



## Investigation of the objectives in the Turkish course curriculum in terms of including critical thinking skills\*\*

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### Abstract

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the objectives in the Turkish Course curriculum in terms of including critical thinking skills. The study was conducted by using the basic qualitative design. The document analysis method was employed to collect data. The data were analyzed through the content analysis technique. The document examined within the context of the current study was the Turkish Course curriculum (1-8 grades) updated by the Board of Education and Discipline in 2019. In the current study, a total of 289 objectives addressed under the headings of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades were focused on. In the analysis of the collected data, “The Form of Classification of Learning Objectives in terms of Category and Level” developed by Yeşilpınar-Uyar, Tunca and Alkın-Şahin (2017) and “The Rubric for Evaluating the Critical Thinking Skill Level of Learning Objectives” were used. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the learning objectives of the Turkish course curriculum are intensified in the cognitive domain while the number of learning objectives from affective and psychomotor domains is relatively lower and that the level of inclusion of critical thinking skills in the objectives is medium or lower. In light of the findings of the current study, it can be suggested that regulations can be made in objectives to include more objectives from affective and psychomotor domains and to put greater emphasis on critical thinking skills.

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*Keywords:* Curriculum, Turkish course curriculum, critical thinking, learning objectives.

## 1. Introduction

Individuals encounter many situations and events throughout their lives. They also need to use many cognitive processes such as making decisions, preferring, choosing, justifying, discussing, explaining, making suggestions in the face of events and situations. In order to develop an effective lifestyle (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2000), to be open to lifelong learning and to achieve high quality of life (Fisher, 2005), it is important for individuals to form a thinking systematic. Therefore, thinking skills have an important place in all education programs. The purpose of thinking skills training is to enable the individual to adapt to life, to be aware of changes and to control strategies that will help him/her develop himself/herself, rather than providing information (Fisher, 2005).

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Critical thinking has also gained importance in educational studies on thinking skills, which are quite comprehensive, and it has been emphasized that critical thinking should be included in educational environments (Dewey, 1993; Murray & Graham, 1996). There is no single agreed definition of the concept of critical thinking. Although it is considered as a critical thinking skill in curricula, it has been determined that the meaning attributed to critical thinking is diversified within the framework of perspectives based on different theories (Şahinel, 2002), and the concept of critical thinking is defined depending on cultural knowledge, thinking skills, tendencies and habits (Alkın, 2012).

### *1.1. Literature review*

Critical thinking includes a wide, comprehensive and multifaceted process that starts with defining a problem or situation and extends to finding solutions. For this reason, definitions focusing on different features of the critical thinking process have been made. Bloom (1956) associated critical thinking with higher-order thinking skills that facilitate logical reasoning (As cited in Jeevanantham, 2005). While Norris (1985) defines critical thinking as “students' application of all previous knowledge on a particular subject and evaluation of the change of their thinking skills and behaviours”, Facione and Facione (1997) emphasize that critical thinking, which they define as a purposeful thinking process, is a collaborative but non-competitive effort. Emphasizing the need to determine different aspects of critical thinking from other ways of thinking, Huitt (1998) defines critical thinking as “the disciplined mental activity of evaluating arguments or propositions, making decisions that can guide the development of beliefs and trigger action. Although defined in different ways by many field experts from philosophy to education, there is an important consensus among experts that critical thinking includes the skills of applying, analyzing and evaluating information (Ruminski & Hanks, 1995). When the definitions are examined, it is seen that critical thinking is defined as the process of reasoning and problem solving based on evidence and criteria (Ennis, 1985, Facione & Facione, 1997; Jeevanantham, 2005, Lai 2011) and this process includes the acquisition of cognitive skills such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, inference, and self-regulation (Facione, 1990; Halpern, 2003; Jonassen, 2000; Paul, 1995) and tendencies such as seeking clarity, reason-evidence, relationship, truth, questioning the reliability of the information, analysing a situation as a whole, being open-minded, systematic, tolerant and impartial (APA, 1990 as cited in Facione & Facione, 1997; Eggen, 2006; Ennis, 1985; Facione, 1990). Critical thinking positively affects the interpretation and evaluation of interpersonal intelligence, knowledge, relationships and experiences in the personal and social life of the individual. It helps solve problems and think ahead. Critical thinking skills and abilities are essential for the free, rational and autonomous mind (Paul, Binkler, Jensen & Kreklau 1990: p. 163). Therefore, critical thinking skills can be regarded as “a liberating power in education and a powerful resource in a person's life” ( Facione et al., 1995: p. 2 )

Training critical thinking individuals has taken its place among the main objectives of education from past to present. For this reason, it is important to know what characteristics critical thinking individuals should have as well as what critical thinking is. According to Şahinel, (2002), an individual thinking critically is expected to use critical thinking skills, adopt the tendency to be a critical thinker, and have critical thinking habits. Curriculums can also play an important role in the process required for the acquisition of these skills, tendencies and habits.

According to Huitt (1998), students gain better critical thinking skills when they associate them with a subject area. Although students learn what these skills are in direct critical thinking training, they may not be able to acquire critical thinking skills. Knowledge will not turn into a skill in an environment where teachers think instead of students. He also states that even if students gain critical thinking skills, they may lose these skills if they do not use them, so curriculums at all levels should be prepared in a way that will guide students to use critical thinking skills by taking into account the elements of critical thinking.

Curriculums are programs that organize teaching activities that cover preparation for learning-teaching, learning-teaching process activities and evaluation in education. There are objectives as a guide on these activities in curriculums. According to the Learning Objectives Guideline, “what students need to know, be able to do and understand at the end of a program or a learning process are expressed as learning objectives”. In other words, learning outcomes are “the knowledge, skills and competencies that an individual should possess after the completion of any learning process” (ÖKR, 2020: 4-5). Before the adoption of the constructivist learning approach, the terms "goal and behaviour" were used but after 2005, the term "objective" has been used in curriculums. The reason for the use of different terms to mean the same thing is due to the approaches taken as a basis while preparing curriculums. When considered in terms of their place in curriculums, objectives can be defined as micro-units that describe the needs, goals, principles and areas of teaching, that include characteristics that make it possible to plan, conduct and evaluate instructional processes (King & Evans, 1991, Malan, 2000) and that have the characteristics features of the learning objectives (Ayvaci, Alan, Yıldız, 2014). As objectives are used to achieve the targets of a curriculum, the quality of the objectives is directly proportional to the quality of the curriculum. In order for education to progress in accordance with national and international standards, the objectives in the curriculum should be developed in the context of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are aimed to be imparted to students (Baykal, 2017). Given that critical thinking is among the common compulsory skills aimed to be inculcated in students by curriculums, it is expected that the objectives in the curriculums will contribute to the development of critical thinking skills and dispositions.

Inclusion of thinking skills in curriculums is one of the most important attempts to train thinking individuals. There is information about these skills in the curriculums of many courses. Although curriculums have been updated over the years, thinking skills have always been emphasized in Turkish course curriculums. The development of thinking skills has always been mentioned generally in the general objectives sections of the 1926 First School Turkish Course Curriculum (1-5), the 1930 First School Turkish Course Curriculum (1–5), the 1981 Basic Education Schools Turkish Course Curriculum (6-8), the 2005 Elementary Education Turkish Course Curriculum (1-5), the 2006 Elementary Education Turkish Course Curriculum (6-8), the 2015 Turkish Course Curriculum (1-8) and the 2017 Turkish Course Curriculum (1-8). The statements about critical thinking skills were first included in the 1981 Basic Education Schools Turkish Course Curriculum (6-8). Then, in the renewed curriculums especially with the adoption of the constructivist approach as the educational philosophy in 2005, eight common skills called “critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, research-inquiry, problem solving, using information technologies, entrepreneurship and proper, effective and beautiful use of Turkish” were incorporated into the curriculums and moreover, objectives and activities related to these skills were also included in the curriculums (MEB, 2006). According to the 2019 Turkish Course Curriculum, students are expected to “produce information and use it functionally in life, solve problems, think critically, to be enterprising and decisive, to show empathy and to contribute to the society and culture”. The objectives, outcomes and measurement and evaluation approaches of the curriculum were shaped in this line.

When the recent research on Turkish Course Curriculum and critical thinking are examined, it is seen that the objectives of the 2018 Turkish Course Curriculum are evaluated according to higher-order thinking skills (Söylemez, 2018; Ünveren Kapanadze, 2019) and the revised Bloom taxonomy (Çerçi, 2018; Büyükalın Filiz, Yıldırım, 2019). In the study conducted by Söylemez (2018), all of the listening, speaking, reading and writing objectives for the 4th-8th grades of the 2018 Turkish Course Curriculum were examined according to higher-order thinking skills. In the study, in which critical thinking, reflective thinking and problem solving were determined as higher-order thinking skills, the collected data were descriptively analyzed by the researcher and a field expert. A similar study was carried out by

Ünveren Kapadza (2019). In the study aiming to evaluate the objectives according to higher-order thinking skills, the objectives belonging to the 1st-8th grades of the 2018 Turkish Course Curriculum were classified across critical thinking, creative thinking, reflective thinking, analytic thinking, metacognitive thinking and lateral thinking skills. Çerçi (2018) attempted to determine the distribution of 285 objectives belonging to the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades in the 2018 Turkish Course Curriculum according to the cognitive dimensions of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. Four objectives were not included in the study as they were found to be in the affective domain. In a similar study, Büyükalın Filiz and Yıldırım (2019) examined 289 objectives belonging to the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades in the 2018 Turkish Course Curriculum. In the study, 20 of the objectives were found to be in the psychomotor domain and excluded from the study data. A total of 269 objectives found to be in the listening/watching, speaking, reading and writing learning areas of the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades were classified according to the revised taxonomy. Yet, no study in which objectives were classified and analyzed according to the features to be possessed by critical thinking skill in a certain systematic has been encountered.

Gündoğdu (2009) states that because of the fact that each researcher and discipline put their own area of interest into the centre, the mistake of seeing the term “critical thinking” identical to other terms such as creative thinking, methodical thinking, rational thinking, logical thinking, making judgment or problem solving has been made in the literature. Although critical thinking is among the higher-order thinking skills, it has its own characteristics. It is also stated that this process, which includes different knowledge, skills, attitudes and tendencies in its structure, is a complex thinking process that is difficult to research and define (Abrami et al., 2008, as cited in Alkın, 2012). This shows that acquisition of critical thinking skill and determining the basic indicators of its acquisition is also a complex and multidimensional process. It is seen that in two of the studies conducted, the objectives in the curriculum were thematically classified according to higher order thinking skills determined without classification, and in two other studies, they were just cognitively classified. In the current study, the objectives in the 2019 Turkish Course Curriculum were classified into categories and analyzed in-depth in terms of their level of critical thinking skills.

There are many variables that affect the development of critical thinking skills in individuals. Among these variables, the school has a very important place in terms of its being planned and programmed and freeing the development of critical thinking skills from randomness (Alkın- Şahin and Tunca, 2015). Researchers often acknowledge that critical thinking is different from the “common sense” knowledge we acquire through daily experiences and that the knowledge and skills necessary to think critically require expertise and systematicity (Paul, 1995; Young & Lambert, 2014; Tan, Koh, Lee, Ponnusamy & Tan, 2017).

## 1.2. Research questions

As the curriculum includes a systematic and planned process, is implemented throughout the country and guides all the elements of the educational and instructional process, in the current study, it is aimed to investigate the objectives in the Turkish course curriculum in terms of the extent to which they include critical thinking. To this end, answers to the following questions were sought.

- What is the distribution of the 5th-8th grade objectives in the Turkish course curriculum according to categories and levels?
- What is the extent to which the 5th-8th grade objectives in the Turkish course curriculum include critical thinking skills?

The results obtained in the current study are important in terms of evaluating the current state of the structural features of learning objectives in a systematic and multi-dimensional structure. The current study is considered to be important in terms of providing a dynamic understanding to curriculum

development studies and it is thought that significant contributions will be made to the continuous improvement of the Turkish course curriculum through the results obtained from the study.

## 2. Method

The basic qualitative pattern (Merriam, 2009), one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the current study. The study does not employ a phenomenological design, embedded theory, narrative analysis, or ethnographic design or it does not aim to produce a theory or to describe the state of a system with certain limits. The primary purpose of this design, which enables the researcher to conduct qualitative research with an interpretative approach, is to reveal and interpret meanings. This design is one of the most preferred qualitative research designs in the field of education (Merriam, 2009). In the current study, the basic qualitative design was preferred, as the study focused on the categorization of the objectives in the Turkish course curriculum and determination of the extent to which these objectives include critical thinking skills.

### 2.1. Sample

The documents analyzed in the current study are comprised of the Turkish course curriculum (1st-8th grades), which was renewed in 2017 and updated in 2019 by the Board of Education. As it was aimed to conduct a holistic and comparative analysis of the objectives in relation to critical thinking skills, the objectives addressed under the headings of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades, which are called the second level, were analyzed.

### 2.2. Instrument(s)

In line with the purpose of the current study, after taking the required permissions, the Form of Classification of Learning Objectives in terms of Category and Level and the Rubric of Evaluating the Critical Thinking Level of Learning Objectives prepared by Yeşilpınar-Uyar, Tunca and Alkın- Şahin (2017) were used. In the Form of Classification Learning Objectives in terms of Category and Level, the categories to be used in the classification of learning objectives are given. In the determination of the categories to form the basis of analysis, the structure proposed by Anderson et al. (2001) and Posner and Rudnitsky (2006) for the classification of objectives according to their categories and levels was taken into consideration. Thus, the classification form is comprised of the categories of “cognitive understanding, affective understanding, cognitive skill, affective skill and psychomotor-perceptive skill”.

Another tool used in the analysis of the data is the Rubric of Evaluating the Critical Thinking Level of Learning Objectives. In the preparation process of the rubric, 11 basic skills were determined considering the interest in critical thinking skills. These skills are; “application of information, analysis of information, synthesis of information, evaluation of information, reconstruction of information, making sense of information, explaining reasoning process, making inference, recognizing assumptions, researching and self-regulation-reflection”. In the analysis process, each learning objective was scored in terms of having the above-mentioned skills as follows: inadequate (1), partially adequate (2), moderately adequate (3), quite adequate (4) and adequate (5) and the extent to which a learning objective includes critical thinking skill was evaluated according to the following score intervals.

- 11-19: Inadequate
- 20-28: Partially adequate
- 29-37: Moderately adequate
- 38-46: Quite adequate

- 47-55: Adequate

### 2.3. Data collection and analysis

In the collection of the data, the document analysis method was employed. In this connection, a total of 69 objectives aimed to be imparted to fifth-graders, 68 objectives aimed to be imparted to sixth graders, 76 objectives aimed to be imparted to seventh graders and 76 objectives aimed to be imparted to eighth graders were taken into the scope of the current study. Thus, a total of 289 objectives were subjected to preliminary analysis in terms of structural features and their inclusion of more than one act was evaluated. Explanation statements under the objectives were removed yet all the objectives were found to be suitable for the classification form making up the first stage of the study.

The data analysis process in which the related form and measurement tool were used was performed in two stages. In the first stage, the learning objectives in the curriculum were analyzed in compliance with the classification form in terms of category and level. The classification form is exemplified in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Sample of the Classification Form Used in the Analysis Process

Learning objectives	Cognitive Understanding	Cognitive Skill	Affective Understanding	Affective Skill	Psychomotor Perceptive Skill
T.5.1.1. Makes predictions about the development and end of the events occurring in what has been listened to/watched.	x				
T.6.3.23. Produces different solutions to the problems addressed in the text.		x			
T.6.1.9. Understands the non-verbal messages of the speaker.			x		
T.8.4.17. Shares what he/she has written.				x	
T.5.1.8. Enacts narrative texts he/she has listened to/watched.					x

As a result of the analysis, the learning objectives at the levels of affective understanding, cognitive skill and affective skill were selected for the second stage to be evaluated in terms of including critical thinking. The learning objectives in these categories and levels were analyzed in terms of the extent to which they include critical thinking skills.

Sample of the analysis conducted to evaluate the level of critical thinking skills is given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Sample of the Analysis Conducted to Evaluate the Level of Critical Thinking Skills

Learning Objective	Application of Information	Analysis of Information	Synthesis of Information	Evaluation of Information	Reconstruction of Information	Making Sense of Information	Explaining Reasoning Process	Making Inference	Recognising Assumptions	Researching	Self-regulation-Reflection	Total	Interpretation
T.7.3.22. Interprets the content of the text.	5	5	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	49	Adequate

In order to enhance the reliability of the current study, inter-coder reliability (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008) was used. In this context, the categories and critical thinking levels of the learning objectives were analyzed separately by the researcher, a field expert and two curriculum development experts and the consistency of the obtained results was compared. As a result of the evaluations, it was decided to exclude the objectives “T.5.3.19. /Answers the questions related to the text. T.6.3.17./ T.7.3.19/ T.8.3.14. Answers the questions related to the text” as they could be included into a certain category. By working on the categories on which there were disagreements, agreements were reached on them (p: 91%) and the data analysis process was completed.

### 3. Results

In this section, findings related to the distribution of the objectives in the Turkish course curriculum according to their categories and levels are given. Then, the findings related to the extent to which the learning objectives in the curriculum include critical thinking skills are presented.

#### 3.1. Distribution of the Objectives in the Turkish Course Curriculum according to their Categories and Levels

The distribution of the objectives of the 5th-8th grades in the Turkish course curriculum according to their categories and levels is shown in Table 3.

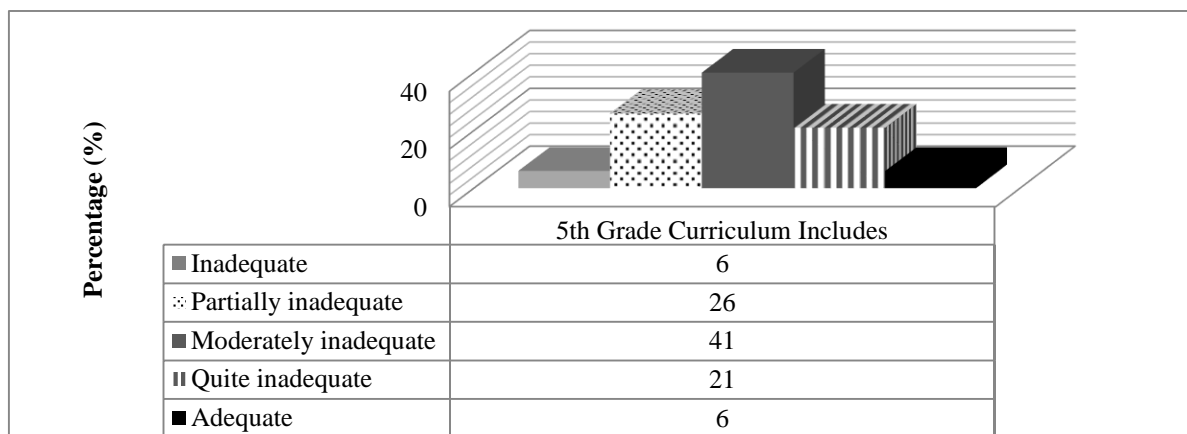
**Table 3.** Distribution of the Learning Objectives in the Turkish Course Curriculum according to their Categories and Grade Levels

Categories	Grade Level				Total	The Number of the Objectives Analysed in terms of the Extent to Which They Include Critical Thinking Skills
	5	6	7	8		
Cognitive Understanding	32	29	32	32	125	152
Cognitive Skill	32	34	39	38	143	
Affective Understanding	1	1	0	1	3	
Affective Skill	1	1	2	2	6	
Psychomotor-Perceptive Skill	2	2	2	2	8	
Total	68	67	75	75	285	

The great majority of the 285 objectives analyzed are seen to be in the categories of cognitive understanding and cognitive skill. Of the objectives, 125 are in the cognitive understanding category while 143 are in the cognitive skill category. While the smallest number of objectives is in the affective understanding category, there are 6 objectives in the affective skill category and 8 objectives in the psychomotor-perceptive skill category. One of the reasons for this accumulation in some certain categories is that many of the objectives are shared in all the grade levels. In the 2019 Turkish course curriculum, “repeated objectives and explanations are presented in a spiral manner in different subjects and grade levels” (p.3). For example, the learning objective “Understands the non-verbal messages of the speaker” which is in the affective understanding category is included in the curriculums of the 5th, 6th and 8th grades and as this objective is not in the 7th-grade curriculum, there is no objective in this category in the 7th grade.

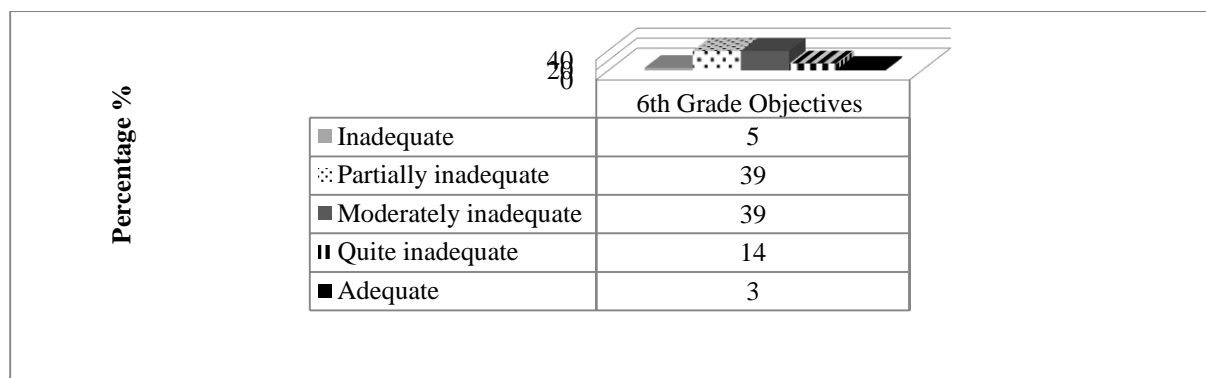
### 3.2. The Extent to Which the Objectives in the Turkish Course Curriculum Include Critical Thinking

After the classification of the objectives, a total of 152 objectives which are in the categories of cognitive skill, affective understanding and affective skill were analyzed in terms of the extent to which they include critical thinking separately for each grade level. The extent to which the objectives of the fifth-grade curriculum include critical thinking is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** The Extent to Which the Objectives in the 5th Grade Curriculum Includes Critical Thinking by Percentages

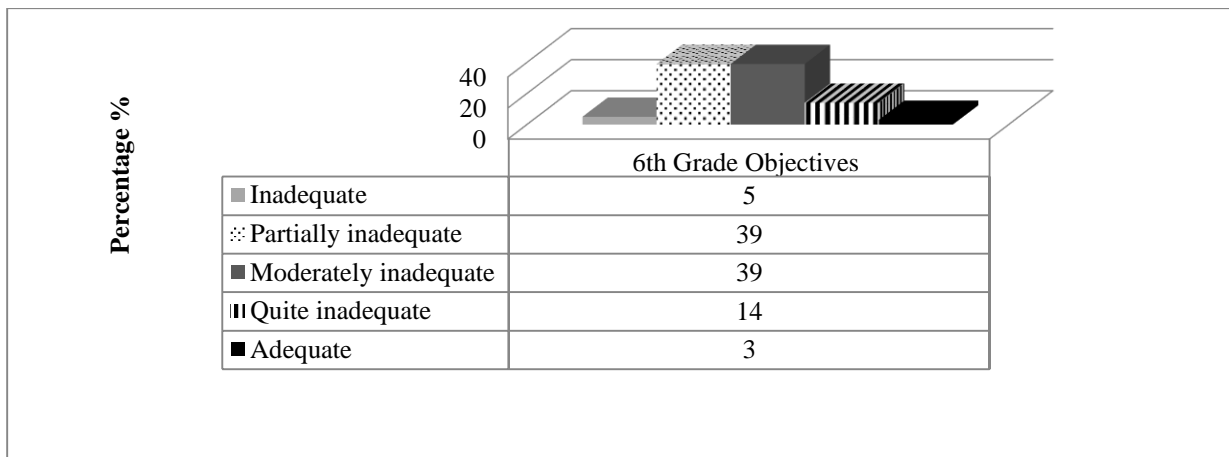
More than half of the objectives in the 5th-grade curriculum are seen to have moderate or lower adequacy in terms of including critical thinking skills. In this regard, 6% of the objectives were found to be inadequate, 26% partially adequate and 41% moderately adequate. While 21% of the objectives were found to be quite adequate, 6% were found to be adequate.



**Figure 2.** The Extent to Which the Objectives in the 6th Grade Curriculum Includes Critical Thinking by Percentages

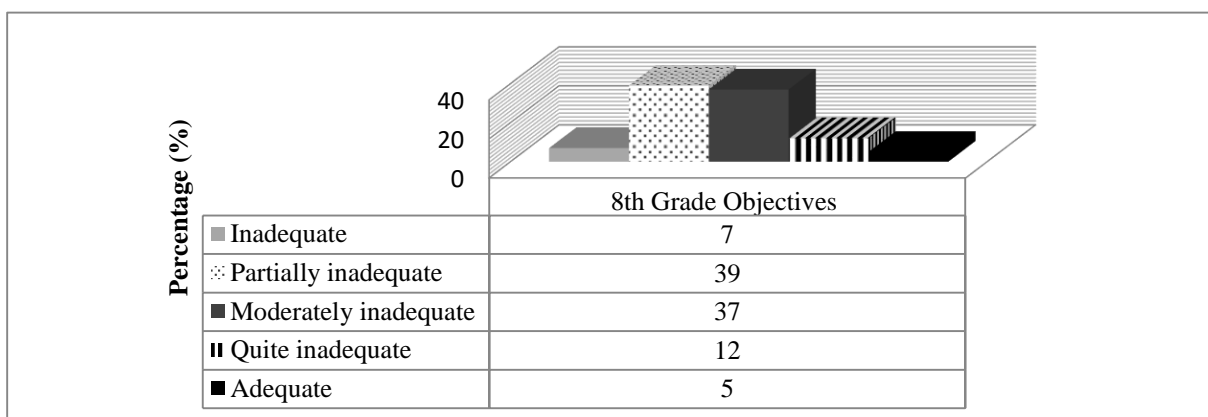
As can be seen in Figure 2, of the 6th-grade objectives, 39% were found to include critical thinking skill at the level of moderately adequate, 39% at the level of partially adequate, 14% at the level of quite adequate, 3% at the level of adequate and 5% of the objectives were found to be inadequate in terms of including critical thinking. When the results are generally evaluated, it is seen that the 6th-grade objectives are seen to have moderate or lower adequacy in terms of including critical thinking.





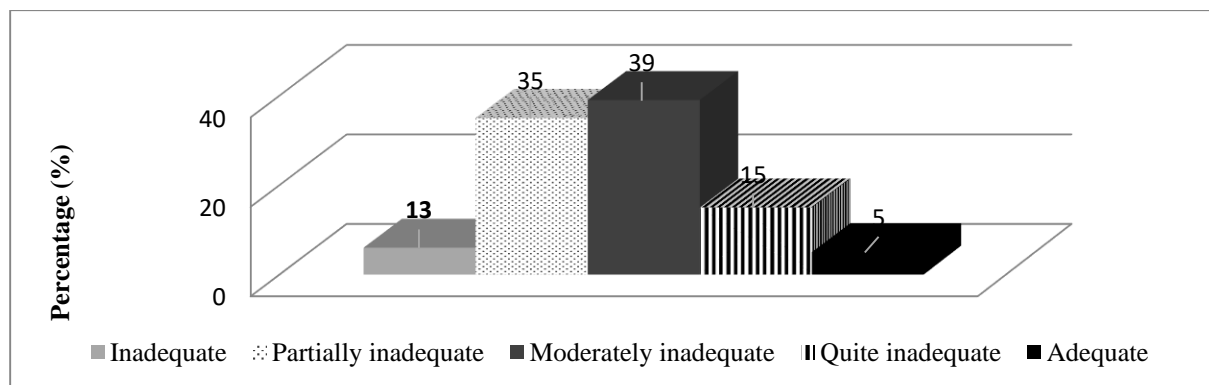
**Figure 3.** The Extent to Which the Objectives in the 7th Grade Curriculum Includes Critical Thinking by Percentages

When the seventh-grade objectives are evaluated in terms of the extent to which they include critical thinking, it is seen that 39% of them are moderately adequate, 34% partially adequate, 15% quite adequate and 5% adequate while 7% of them seem to be inadequate. When these results are generally evaluated, it is seen that the seventh-grade objectives have moderate or lower adequacy in terms of including critical thinking.



**Figure 4.** The Extent to Which the Objectives in the 8th Grade Curriculum Includes Critical Thinking by Percentages

When the eighth-grade objectives are examined, it is seen that the extent to which they include critical thinking skills is largely moderate and lower. In this regard, 39% of the objectives were found to be partially adequate, 37% moderately adequate, 12% quite adequate and 5% adequate while 7% of them were found to be inadequate.



**Figure 5.** The Extent to Which the Objectives in the Turkish Course Curriculum Include Critical Thinking

As can be seen in Figure 5, the objectives in the Turkish course curriculum seem to have moderate or lower adequacy in terms of the extent to which they include critical thinking skills. Of the 152 objectives analysed, 39% are moderately adequate, 35 are partially adequate, 20% are more than moderately adequate while 13% of the objectives are inadequate in terms of including critical thinking skills. The findings of the current study show that the objectives in the Turkish course 5th-8th grade curriculum are largely accumulated in the categories of cognitive understanding and cognitive skill and the extent to which they include critical thinking is medium in general.

#### 4. Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the objectives of the Turkish course curriculum in terms of the extent to which they include critical thinking skills. When the objectives in the Turkish course curriculum were examined in terms of categories and levels, it was determined that the objectives were largely accumulated in the cognitive domain. The number of the objectives from the affective and psychomotor-perceptive domains was found to be small in the 2019 Turkish course curriculum and the number of the objectives in the cognitive domain was found to be much larger. The findings reported in similar studies in the literature support this finding of the current study. Çerçi (2018) stated that just 4 of the 289 objectives in the Turkish course 5th-8th grade curriculum are in the affective domain while the remaining 285 objectives are in the cognitive domain. Büyükalan-Filiz ve Yıldırım (2019) investigated the 289 objectives in the curriculum according to the revised Bloom's taxonomy and they found that while 269 of them belong to the cognitive domain, 20 belong to the psychomotor domain. Cognition and affection are complementary and they cannot be developed independently in the learning process (Karaiger, Ford & Salas, 1993). Affection has some indicators in the cognitive domain. While cognition is activated, it is affected by the concept of affection and when this is staged, different stages emerge such as recognition, directing cognition and activating different cognitions. In this case, affection can be defined as a "power" (Bacanlı, 2006). While affective skills are very important in the development of cognitive skills, to effectively develop psychomotor skills and behaviours, affective and cognitive features should be well acquired. Gözütok (2011) stated that affective behaviours are as important as cognitive behaviours and sometimes even more important, but since it is more difficult to form an affective behaviour than a cognitive behaviour, it does not receive enough importance in teaching programs. However, affective behaviour such as enjoying learning will help cognitive behaviour to occur spontaneously. Studies seem to confirm these views. As a result of teaching processes with a focus on affective characteristics, students express themselves better (Bloom & Beckwith, 1989, Shechtman & Leichtentritt (2004), their level of awareness increases (Shechtman & Leichtentritt (2004), their attitudes towards the lesson change positively and their anxiety about achievement decreases (Kara, 2003; Tyler, 1973, Yakar & Duman, 2017) and the desire to learn increases (Carpenter & Morgan,

1999). In a meta-analysis study conducted on factors affecting academic achievement, Sarier (2016) determined the student-related factors and effect size values such as self-efficacy perception (0.506), student motivation (0.360), self-esteem (0.200) and study habits (0.138) are influential on academic achievement. School-related factors found to be effective in academic achievement are attitudes towards the lesson (0.304) and school culture (0.253). Thus, cognitive achievement seems to be affected by affective factors.

The affective domain is related to issues such as values education and character education, attitudes, recognition and expression of emotions, awareness of emotions and positively guiding them, which have become very important in today's education system. According to Nicholls (1989), the main goal of affective education is for every child to have a positive self-image and become self-motivated (as cited in Nucci & Lee, 1992). Wight (1971) classified the goals of affective education under four general headings. These are; Self consisted of sub-goals such as self-actualisation, self-regulation, personal values, skills; other people consisted of sub-goals such as familial and interpersonal communication and intercultural understanding; physical environment covering issues such as social and human sciences, understanding human success in arts, technological awareness in understanding and development and nature including the sub-goal of seeing the human as a part of nature. To train individuals who can keep up with the rapidly developing world, educational goals must also comply with these developments.

Although training good citizens or good people, which is one of the most important goals of education, is directly related to affective goals, according to Bacanlı, as we move from general goals to specific goals, cognitive goals begin to replace affective goals. As the reasons for this situation, following can be given: it is difficult to agree on affective objectives and reify them, it is believed that affective teaching will take a long time, there is a tendency to teach affective skills with traditional methods, it is difficult to evaluate them and the affective goals are individually flexible and they are out of the accepted conception of “achievement” (2006: 14-17). However, these reasons create a vicious circle and lead to the impossibility of compensating for affective learning. When the findings of the current study and research in the literature are taken into consideration, it is seen that more importance should be attached to affective objectives which play an important role in students' developing positive behaviours and attitudes towards learning and in the emergence and development of thinking skills. For this reason, it is thought that there is a need to make regulations to incorporate the features of the affective domain into the objectives of the Turkish course curriculum.

Similarly, it was concluded that few objectives are belonging to the psychomotor-perceptive domain in the Turkish course curriculum. In this domain, just 2 objectives were detected for each grade level in the curriculum. While psychomotor-perceptive skills focus on basic movements, perceptive skills, physical abilities, skill-based movements and non-discursive communication skills (Harrow, 1972), according to Simpson (1966), psychomotor skills consist of stages allowing the individual to turn the behaviours he/she is engaged in through observations and/or instructions into his/her own behaviours. According to Hill, Fadel & Bialik (2018), although psychomotor skills express how we use our muscles in general, basic physical activities are necessary to some extent and have a basic function in society. As the economy improves and technology advances, it will be seen that more complex psychomotor skills are in demand. Individuals with meta-motor skills, which refer to the conscious use of many motor skills in a coordinated and/or adapted manner, will be able to keep up with the concept of success in the 21st century. Psychomotor skills are of special importance in the effective use of expression skills, especially in the learning of speaking and writing. “While knowledge, skills and competencies are defined with learning objectives, the units and parts that make up the whole to be learned are considered as a whole in terms of content, level and duration. Seen from this perspective, learning objectives represent the most basic element in the determination of competence frameworks, professional standards, competences; in the design of curriculums; in the determination of methods and techniques;

in the measurement and evaluation of learning; in ensuring quality; in the recognition of previous learning and in equivalency processes” (ÖKR, 2020: 6). For this reason, arrangements can be made in the objectives of the Turkish course curriculum for students to acquire skills they will need while using Turkish.

As a result of the current study, the objectives in the Turkish course curriculum were found to have moderate or lower adequacy in terms of including critical thinking skills. In the study conducted by Çerçi (2018), more than half of 285 objectives (53.33%) are in the domain of operational knowledge while 45.33% of them are in the domain of conceptual knowledge. While the rate of phenomenal knowledge is just 1.33%, no objective can be included in the domain of metacognitive knowledge. When the objectives were examined in terms of the dimension of the cognitive process, a significant part of them was found to be in the comprehension stage (34.74%) and application stage (28.42%). The rate of the objectives in the stages of analysis, evaluation and creation which require higher-order thinking skills was found to be 36.84%. These findings concur with the finding of the current study. Similarly, in the classification made by Büyükalan- Filiz and Yıldırım, just 0.74% of 269 objectives were found to be in the metacognitive knowledge stages. This finding can be interpreted as the great majority of the objectives in the 5th-8th grades are in the lower level knowledge stages. Söylemez (2018) concluded that a considerable place is allocated to critical thinking skills in the objectives related to listening and reading skills while a very small place is allocated to these skills in the objectives related to speaking and writing skills. In the study conducted by Yeşilpınar (2011) on elementary school teachers and pre-service teachers, it was found that the majority of the elementary school teachers think that activities should be conducted to teach critical thinking skills in curriculums and that they experience difficulties stemming from the curriculum, environment and family in the implementation of these activities. Yang (2012) conducted classroom applications on critical thinking with the participation of 7th and 8th-grade students. As a result, it was concluded that the students’ critical thinking skills improved. Eğmir (2016) developed a skill-based critical thinking teaching program and applied this program to 5th graders and found that the critical thinking skills of the experimental group students developed significantly more.

While the inclusion of critical thinking skills in curriculums provides guidance for teachers, the application of these curriculums affects students' critical thinking skills positively. “Although the goals of critical thinking education are very broad, its main goal is to make the individual evaluate the possible effects of his/her own and other people's ideas and raise his/her awareness of the errors and biases that he/she may fall in his/her own thinking process” (Melanloğlu, 2011). Including more critical thinking in the objectives of a curriculum where critical reading/writing/listening and speaking skills are emphasized will increase the quality of teaching and awareness in the teaching process. Although not directly included in the objectives, there are terms used in the explanations of the objectives such as critical speaking (p.43), critical listening (p.47), critical writing (p. 50) in the Turkish course curriculum, these terms are suggested to be used as methods and techniques in the explanations of the objectives prepared for the use of strategies.

## 5. Conclusions

To review, when the distribution of the objectives in the Turkish course curriculum across the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains was examined, it was seen that the majority of the objectives were accumulated in the cognitive domain and that the number of the objectives in the affective and psychomotor domains is small. Moreover, more than half of the objectives in the Turkish course curriculum were found to have moderate or lower adequacy in terms of including critical thinking skills.

Although all these findings are limited to the structural analysis of the objectives, they show that more attention should be paid to features of affective and psychomotor domains in the general goals and

learning objectives of the curriculum and that learning objectives should be re-organized in such a way as to improve critical thinking skills. It can be suggested that qualitative research should be conducted to investigate the learning-teaching process in-depth so that the extent to which learning objectives fostering critical thinking are reflected in practice can be investigated.

## 6. Ethics Committee Approval

The author confirms that she does not need ethics committee approval according to the research integrity rules in her country (Date of confirmation: 01/09/2020).

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## Türkçe Dersi Öğretim Programında Yer Alan Kazanımların Eleştirel Düşünmeye Yer Verme Durumu Açısından İncelenmesi

### Öz

Araştırmanın amacı, Türkçe dersi öğrenme kazanımlarının eleştirel düşünme becerisine yer verme durumu açısından incelenmesidir. Araştırma, temel nitel desen kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Verilerin toplanmasında doküman incelemesi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Veriler içerik analizi tekniğiyle çözümlenmiştir. Araştırma kapsamında incelenen dokümanları 2019 yılında Talim terbiye kurulu başkanlığınca güncellenen, Türkçe Dersi Öğretim Programı (1-8. sınıflar) oluşturmuştur. Araştırmada 5, 6,7, ve 8. sınıflara yönelik dinleme, konuşma, okuma ve yazma becerileri başlıkları altında hazırlanan 289 kazanım ele alınmıştır. Verilerin analizi sürecinde Yeşilpınar-Uyar, Tunca ve Alkın-Şahin (2017) tarafından geliştirilen “Öğrenme Kazanımlarını Kategori ve Düzey Açısından Sınıflandırma Formu”, “Öğrenme Kazanımlarının Eleştirel Düşünme Beceri Düzeyini Değerlendirme Rubriği” kullanılmıştır. Analiz sonucunda Türkçe Dersi Öğretim Programı öğrenme kazanımlarının bilişsel alanda yoğunlaştığı kazanımlarda duyuşsal ve psikomotor alana daha az yer verildiği belirlenirken kazanımların eleştirel düşünme becerilerine yer verme durumunun orta düzey ve altında bir yeterliğe sahip olduğu görülmektedir. Çalışma sonucunda kazanımlarda duyuşsal, psikomotor alanlara ve eleştirel düşünme becerisine yönelik düzenlemeler yapılabileceği önerisi getirilmektedir.

*Anahtar sözcükler:* Türkçe dersi öğretim programı, eleştirel düşünme, öğrenme kazanımı.

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