison of Textbooks Journey to Turkish A1 and Journey to Turkish A2 in terms of Readability Levels**

	Journey to Turkish A1	Journey to Turkish A2
Average Word Length Range	2,174757282 - 3,112903226	2,182795699 - 2,95
Average Word Length	2,51698107	2,582987452
Average Sentence Length Range	1,777777778 - 7,333333333	4,390243902 - 8,090909091
Average Sentence Length	4,714911522	6,05291254
Average Readability Score Range	55,7841129 - 98,44030229	55,65418328 ile 98,68349049
Average Readability Score	85,39936642	79,25537737

The average word length of the reading texts in the Turkish Journey to Turkish A1 textbook varies between 2.174757282 and 3.112903226, and the average number of words is 2,51698107. The average word length of the reading texts in the Turkish Journey to Turkish A2 textbook varies between 2.182795699 and 2.95, and the average number of words is 2,582987452. According to the data obtained, it was found that the Turkish Journey A2 textbook had longer words in terms of average word length, Journey to Turkish A1 textbook, on the other hand, is seen to consist of words in wider ranges.

The average sentence length of the reading texts in the Turkish Journey to Turkish A1 textbook varies between 1.777777778 and 7.333333333, and the average sentence length is 4.714911522. The average sentence length of the reading texts in the Turkish Journey to Turkish A2 textbook varies between 4.390243902 and 8.090909091, and the average sentence length is 6.05291254. According to the data obtained, Turkish Journey A2 textbook has longer sentences in terms of average sentence length, and Journey to Turkish A1 course book is seen to consist of sentences in wider ranges.

When the reading texts in both textbooks are examined in terms of readability level scores, it is seen that the readability scores of the reading texts in the Turkish Voyage A1 textbook vary between 55.7841129 and 98.44030229, and the average readability score of the texts is 85.39936642. It is seen that the readability scores of the reading texts vary between 55,65418328 and 98,68349049 and the average readability score of the texts is 79,25537737. According to these findings, it is seen that the readability score ranges of the reading texts in the Turkish Journey A1 and Turkish Journey A2

textbooks are similar, but the average readability score of the Turkish Journey A1 textbook is higher.

### Conclusion and Suggestions

Although there are formulas for measuring the readability of reading texts, these formulas do not provide precise and clear information about the readability levels of these formulas. However, it is very important in terms of getting an idea about the readability of reading texts. In this study, the readability levels of the reading texts in the course book Journey to Turkish A1 and Journey to Turkish A2 were determined. According to the results obtained, it was determined that the reading texts in both textbooks were not ordered according to their readability levels and had an appropriate readability level according to the students' levels.

It has been determined that 12 of the 30 reading texts in the Journey to Turkish A1 textbook are very easy, and 7 of the 35 reading texts in the Journey to Turkish textbook A2 are very easy. It can be said that these results are suitable for A1 and A2 levels. In addition, there are no difficult or very difficult level texts in both books. It can be argued that this is due to the fact that A1 and A2 level textbooks are simpler and beginner level in Turkish teaching. In both books, it is seen that the reading texts do not progress in an order from easy to difficult. Especially in the books prepared for teaching Turkish, following an order from easy to difficult is very important in terms of reaching the target more accurately in Turkish teaching. In this respect, the fact that both books do not observe this order can be claimed as a deficiency.

Although the average word length range of the reading texts in both books is close to each other, it has been determined that the word length range in Turkish Journey A2 (2,182795699 to 2,95) is

closer than the word length range in Turkish Journey A1 (2,174757282 to 3,112903226) . In addition, it was determined that the average sentence length range of the reading texts in Journey to Turkish A1 (1.777777778 to 7.333333333) and the average sentence length interval of Journey to Turkish A2 (4,390243902 to 8.090909091) were far from each other.

When the readability score range of both books was examined , Journey to Turkish A1 was 55.7841129 to 98.44030229 and Journey to Turkish A2 was determined to be between 55,65418328 and 98,68349049. According to these results, it was determined that the readability score ranges of the reading texts in the Turkish Journey A1 and Turkish Journey A2 textbooks were similar, but the average readability score of the Turkish Journey A1 textbook was higher.

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions can be made:

- In the textbooks prepared for the purpose of teaching Turkish, the reading texts should be listed according to their readability levels. When such a ranking is made, it is important that students do not have a negative perception in terms of learning Turkish and that it provides a more systematic progress in Turkish teaching. In this respect, it is very important to order the reading texts according to the level.
- The syllable, word and sentence lengths of the reading texts in the Turkish teaching course books should be handled in detail according to each level and included in the book accordingly. In this respect, it can be argued that it would be beneficial to increase the number of syllables, words and sentences of each text to a certain extent compared to the previous text.
- Considering the readability levels of the reading texts in the textbooks prepared for Turkish teaching, it can be ensured that the textbooks are more differentiated according to the education level.

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