

Use of Primary Sources in the Sixth Grade Social Studies Course Books

Ali Yilmaz

Department of Primary Education, Ataturk Faculty of Education, Marmara University, Turkey

Abstract: The main purpose of this study is to determine the level of use of primary sources in the 6th Grade Social Studies Course Books. The “document analysis” method from among the qualitative research methods was used in the study. The study was conducted on 4 books from among the Social Studies course books published by total of 6 Publishing Houses accredited by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education Head Council of Education and Morality. The “Primary Source Utilization List”, which was prepared based on the literature review carried out by the researchers, was used for data collection. The research data were analyzed descriptively in the form of frequency on the basis of these criteria and research questions. The findings were interpreted with supporting examples from the relevant course books. According to the results obtained at the end of the study, the image sources were used the most and the audio and the community sources the least in all course books. In terms of the fields of learning, the field in which the primary sources are used the most was the “Turks on the Silk Road”.

Key words: Social studies course . primary sources . use of sources . course book

INTRODUCTION

The new primary education curriculums, which were specified to have been prepared in line with the constructive approach, were put into practice by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education in the 2005-2006 school year as a result of the change that had commenced in 2004 [1]. In constructive theory, the goal is not to pre-determine what learners would do, but to provide the individuals with the opportunity to voluntarily orient themselves to learning with materials that would render the information meaningful and useful. One of the most important tools that would meet these conditions and enable children to create pictures in their minds relating to the life in the past is the use of primary sources particularly in teaching history subjects.

Primary sources are snippets of history and documents of a moment in the history. Therefore, they provide a momentary rich visualization of the history, which is otherwise impossible to fit into a course book [2]. Its use is important, for primary sources consisting of dairies, photographs, audio recordings, speeches, etc. directly reflect the living history of the past for students [3].

History education prompts students towards studying methods requiring them to evaluate the sources, which provide information through documentary and literary materials, by reasoning.

Providing historical sensitivity, historical view, historical criticism skills, it contributes to cognitive development of students. However, all these would be possible through use of appropriate historical evidences in teaching history subjects [4]. Use of primary sources in classrooms provides mainly the following benefits to students [5]:

- Develops students' critical thinking skills.
- Enables students to understand the local history.
- Enables students to acquire empathy by developing a deeper understanding of the lives and experiences of different people.
- By enabling analysis of different points of view, contributes to development of a multi-point of view lacking in traditional course books.
- Gets students comprehend the continuum of the history.
- Assists learning the abstract historical concepts.

Everything uttered or created by human beings may provide information about them. However, any informative material is not of the nature of a primary source. In order for a material to be accepted as a primary source, it should be created in its own age, or at a time near its age, using the sources of its age [6]. On the other hand, the primary source (in order to be used as a primary source) does not need to be the exact copy of the original. For example, the text of the American

Declaration of Independence is still a primary source when written or typed out on a website [7]. The US Library of Congress explained in details the primary sources that can be used in a variety of researches and classified these sources under six groups [8]:

- a. Object Sources: Artifacts, tools, weapons, inventions, uniforms, fashions, tombstones.
- b. Image sources: Photographs, films, videos, fine arts, etc.
- c. Audio Sources: Oral histories, interviews, musical recordings, etc.
- d. Statistical sources: Census data, maps, architectural drawings, etc.
- e. Text sources: Journals, letters, historical cookbooks, advertisements, diaries, known historical documents in the original handwriting.
- f. Community sources: Family photographs, memorabilia, ancestors' clothes, etc.

Even though the social studies teachers particularly in the USA never deny the importance of the use of primary sources in classrooms, they experience difficulties in accessing the primary sources due to a variety of reasons. Therefore, many teachers are unable to use the primary sources in the classrooms [9]. This situation applies to Turkey as well. Furthermore, there is more need for the use of primary sources in the new 2004 Social Studies Curriculum prepared in line with the constructive approach, because one of the fundamental learning principles of the constructive approach is the use of primary sources.

Teachers have different ways and choices of using primary sources in the social studies courses. These ways have different advantages and disadvantages. Some of them are, for example, use of primary sources in course books, use of primary sources prepared by publishing houses and the technology (the Internet, digital archives, etc.). The first and the simplest way of using primary sources is to use them in social studies course books, for the course books are the most important materials used in educational environments. Therefore, the course books should contain more primary sources such as illustrations, maps, examples, original texts, etc. [10]. Use of primary sources in social studies is particularly important to enable all teachers and students to access the primary sources. Therefore, determination of the level of use of primary sources in the social studies course books prepared according to the constructive approach would make contributions to the review of the books and implementation of the necessary arrangements.

Purpose of the study: The main purpose of this study is to determine the level of use of primary sources in

the 6th Grade Social Studies Course Books. Answers to the following questions were sought in line with this purpose:

- What is the level of use of the following in the 6th Grade Social Studies course books?
 - a. Object sources,
 - b. Image sources,
 - c. Audio sources,
 - d. Statistical sources,
 - e. Text sources and
 - f. Community sources?
- Are there any differences among publishing houses in terms of use of primary sources in the 6th Grade Social Studies course books?
- Are there any differences among the fields of learning in terms of use of primary sources in the 6th Grade Social Studies course books?

Limitations: This study is limited to: 4 books accessed from among the 6 primary education 6th Grade Social Studies course books approved by the Ministry of National Education in 2006 [11].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Because the purpose of this study is to determine the level of use of primary sources in the 6th grade social studies course books, the “document analysis” method from among the qualitative research methods was used in the study.

Selection of samples: In qualitative researches, the purpose is not generalization but to obtain a total picture. Qualitative research aims to investigate the matter being studied in depth and with all possible details. Therefore, selection of samples in qualitative research is closely related to the nature of the research problem and the researcher's sources [12]. According to the Article 55 of the Basic Law of National Education, the course books to be taught at educational institutions are to be determined by the Ministry of National Education. And this task is entrusted to the Head Council of Education and Morality. There are total of 5 Sixth Grade Social Studies Course Books approved by the Ministry of National Education Head Council of Education and Morality in the 2006-2007 school year [13]. Accessibility was determined to be the sampling criterion in the study. Therefore, this study was conducted on 6th grade course books, which were published by 4 publishing houses, accessed by the researchers and approved by the Ministry of National Education.

Table 1: Distribution of rates relating to use of primary sources in the 6th grade social studies course books

Primary sources	Book I f	Book II f	Book III f	Book IV f	Total F
Object sources (Artifacts, tools, weapons, inventions, uniforms, tombstones, etc.)	31	24	28	28	111
Image sources (photographs, films, videos, posters, maps, etc.)	48	47	38	51	184
Audio sources (Oral histories, interviews, musical recordings, etc.)	-	-	-	-	
Statistical sources (census data, maps, architectural drawings, etc.)	17	15	11	13	56
Text sources (Journals, letters, historical books, advertisements, diaries, known historical documents in the original handwriting, etc.)	61	25	35	32	153
Community sources (Family photographs, memorabilia, ancestors' clothes, etc.)	8	-	6	9	23
Total	165	111	118	133	527

Features of the course books used in the study:

“Primary Education 6th and 7th grade Social Studies course books and workbooks” were approved as course books with the resolution dated June 28, 2006 of the Ministry of National Education Head Council of Education and Morality. The features of the course books are provided in their respective order in the tables:

Book I [14]: Printed by the Ministry of National Education in 2006. It is the second edition of the book. The book has total of 11 authors. Consisting of 196 pages, the book is printed on glossy paper.

Book II [15]: Printed by Altin Kitaplar publishing house in 2006. It has total of 3 authors. Consisting of 189 pages, the book is printed on glossy paper.

Book III [16]: Printed by Tuna Matbaacilik (Tuna Printing House) in 2006. The book has total of 2 authors. Consisting of 176 pages the books is printed on high-grade glossy paper.

Book IV [17]: Printed by A Yayinlari (A Publications) in 2006. The book has total of 3 authors. Consisting of 197 pages, the book is printed on high-grade glossy paper.

Collection and analysis of the data: A literature review conducted by the researchers and the “Primary Source Utilization List”, which was prepared based on the US Library of Congress’ classification, were used for data collection purposes. Each main item in the list constituted the categories to be used in document analysis. The research data were analyzed descriptively in the form of frequency on the basis of these criteria and research questions. The findings were interpreted with supporting examples from the relevant course books.

All procedures followed during the data analysis process were conducted by the researchers separately. Subsequently, the researchers came together and compared their works. Thus, it was tried to ensure reliability of the study.

Findings and interpretation: In this section, the findings obtained in line with the purposes of the study are presented under 2 titles and in 2 tables.

Use of primary sources in 6th grade social studies course books: The 6th grade social studies course books, which were published by 4 publishing houses and accessed in line with the primary and secondary purposes of the study, were analyzed descriptively in accordance with the categories in the course book primary source utilization list and the rates obtained are tabulated in the form of percentages and frequencies. Detailed distribution of the rates of use of primary sources in the 6th grade course books published by different publishing houses is presented in Table 1.

As it can be seen in Table 1, total of 165 primary source examples used in the Book I were composed of “text sources” (61), “image sources” (48) and “object sources” (31) respectively. They are followed by “statistical sources” (17) and “community sources” (8). It was seen that “audio sources” were not used in this book. Based on these findings, it can be said that use of “text sources” was attached the highest importance in the Book I.

Total of 111 primary source examples used in the Book II were composed of “image sources” (47), “text sources” (25), “object sources” (24) and “statistical sources” (15) respectively. It was seen that no “audio sources” and “community sources” were used in this book. Based on these findings, it can be said that use of “image sources” was attached the highest importance in the Book II.

Table 2: Use of primary sources by fields of learning

Fields of learning	Book I	Book II	Book III	Book IV	Total
	F	f	f	f	F
Individual and the society	13	10	11	15	49
People, places and environments	14	27	22	23	86
Production, distribution and consumption	16	5	14	9	44
Global connections	19	19	13	19	70
Culture and heritage	56	27	23	28	134
Power, government and the society	26	16	23	27	92
Science, technology and the society	21	7	12	12	52
Total	165	111	118	133	527



Fig. 1: Object Source (Book I, p: 52)

YILLAR	KARŞI		YILDIZLI ÇIKIŞI		BİRAL DOKKAT. 95% KAZA		BİLİMEYEN NEDENLER		TOPLAM
	ADET	%	ADET	%	ADET	%	ADET	%	
1984	180	9	120	4	987	27	1000	63	3008
1985	270	55	139	7	277	33	754	45	3776
1986	333	12	30	3	590	43	607	42	1845
1987	183	14	78	6	590	52	372	26	1339
1988	204	12	58	3	1103	80	487	24	1902
1989	376	14	331	13	1151	95	445	21	3075
2000	430	17	135	6	1364	56	427	15	2352
2001	351	12	180	7	1626	52	543	21	2831
2002	318	13	181	12	808	86	263	18	1471
2003	370	12	120	9	1317	81	488	22	2177
TOPLAM	2681		1275		10311		5435		30632
ORTALAMA	282	13	128	8	1030	81	543	30	2863

Fig. 2: Statistical Sources (Book IV, pp:78)

Total of 118 primary source examples used in the Book III were composed of “image sources (38), “text sources” (35), object sources (28), statistical sources (11) and “community sources” (6) respectively. No “audio sources” were used in this book. Based on these findings, it can be said that use of “image sources” was attached the highest importance in the Book III.

Total of 133 primary source examples used in the Book IV were composed of “image sources” (51), “text

sources” (32), “object sources” (28), “statistical sources” (13) and “community sources” (9) respectively. No “audio sources” were used in this book. Based on these findings, it can be said that use of “image sources” was attached the highest importance in the Book IV.

When we look at the use of the primary sources in the 6th grade social studies course books in general, as the Table 1 suggests, in terms of the level of use of the primary sources, the Book I has the highest level of use of the primary sources with 165 examples. It is followed by the Book IV with 133 examples. The use of the primary sources was the least in Book II (111) and Book III (118) respectively. Based on these findings, it can be said that the Book I attached more importance to use of primary sources than the other books. When we examine the use of primary sources by types, we see that the “image sources” (184) were used the most in the course books. These sources were followed by “text sources” (153), “object sources” (111) and “statistical sources” (56). The primary sources that were used the least in the books were “community sources” (23) and “audio sources” (0). Based on this finding, it can be said that, in terms of use of primary sources, the image sources are used the most, that they are followed by text and object sources, that the use of community sources was limited to specific books and generally used minimally and that audio sources were not used at all.

Examples of use of primary sources in the 6th grade social studies course books are provided below. One important point that draws attention in Fig. 1-5 is that, following the shift to constructive learning, the primary sources used in the course books are generally supported with questions and guidance.

As it can be seen in the examples above, it is necessary to urge students to think and to make inferences about the source through a variety of questions to ensure effective use of the historical evidences. The answers to the questions should be



Fig. 3: Image Source (Book I, pp: 29)



Fig. 4: Text Source (Book I, pp: 112)

given by the students themselves[18]. Even though it was observed that this principle was generally adhered to in the course books, it was ignored in some, as can be seen in the Fig. 6 below.

Use of primary sources by fields of learning: Table 2 shows the distribution of the use of primary sources in 6th grade social studies course books, which were published by 4 publishing houses and accessed in line with the third purpose of the study, by the fields of learning.

As the Table 2 suggests, in terms of the use of primary sources by the fields of learning, the "Culture and Heritage", about which 56 primary source examples were used in Book I, 27 in Book II, 23 in Book III and 28 in Book IV corresponding to total of 134 primary source examples, has more examples of use of primary sources than any other learning fields in all the books. This field of learning is followed by "Power, Government and the Society" with 26 primary source examples in Book I, 16 in Book II,



Fig. 5: Community Source (Book IV, pp: 138)

23 in Book III and 27 in Book IV corresponding to total of 92 primary source examples and "People, Places and Environments" with 14 primary source examples in Book I, 27 in Book II, 22 in Book III and 23 in Book IV corresponding to total of 86 primary source examples.

As the Table above suggests, in terms of use of the primary sources by the fields of learning, "Production, Distribution and Consumption" has the least primary source utilization examples with 16 in Book I, 5 in Book II, 14 in Book III and 9 in Book IV corresponding to total of 44 examples of primary sources. It is followed by "Individual and the Society" field of learning with 13 examples of use primary sources in Book I, 10 in Book II, 11 in Book III and 15 in Book IV, total of 49 primary source examples. Based on these findings, it can be said that the fields of study that are the most suitable for the use of primary sources from among the fields of learning in the 6th grade social studies course books are "Culture and Heritage", "Power, Government and the Society" and "People, Places and Environments" respectively and that those the least suitable are "Production, Distribution and Consumption" and "Individual and the Society".



Fig. 6: Image Source (Book III, pp: 13)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the findings obtained in this study that aims to determine the level of use of primary sources in the 6th grade social studies course books, there are total of 527 examples of use of primary sources in the 6th grade social studies course books. This finding shows that there is substantial utilization of primary sources in the 6th grade social studies course books prepared in line with the constructive approach. Furthermore, it is observed that the primary sources used were supported with instructions and questions such as “analyze”, “critique”, “comment”, “What does this picture explain in your opinion?”, “What do you think this tool was used for?”, “Does it look like a thing we use today?”, which generally conform to constructivism and urge students to think. Thus, students examine a source used in course books just like a historian and construct the new knowledge in their minds more easily by establishing connections with the present.

In terms of the level of use of primary sources, the Book I has the highest level of use of the primary sources with 165 examples from among the other 6th grade social studies course books published by different publishing houses. It is followed by the Book IV with 133 examples. The use of the primary sources was the least in Book II (111) and Book III (118) respectively. In this context, particularly the fact that the Book I was prepared by more authors and specialists shows that course book preparation requires teamwork where specialists in different fields work together and consequently more efficient results are obtained in terms of use of primary resources and other factors.

When we examine the use of primary sources by types, we see that the “image sources” (184) were used the most in the course books. These sources were followed by “text sources”(153), “object sources” (111) and “statistical sources” (56). The primary sources that were used the least in the books were “audio sources” (0) and “community sources” (23). Use of more image sources in course books is important and required to render the books to be more interesting. Furthermore, easier access to image sources and text sources would contribute to added use of such sources in course books. Another important point that draws attention in use of primary sources in course books is that the primary sources used in course books are usually similar. For example, the world map of Piri Reis is used in almost all course books.

In terms of the use of primary sources by the fields of learning, the “Culture and Heritage”, about which total of 134 primary source examples are seen in the 6th grade social studies course books, is the one in which the primary sources are used the most. It is followed by “Power, Government and the Society” with 92 primary source examples and “People, Places and Environments” with 86 primary source examples. “Production, Distribution and Consumption” has the least primary source utilization level with 44 examples of primary sources and it is followed by “Individual and the Society” field with 49 primary source examples. Based on these findings, it can be said that the level of use of primary sources is the highest in the history discipline among all the fields of learning in the 6th grade social studies course.

The following recommendations can be made based on the results of the study:

- Number of “audio sources” and “community sources”, which are only used to a limited extent in social studies course books, should be increased.
- The level of use of primary sources should be increased also in the fields of learning other than the history discipline.
- In addition to use of social studies course books, special websites, which are aimed at use of primary sources and whose examples can be seen in other countries, should be created[19].
- Primary sources should be compiled on CD-ROMs as a package and provided to the service of social studies teachers.

REFERENCES

1. M.E.B., 2005. İlköğretim Sosyal Bilgiler Dersi 6-7. Sınıflar Öğretim Programı ve Kilavuzu-Taslak Basım-TC. M.E.B. Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı; M.E.B. (2005). <http://yayim.meb.gov.tr/dergiler/pdf/2575.pdf>.
2. <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/educators/handouts/prsrc.pdf>
3. Hutchison, M., 2001. Classroom connect's American memory primary sources. T.H.E. Journal, 29 (3). www.thejournal.com/the/printarticle/?id=15644.
4. Yilmaz, A. and A. Balkaya, 2004. İlköğretim sosyal bilgiler dersi tarih konularına uygun tarihsel kanıtların öğrenme üzerindeki etkisi. I.Sosyal Bilimler Eğitimi Kongresi Tebliğler, pp: 195-203; Dilek, D., 2001. Tarih Derslerinde Öğrenme ve Düşünce Gelişimi. Ankara: PegemA. Safran, M. (2006), “Avrupa Birliğinin tarih öğretimine ilişkin önerilerinin bilimsel temelleri ve sınırlılıkları”, Tarih Eğitimi Makale ve Bildiriler, Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi, pp: 191-206.
5. VanFossen, P.J. and J.M. Shiveley, 2000. Using the internet to create primary source teaching packets. The social studies, Brooklyn New Jersey then Washington: 91 (6): 244-252. <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/educators/handouts/prsrc.pdf>
6. Kutukoglu, Mubahat S., 1998. Tarih Araştırmalarında Usul. İstanbul: Kubbealtı Nesriyat.
7. California Learning Resource Network. Web information links guidelines. 17.04.2007, http://www.clnr.org/weblinks/WIL_guidelines.pdf.
8. Akbaba, B., 2005. Tarih öğretiminde fotoğraf kullanımı. Journal of Gazi University Kırsehir Faculty of Education. <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/primary.html>. Demircioglu, I.H., 2005. Tarih Öğretiminde Öğrenci Merkezli Yaklaşımlar, Ankara: Ani Yayınevi, 6 (1): 185-197.
9. Huck, C.S., S.I. Hepler and J. Hickman, 1987. Children's literature in the elementary school, Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 4th Edn. VanFossen, P.J. and J.M. Shiveley, 2000. Using the internet to create primary source teaching packets. The social studies, Brooklyn New Jersey then Washington, 91 (6): 244-252..
10. VanFossen, P.J. and J.M. Shiveley, 2000. Using the internet to create primary source teaching packets. The social studies. Brooklyn New Jersey then Washington, 91 (6): 244-252.
11. M.E.B., 2006. <http://yayim.meb.gov.tr/dergiler/pdf/2587.pdf>
12. Yıldırım, A. and H. Simsek, 2005. Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel araştırma Yöntemleri. (5th Edn.). Ankara: Seckin Yayıncılık.
13. M.E.B., 2006. <http://yayim.meb.gov.tr/dergiler/pdf/2587.pdf>.
14. Genc, E. et al., 2006. İlköğretim Sosyal Bilgiler Ders Kitabı 6, İstanbul, Ministry of National Education Publishing House.
15. Uzun, E., A. Altun and Y. Dogan, 2006. İlköğretim Sosyal Bilgiler Ders Kitabı 6, İstanbul, Altın Kitaplar Yayınevi.
16. Tuysuz, S. and S. Yıldırım, 2006. İlköğretim Sosyal Bilgiler Ders Kitabı 6, Ankara, Tuna Matbaacılık.
17. Kolukisa, E.A., H. Tokcan and B. Akbaba, 2006. İlköğretim Sosyal Bilgiler Ders Kitabı 6, Ankara, A Yayınları.
18. Vella, Y., 2005. Using Historical Sources with Primary School Children. İlköğretim sosyal bilgiler öğrencileriyle tarihsel kaynakları kullanma. (Translated by: Bahri Ata.). Bilim ve Aklin Aydınlığında Eğitim, pp: 66-67.
19. Dogan, Y. and E. Dinc, 2007. <http://www.sosyalbilgiler.gazi.edu.tr/article17.pdf>. Safran, M.(2006). Türk tarihi öğretimi ve meseleleri. Tarih Eğitimi Makale ve Bildiriler, Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi, pp: 175-189.