

The Reflection of Social Norms in Turkish Folklore on the 5th Grade Turkish Language Textbook Prepared According to the Maarif Model

Ayhan Dönmez¹

İzmir Provincial Police
Department, İzmir, Türkiye

Abstract

This research examines the place of social norms in Turkish folklore in Turkish textbooks and the impact of these norms on education. The research evaluates the texts in the 5th grade Turkish textbook prepared by the Ministry of National Education in terms of social norms in Turkish folklore. The research was conducted with a qualitative survey model and document analysis method was used. According to the findings, the most emphasized social norms in the 5th grade Turkish textbooks are principle and moral code, followed by tradition and habit. Fashion and customary practice are among the least emphasized social norms. These findings show that textbooks contain norms that reinforce social behaviors and harmony among individuals and contribute to the shaping of social values through education.

Keywords: Folklore, Social Norms, Turkish Textbooks

To cite this article:

Dönmez, A. (2024). Reflection of the social norms in Turkish folklore on the 5th grade Turkish language textbook prepared according to the Maarif Model. *Innovative Educational Research (INNER)*, 6, (2), 122-130.

Article Type	Received	Accepted	Published Online
Research Article	09.12.2024	11.29.2024	12.30.2024

Turkish folklore is a branch of science that examines the way of life, beliefs, traditions and cultural values of the people. Folklore acts as a bridge that carries social memory and identity to the future through oral and written cultural products. Turkish folklore is a branch of science that examines the cultural products, traditions, beliefs, daily life practices and oral literature of the people (Örnek, 2000). This discipline compiles the material and immaterial cultural elements produced by the people and investigates their sources, diffusion and interaction with other cultures (Aça, 2012). Turkish folklore examines a wide range of cultural elements from the way of life of the people to art and literature. This branch of science aims to compile, protect and transfer cultural heritage to future generations. Oral literature products,

¹ Dr., İzmir Provincial Police Department, İzmir, Türkiye. E-mail: ayhandonmez1903@gmail.com

folk dances, beliefs and traditions constitute the main fields of study of folklore (Ceylan, 2017). Folklore also has an important role in strengthening cultural identity and understanding cultural differences (Yıldız, 2023). Folklore is in close relationship with sociology, anthropology, linguistics, history and geography. For example, anthropology contributes to folklore research by analyzing the cultural structures of societies (Örnek, 2000). Linguistics is an important tool in understanding the structural and semantic features of the languages and dialects used by the people. History and geography support folklore in analyzing the temporal and spatial changes of cultural elements (Ceylan, 2017). Folklore emerged as a social and human discipline in the 19th century. In Türkiye, folklore has developed as an academic discipline especially during the Republican period and important research has been conducted in this field. Today, there are folklore departments in universities and studies in this field are of great importance for the protection of cultural heritage (Aça, 2012; Yıldız, 2023). Turkish folklore is an important branch of science that examines the cultural heritage of the people in depth and aims to protect this heritage. It contributes to the self-knowledge of society by analyzing cultural elements from a multi-faceted perspective. In this context, folklore studies are of great importance for the protection and development of cultural identity.

While stories narrate social events through the eyes of individuals, fairy tales generally convey the moral teachings of society through fantastic elements. Epics, on the other hand, reinforce the sense of social identity and solidarity by dealing with historical events and heroic themes (Boratav, 1992). From a sociological perspective, these products contribute to the cultural continuity of society by reflecting social norms, customs and traditions. The moral teachings that fairy tales convey to children and themes such as heroism emphasized in epics play a critical role in the construction of social structure. From fairy tales to epics, from proverbs to folk beliefs, the social norms and value judgments of the people can be clearly seen. Social norms refer to the behavior patterns and unwritten rules that a society expects from individuals. These norms ensure the preservation of social order by regulating the relations between individuals. The main social norms in Turkish folklore consist of seven elements: practice, tradition, customary practice, principle, habit, fashion, moral code (Artun, 2011). Social norms are not only related to folklore but also to sociology. However, sociology and Turkish folklore are complementary disciplines to understand the function of social norms in society and how individuals comply with these norms. Social norms such as practice, tradition, customary practice, principle, habit, fashion, moral code shape the values, beliefs and cultural structure of society. From a sociological perspective, these norms play a critical role in maintaining social order and determining individuals' relations with society. Turkish folklore, on the other hand, provides in-depth information about the social structures of societies by examining the social traditions and cultural elements in which these norms are embedded. Sociology and folklore address similar issues using different methodological approaches. Sociology studies societies, usually through quantitative research methods, while folklore collects and analyzes the cultural products of the people through qualitative research methods. However, both disciplines collect data using methods such as fieldwork and observation (Eren, 2018). Accordingly, literature is an important cultural tool that reflects the values, norms and ideologies of a society. In this sense, a sociological perspective enables a more in-depth analysis by relating literary works to social structures (Giddens et al., 2017).

When the literature is examined, it is seen that the social norms in question are defined separately, for example, the whole of common habits and rules of behavior accepted in a community is called practice. Organizing weddings in marriages is an example of practice (Yanardağ, 2017). Tradition, on the other hand, refers to the rules, traditions and customs established within the community. For example, in some regions, marrying off young people at an early age is considered a custom (Yanardağ, 2017). Tradition can be defined as the settlement of habitual behaviors in society over time. They can be defined as the fulfillment of our behaviors in our daily lives in accordance with the forms that have become habitual and accepted by society. When traditions are violated, the person exhibiting this behavior is socially despised (Güngör, 2011). According to Gözler (2010), habits and traditions are orders and prohibitions that are created by a certain social environment and regulate human behavior and have sanctions such as warning, condemnation or exclusion.

Customary practice, on the other hand, are rules that have mild sanctions such as shaming and condemnation if they are violated (Gözler, 2010). Practices from cultural and traditional origins, i.e. customs, have from time to time been used as a source in legal matters. Certain rules of behavior adopted by the public and obeyed without question can become the common norms of a community or the whole society (Artun, 2011). According to Eroğlu, customary practice evaluates their sanctions in a more flexible way and see these rules at the level of “it would be good if done; it would be good even if not done, it would be good if obeyed; it would be good even if not obeyed” (Eroğlu, 2003). By concealing or postponing individual aggression and calculations of self-interest, conventions contribute to the maintenance of social solidarity and order, at least formally. Similarly, courtesy and etiquette rules ensure order in social relations and positively guide the interaction between individuals (Yanardağ, 2017).

The word “principle” has entered Turkish from Arabic and is considered equivalent to “an'ane” (Eroğlu, 2015). Principles, as long as they are generally kept alive by conservative communities, have an inhibiting and limiting characteristic. Especially in small settlements, in communities with strong religious elements or in certain political environments, principles can delay social change. On the contrary, some principles encourage solidarity and cooperation within society and thus play a regulatory and supportive role. Especially in settlements where the function of official institutions to provide support and solutions is limited, principles constitute an important support and organizing force in the face of the difficulties faced by individuals and communities (Artun, 2011).

Habit is a system of values that meets social needs and ensures the continuation of order. Changes occur in this system as the human generation continues. Rapid changes in habits lead to the transformation of principles (Çınar, 1996). Habit help to maintain orderly relations by setting rules on how to behave in various social interactions in society, such as visiting neighbors, visiting the sick, shopping, getting in and out of vehicles, recognition and introduction (Örnek, 2000). Habits are open to innovations and changes since they are based on behaviors that have been going on since the past and are not stereotyped. Thanks to these characteristics, new practices can be added to the forms of behavior within habits, and they can change over time. In addition, some habits may disappear completely because of change processes (Artun, 2011).

Fashion means “choosing, favoring something, a place, an activity, etc. that reflects the taste prevalent in a society or a group in a certain period, that is very popular” (Büyük Larousse, 1992). Although fashion mostly manifests itself in clothing and adornment, it can also be effective in language, thought, movement style, music, art and other fields. There are also some fashions that are adopted only by limited and certain segments of a society; we can characterize such fashions as “fads” (Örnek, 2000:128-129). A gesture, a hairstyle, a style of music or dance can influence the whole world. While the duration of this influence can be long, it is usually short-lived and quickly abandoned when a new style emerges (Uğurlu, 2010). Fashion can be effective in all subjects such as dressing, adornment, household items, architectural styles, music, literature and art (Eroğlu, 2015).

As can be seen, the social norms in Turkish folklore also contribute to the formation of the values of the society. These norms, which permeate every part of society, also have features that will shape education and training life. Because the institutions that constitute education are shaped according to the needs of the society to which they belong, and the individuals who provide this education appear as members of the society. For this reason, this study aims to reflect the social norms in Turkish folklore on the 5th grade Turkish textbook prepared according to the education model. Accordingly, the problem statement of the research is “How often are the social norms in Turkish folklore included in the 5th grade Turkish textbook?”.

Method

In this study, the survey model was used in accordance with qualitative research techniques. The survey model is a research model that aims to define events or situations with their current conditions. In this model, the subject or situation is examined in line with its own conditions and current situation (Karasar, 1998).

Study Material

The object of the research is the texts in the 5th grade Turkish textbook prepared by the Ministry of National Education according to the education model. The texts in the book were analyzed and evaluated according to the social norms of Turkish folklore.

Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, was used as a data collection tool. According to Scott and Morrison (2005), document analysis is a technique based on the use of pre-existing or post-existing materials. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2006), this method allows the researcher to obtain the data needed without direct observation or interview.

Findings

The findings of this study are shown in Table 1. The table shows the social norms and their frequencies in the texts in the 5th grade Turkish textbook prepared by the Ministry of National Education.

Table 1

The values of the texts in the 5th grade Turkish textbook prepared according to the Maarif model in terms of social norms

Social Norms	f	Texts Containing Social Norms	%
Practice	11	Öğretmenin Sevinci, Oyuncakların Oyuna Başla, Mangala/Göçürme Oyunu, Oğlu Hüseyin'den Emine Ana'ya Mektuplar, Bir İp Bul Oyuna Başla, Gazi Mustafa Kemal ve Sığırtmaç Mustafa, Yeni Türk Harflerinin Kabulü, Atatürk'ün Öğrenim Hayatı, Atatürk'ün Vatanseverliği, Duygularımız	11,45
Tradition	15	Beştaş ve İki Ceviz Bileti, Kangurunun Parmak Uçlarındaki Dünya, Öğretmenin Sevinci, Oyuncakların Oyuna Başla, Mangala /Göçürme Oyunu, Oğlu Hüseyin'den Emine Ana'ya Mektuplar, Meclis'te Yankılanan Hatıralar, Gazi Mustafa Kemal ve Sığırtmaç Mustafa, Duygularımız, Türkiye, Dilek Kuşu	15,62
Customary practice	6	Öğretmenin Sevinci, Gazi Mustafa Kemal ve Sığırtmaç Mustafa, Atatürk'ün Vatanseverliği, Atatürk ve Çiftlik	6,24
Principle	20	Bülbül ile Bezirgân, Beştaş ve İki Ceviz Bileti, Öğretmenin Sevinci, Oyuncakların Oyuna Başla, Mangala /Göçürme Oyunu, Oğlu Hüseyin'den Emine Ana'ya Mektuplar, Meclis'te Yankılanan Hatıralar, Gazi Mustafa Kemal ve Sığırtmaç Mustafa, Atatürk'ün Öğrenim Hayatı, Baharda Çiçek Açar, 23 Nisan'da Çocuk, Duygularımız, Türkiye, Dilek Kuşu,	20,83
Habit	17	Beştaş ve İki Ceviz Bileti, Bülbül ile Bezirgân, Kangurunun Parmak Uçlarındaki Dünya, Topsuz Basketbol Oyunu, Bir İp Bul Oyuna Başla, Öğretmenin Sevinci, Atatürk'ün Vatanseverliği, Baharda Çiçek Açar, Oğlu Hüseyin'den Emine Ana'ya Mektuplar	17,70
Fashion	8	Topsuz Basketbol Oyunu, Bir İp Bul Oyuna Başla, Öğretmenin Sevinci, Oyuncakların Oyuna Başla, Yeni Türk Harflerinin Kabulü, Dilek Kuşu,	8,37
Moral code	19	Beştaş ve İki Ceviz Bileti, Bülbül ile Bezirgân, Öğretmenin Sevinci, Mangala /Göçürme Oyunu, Oğlu Hüseyin'den Emine Ana'ya Mektuplar, Meclis'te Yankılanan Hatıralar, Gazi Mustafa Kemal ve Sığırtmaç Mustafa, Yeni Türk Harflerinin Kabulü, Atatürk'ün Öğrenim Hayatı, Atatürk'ün Vatanseverliği, Atatürk ve Çiftlik, Baharda Çiçek Açar, 23 Nisan'da Çocuk, Türkiye, Dilek Kuşu	19,79
Total	96		100

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that principle (20,83%) and moral code (19,79) are the most frequently mentioned social norms in the texts in the 5th grade Turkish textbooks prepared with the maarif model. Tradition (15,62%) and habit (17,70%) social norms are also quite prominently mentioned. These rates show that the norms emphasized in the texts teach certain social behaviors to the individuals of the society and to make them harmonious are also important. In addition, fashion (8.37%) and customary practice (6.24%) are among the least emphasized social norms. Examples of these findings are as follows:

Examples arising according to the principal norm:

Welcome. I'll let you in, but what do you give me for the right of entry? (Beştaş ve İki Ceviz Bileti)

Examples arising according to the habit norm:

The man took out a small silk cloth from his saddlebag and handed it to him. He said, "Let it be a souvenir from us to you" (Beştaş ve İki Ceviz Bileti).

Tearful mothers, fathers and sons at every station... Full of longing to live in a free country, they send off their loved ones to the front. (Oğlu Hüseyin'den Emine Ana'ya Mektuplar)

One summer day when the water in the stream was low, the animals from across the stream went to the tree park. The little kangaroo and his friends also went to the park, and they all played musical chairs and had fun together (Bülbül ile Bezirgan).

Examples that emerged according to the moral code norm:

In the Ottoman period, the game of mangala, which was played especially in palaces, inns and mosque courtyards, was seen as a means of socialization and cultural exchange (Mangala/Göçürme Oyunu).

Examples that emerged according to the norm of Tradition:

Today, the 'mangala game' continues its function of socialization and cultural sharing in that players of all ages can play it at any time in different places such as home, school, course, traditional celebration areas (Mangala/Göçürme Oyunu)

Examples arising according to the norm of Practice:

"My father is shouting: 'Come on Ali, put the kite's string down! Release it into the sky, today the sky will be ours!'" (Öğretmenin Sevinci)

Many of you are familiar with the game of tug of war (Bir İp Bul, Oyuna Başla!).

Examples according to the fashion norm:

A woman said to her husband: "If only we had a beautiful palace, if only we had servants, if only they looked us in the eye to see if we had any requests, if only I had silk dresses and jewels" (Dilek Kuşu).

Examples arising according to the norm of customary practice:

"Wait!... Wait! There is enough for all of you, don't be impatient" (Öğretmenin Sevinci).

Conclusion and Discussion

Text begins as a new paragraph. You must explain and discuss by citing similar and dissimilar results of other studies the findings you collected in your study within the context of your hypotheses (purposes), sub-problems and literature. Accordingly, you must report the results arising from these discussions.

This study examines how social norms in Turkish folklore are reflected in the texts in the 5th grade Turkish textbook prepared with the maarif model. The findings show that the integration of folklore concepts into educational materials contributes to students' development of an in-depth understanding of social values and norms. These findings reveal that social norms in folklore not only transmit cultural memory but also help to harmonize educational processes with the social context.

The most emphasized social norms in the texts were principles (20.83%) and moral code (19.79%). Principles play an important role in ensuring cultural continuity in society and are in line with the studies on their place in education as a determining factor in students' identity development. It is widely discussed in the literature that principal functions as strong norms that guide the behavior of individuals, and that cultural elements have an important place in social memory (Hofstede, 2011). In this context, the fact that the principle finds more space in textbooks reveals the necessity of educational content that is sensitive to the cultural structures of society. On the other hand, the moral code is similarly covered in textbooks as an important element that ensures social order and determines individuals' lifestyles. It is possible to say that the moral code is one of the basic building blocks not only of the past but also of today's societies. Moral codes determine the social responsibilities of individuals based on the legal system and cultural traditions of a society (Geertz, 1973). At this point, it can be said that the importance given to moral codes in textbooks will be effective in creating an in-depth awareness of social norms. On the other hand, norms such as fashion and customary practice have found less space in educational materials because they are more temporary and based on individual preferences. Fashion is generally less emphasized in education as an area where social changes occur rapidly, and temporary tastes and aesthetic understandings are determinant. This is in line with the views in the literature that social norms in education that are more permanent and linked to the common values of society are more compatible with the way students understand the world (Bauman, 2000). Norms such as fashion and customary practice are secondary to norms such as principle and moral code in terms of maintaining social order, as they allow for more flexibility and individual freedom.

The findings emphasize how textbooks need to be designed in line with the cultural and social context. This enables students to construct not only their individual but also their social identities. In this context, Hofstede (2011), with his cultural dimensions' theory, analyzed the effects of different cultures in education and the traces of these cultural interactions on educational materials. Turner (1969), while analyzing the impact of rituals and norms on social structures, argues that norms in education also function as a ritual and that these norms adapt individuals to the social structure. Social norms in education determine how individuals become actors in social life. The inclusion of social norms in educational materials and the transfer of these norms to students contribute to raising students as more responsible and conscious individuals in the social context. As a result, the diversity of social norms in educational materials allows students to better understand the cultural richness and values of society. Education should not only be a process of informing, but also a process of strengthening social belonging and identity. This study emphasizes the importance of integrating folklore into education and provides important clues about the need to increase the space given to cultural norms in textbooks. In this context, the following recommendations were developed based on the study:

- How social norms in Turkish folklore evolve with social change and their reflection on the education system can be examined in more detail.
- Surveys or focus group interviews can be conducted to understand students' perceptions of social norms.
- Comparative analyses can be conducted on how social norms in Turkish folklore are reflected in education systems in different cultures.
- Comparison of old and new textbooks, reflection of social norms in education can be emphasized.

References

- Aça, M. (2012). Halk Edebiyatına Giriş, (Ed. Mehmet Ali Yolcu), In *Türk Halk Edebiyatı El Kitabı*, s. 1-48, Paradigma Akademi Yayınları
- Artun, E. (2011). *Türk Halkbilimi*. Karahan Kitabevi
- Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Polity Press
- Boratav, P. N. (1992). *100 Soruda Türk Halk Edebiyatı*. Gerçek Yayınevi
- Büyük Larousse Ansiklopedisi (1992). “Ansiklopedi Maddesi”, 2. Cilt, İstanbul: *Milliyet Gazetecilik A.Ş. Cumhuriyet Ansiklopedisi (?)*. “Ansiklopedi Maddesi”, İkinci Cilt, İstanbul: Arkın Kitabevi
- Ceylan, M. N. (2017). *Hâmit Zübeyr Koşay'ın hayatı ve halk bilimi ile ilgili çalışmaları* (Master Thesis). Atatürk Üniversitesi, Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, Erzurum
- Çınar, A. A. (1996). *Türk Dünyası Halk Kültürü Üzerine Araştırma ve İncelemeler*. Muğla: Muğla Üniversitesi Matbaası
- Eren, M. (2018). Yöntemsel bir kavram olarak Türk halk bilimi çalışmalarında düşünömsellik. *Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 11, 169-176
- Erođlu, E. (2015). Geçmişten günümüze sosyal normlar. *Akademik Bakış Uluslararası Hakemli Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, (50), 299-308
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. Basic Books
- Giddens, A., Duneier, M., Appelbaum, R. P., & Carr, D. (2017). *Introduction to Sociology (10th ed.)*. Seagull Edition. Pearson Education
- Gözler, K. (2010). *Hukukun Temel Kavramları*. Yedinci Basım, Ekin Yayınevi
- Güngör, E. (1990). *Tarihte Türkler*. (3. Basım). Ötüken Yayınları
- Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1), 1-26
- Karasar, N. (1998). *Bilimsel araştırma yöntemi*. Nobel Yayınları
- Örnek, S. V. (2000). *Türk Halkbilimi*. (2. Basım). Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları
- Scott, D. & Marlene M., (2005). *Key ideas in educational research*. Continuum International Publishing
- Turner, V. W. (1969). *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Aldine

- Uğurlu, S. (2010), *Gelenek ve Kimlik İlişkisi*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Sakarya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Sakarya
- Yanardağ, A. (2017). Örf ve Adetler Sosyolojisi. *Iğdır Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* (9), 39-63
- Yıldırım, A.; Şimşek, H., (2008). *Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri*. 6. Edition. Seçkin Kitapevi
- Yıldız, T. (2023). Ortaoyunu Metinlerinde Köy-Kent İkilemi. Erkan, A. (Ed.) In *Kuramsal Yaklaşımlar Işığında Kent Folkloru* (s. 296-301). Çizgi Kitabevi

Author Information

Ayhan Dönmez: He received his PhD degree from Dokuz Eylül University, Institute of Educational Sciences. He works on Turkish education and folklore.

Conflict of Interest

It has been reported by the author that there is no conflict of interest.

Funding

No funding was received.

Ethical Standards

Since no human study was conducted, no ethics committee approval was obtained.