



## The reflection of text structure modifications on reading comprehension: a comparison of authentic and modified texts among 7th grade students

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### Abstract

This study aims to compare the reading comprehension levels of 7th-grade students in authentic and modified texts. For this purpose, two texts were identified, one being narrative and the other informative. The selected texts were processed according to determined modification criteria, and an effort was made to align them with the students' grade levels. Following this, reading comprehension questions regarding the texts were prepared. Two study groups were utilized during these stages. The first group (n = 22) was included in the text modification process. While the second group (n = 34) was used during the development phase of the reading comprehension questions. After preparing the texts and reading comprehension questions, two groups equivalent in terms of reading comprehension were selected. One group was presented with the modified text, and the other group received the authentic text. Subsequently, reading comprehension questions related to the read texts were directed to these two groups. Thus, the third group in the research (n = 92) participated in the comparison of reading comprehension scores obtained from the authentic and modified texts. The obtained data were analyzed with ANCOVA in the Jamovi software. According to the findings, the contribution of texts modification to reading comprehension is statistically significant. Effect size analyses showed that this contribution was at a medium level ( $\eta^2_p = .087$ ) for the narrative text and at a large level ( $\eta^2_p = .141$ ) for the informative text.

### Keywords

Narrative text  
Informative text  
Text modification  
Reading comprehension  
Middle school student

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### Introduction

Language is the most important instrument underpinning the educational process, beyond serving merely as a means of communication. Given that teaching and learning activities are largely conducted through language-based resources, it is evident that there is a direct relationship between a student's reading comprehension skills and their general academic achievement (Bayraktar & Durukan, 2016). This situation is particularly pronounced in Turkish courses. Indeed, in these courses, texts serve as the primary material not only for developing basic language skills but also for instilling reading

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appreciation, core values, and 21st-century skills (Arslan & Engin, 2019; Derse & Coşkun, 2021; Kurudayıoğlu & Soysal, 2019; Şeref et al., 2020). As stated by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE, 2019), these texts, designed with a thematic approach, constitute the foundation of course activities. Considering the critical role of texts in achieving the objectives of the Turkish course and their importance in the instructional process, the question of which texts students encounter gains significant importance. Therefore, text selection can be considered one of the most crucial and sensitive stages of language teaching. As emphasized in the literature, the prerequisite for deriving maximum benefit from the educational process is that the presented texts are fully aligned with the cognitive and developmental levels of the target audience (Bayraktar & Durukan, 2020; Karaağaç & Alikılıç, 2023).

According to Güneş (2013), in addition to literary texts, original, constructed, and special-purpose texts are utilized in language teaching. Among these, literary texts are defined as products that arouse excitement and admiration in the reader by presenting emotions and thoughts within an aesthetic framework. However, it can be stated that two fundamental problems emerge that complicate the use of these texts in educational settings. The first problem is that many literary works, by virtue of their origin, did not prioritize the reality of the child or pedagogical concerns. Many of these works were written before the development of psychological and pedagogical approaches regarding the concept of childhood. As Şimşek (2007) stated, this situation is the product of an understanding wherein children experience a world specific to adults. Therefore, literary works may not always be suitable for the developmental characteristics of contemporary students in terms of their themes and narrative forms. For instance, even if the protagonist is a child, Ömer Seyfettin's story titled "Kaşağı" contains sections that conflict with the psychological characteristics of a certain age group (such as the direct handling of the phenomenon of death through a child character). Secondly, it is possible that literary texts often possess linguistic and narrative features that may impede understanding for middle school students, thereby potentially fostering negative attitudes toward the act of reading. As noted in Başaran's (2021) study, texts that resonate with the student's life experiences and possess plain and clear language (that is, high readability levels) can positively affect the reading comprehension process. Furthermore, Durukan's (2014) study indicates that texts containing long words and sentences negatively impact students' reading speeds and reading comprehension levels. Although he employed relatively simple language for his era, words exceeding the level of middle school students are encountered in Ömer Seyfettin's stories. Similarly, Muallim Naci's work titled "Ömer'in Çocukluğu" (Ömer's Childhood), despite centering on a child protagonist, contains long and detailed descriptions that freeze the narrative flow, making it significantly difficult for students at this level to follow the text. Disregarding literary texts due to these difficulties might imply forfeiting their indispensable contributions. Foremost among these contributions is that texts reflect the culture in which they were formed in its most natural state. Indeed, as Melanlıoğlu (2008) stated, language teaching is simultaneously culture teaching. In this context, particularly folk literature works, according to Özcan (2008), offer a rich resource harboring a nation's modes of living, thinking, and appreciation spanning centuries. On the other hand, these texts, which have reached artistic competence through long literary processes, are among the most important tools for instilling artistic sensitivity in students, as emphasized by Sever (2018). Briefly stated, despite the national and universal values and aesthetic riches they carry, literary works may surpass students' comprehension levels in terms of language and narrative features (vocabulary, sentence structures, etc.) because they are usually written without observing the principle of suitability for the child. Moreover, certain themes or characters processed in these texts may not be suitable for students' developmental characteristics, and this situation may conflict with the pedagogical and legal frameworks determined by the MoNE (2019). At this point, Duman (2010) states that instead of leaving the student trapped between the unintelligible and the misunderstood, intervening in the text when and to the extent necessary is a viable approach. This situation has brought practices known as text modification (simplification, adaptation, revision, etc.) to the forefront of the literature. The literature treats text modification as a practice that offers significant benefits while also harboring serious limitations. The primary benefit of modification is that it increases reading comprehension levels by reducing the linguistic and structural complexity of texts. This effect is more pronounced on target audiences such as non-native speakers, students with reading difficulties, and children (Gala et al., 2018; Glavas &

Štajner, 2015; Javourey-Drevet et al., 2022; Kim & Snow, 2009). It is also stated that modified (especially simplified) texts make historical or complex subjects more accessible (Durmuş, 2013a) and facilitate students' reading fluency and interaction with the text (Bayraktar & Durukan, 2020; Javourey-Drevet et al., 2022). However, the risks and limitations associated with text modification are also extensively covered in the literature. The fundamental criticism is the potential for the simplification process to damage the text's literary texture, aesthetic value, and the author's original style (Uygur, 2024; Yücelşen, 2014). Changes made with a mechanical approach can transform the work into a soulless text by destroying its rhythm, atmosphere, and the associative richness of its words (Carroli, 2008; Gilmore, 2007). A second limitation is that oversimplification deprives students of the opportunity to cope with complex language structures and develop higher-level thinking skills. A study conducted by Hayes et al. (1996) drew attention to this danger by suggesting that simplification in school textbooks might be related to a decline in students' verbal achievements. Additionally, Dahl et al. (2021) state that students develop more metacognitive and abstract evaluations in complex science texts. This dilemma underscores the necessity of conducting text modification not as an arbitrary and intuitive process, but through an approach with clearly determined principles that preserve both the structural and aesthetic integrity of the text.

It is frequently noted in the literature that the intuitive approach is prevalent in the text modification process (Durmuş, 2013a). Although this approach offers advantages such as flexibility and situational adaptability, it distances the process from objectivity (Uygur, 2024). İsen and Işinsu (2011) explain this situation as publishing houses and editors turning to superficial solutions, such as merely removing unknown words, instead of developing a standard method. Indeed, it is frequently emphasized in the literature that such uncontrolled interventions distort the text's messages, cause it to lose its artistic value, lead to semantic ambiguity and structural inconsistency, and furthermore, create unnatural language input (Bakan, 2012; Durmuş, 2013a; Long & Ross, 1993). Besides this approach, the structural approach, in which the linguistic structures the student will encounter at each stage are predetermined (Aytan et al., 2021), differs from the intuitive approach in this aspect. While the structural approach offers a systematic process based on language structures, it does not always prioritize cohesion and coherence (Uygur, 2024). In contrast, the linguistic approach offers a more in-depth framework for modification by focusing on the semantic integrity and contextual harmony of the text (Bakan-Aktaş & Ay, 2021). Along with these, specific standards, strategies, and techniques for text modification are also suggested in the literature. Guidance resources, such as the MoNE curricula (MoNE, 2006, 2019), address principles of intervention in texts while listing the characteristics that texts to be included in textbooks must possess. These approaches to be applied primarily address interventions made to texts at the lexical and syntactic levels (De Belder & Moens, 2010; Surya et al., 2018). Bölükbaş (2015) classifies the four basic strategies of text modification as preservation (leaving parts suitable for the level as is), modification (simplifying parts not understood), summarizing (shortening while preserving semantic integrity), and deletion (removing details that do not contribute to the semantic flow). Similarly, Yaşar (2019) classifies this process as lexical, syntactic, lexical-syntactic, and formal modification. Yücelşen (2014), on the other hand, includes more micro-level operations such as changing the text title, personal names, and sentence positions in this process under the headings of shortening and editing. As can be seen, the literature defines text modification as a multi-layered and systematic operation extending from the word level to the whole text. In addition to these, Durmuş (2013b) addresses text modification under two basic types: simplification and elaboration. Simplification involves replacing lexical and syntactic structures thought to make understanding difficult for the target audience with simpler, more understandable equivalents. Elaboration, on the other hand, aims to contribute to the target audience's understanding by preserving original words that are difficult to understand in the text and adding synonyms or explanatory expressions to them. Durmuş (2013b) also states that in the text modification process, besides operations that are modification types in themselves such as summarizing, simplification, and elaboration, sub-operations encountered in more than one modification type (such as shortening, splitting, paraphrasing, combining, substitution, dropping, and reduction) also play a role. It is stated that as a result of these operations, reconstructed texts emerge that differ semantically from the source text but are more suitable for the

target audience. Beyond these strategies and techniques, Duman (2010) comprehensively sets forth the philosophy and ethical framework of text modification. According to Duman, preserving the original spirit of the text lies at the center of this process. This principle requires the intervention to maintain the author's style, the sentence structure dominating the text, and its phonetic characteristics. However, the most fundamental and inviolable principle is the preservation of the text's main idea and semantic integrity. As can be seen, the literature offers a body of knowledge regarding the theoretical foundations, applicable techniques, and fundamental principles of text modification.

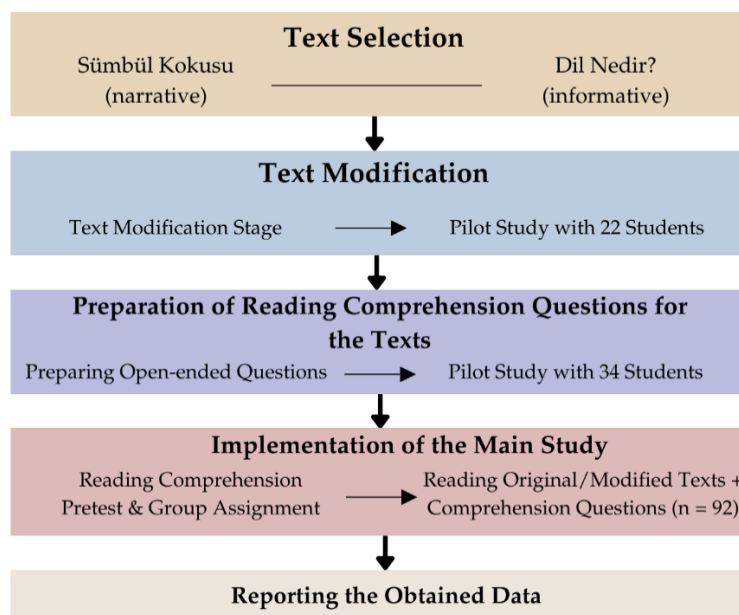
The presence of text modification in the context of Turkish language teaching has been addressed from various aspects in the literature. A significant portion of studies in this field has focused on descriptively analyzing modification practices in textbooks. Studies such as Bayraktar and Durukan (2016), Tekşan and Çinpolat (2023), and Yücelşen (2014) examined the current situation in the field by revealing, through document analysis, by which methods and to what extent the texts in textbooks were modified. There are also studies that examine the effect of the practice by moving beyond this descriptive framework. Durukan (2014) addressed a topic that can be said to be related to modification by examining the relationship between readability level and reading skills. Bayraktar and Durukan (2020) demonstrated the positive effect of surface structure changes on students' comprehension skills and views employing a mixed-method design, thereby strengthening the foundation of the subject in the context of Turkish education. As can be seen, experimental studies in which authentic and modified texts are directly compared and where the different responses of text types to modification practices are examined empirically are limited. In this context, the current research aims to offer an original and holistic contribution to the literature by comparatively examining the effect of modified forms of different types of texts on students' reading comprehension achievement using quantitative data. In this regard, the current research aims to comparatively examine the contribution of authentic and modified texts on the reading comprehension achievements of 7th-grade students. In the study, students' reading comprehension levels regarding these texts were evaluated by using authentic and modified versions of two different types of texts (narrative and informative). Thus, answers to the following questions were sought within the scope of the research:

1. Is there a contribution of the text modification practice to reading comprehension scores in the narrative text?
2. Is there a contribution of the text modification practice to reading comprehension scores in the informative text?

## Method

### *Design*

In this research, a quasi-experimental pre-test post-test control group design was employed. Quasi-experimental designs are research models that permit the examination of the effect of the independent variable, although the controls required by experimental designs cannot be fully established (Creswell, 2020). In the study, two groups consisting of intact classes were determined in their natural states, and random assignment was not performed. Prior to the process of comparing reading comprehension in modified and authentic texts, a reading comprehension test (Ülper et al., 2017) was administered to both groups to evaluate the groups' baseline levels and check their equivalence. Subsequently, the experimental group read the modified text type, while the control group read the authentic text. Following the reading of the texts, reading comprehension questions related to the read texts were administered to both groups, and the scores of the two groups were evaluated. Thus, the differences between the post-test results of the two groups were compared through statistical analyses (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Research Design

### *Study Group*

Three different study groups were used within the scope of the research. The first study group was utilized in the text modification process. The second study group was used during the pilot application and rubric development phase of the open-ended reading comprehension questions. Finally, the third study group was used during the administration phase of the reading comprehension achievement tests for the modified and authentic texts. All study groups consisted of intact classes, and student participation was not mandatory. Data collection in the third group was carried out in stages. Therefore, students who participated in the pre-assessment and were included in one of the stages of the main application remained in the sample. Students who did not participate in the narrative and informative text applications were excluded from the sample. Thus, one student who participated in the narrative text application but not the informative text application, and two students who participated in the informative text application but not the narrative text application, remained in the sample. For this reason, the number of participants is restated in each analysis in the findings section.

The first group consists of 22 students from the 7th grade. The students study at a public school. This study group was used during the modification phase of the texts. This group has no connection with the other groups. The gender distribution of the group is eight boys and fourteen girls. This study group was administered the authentic text and the modified text. They were asked to underline the parts not understood in the authentic and modified texts. Thus, the parts where difficulties in understanding occurred were determined.

The second study group consists of a total of 34 students, also from the 7th grade. These students study at a public school. This group was used to carry out the pilot application of the texts and reading comprehension questions. During the pilot application process, a graded scoring key (rubric) was prepared to ensure the scoring of reading comprehension questions, and example student answers were used in the creation of this key. The reading duration of the authentic text and the modified text was also examined. Thus, final checks were performed on the texts at this stage, and the reading comprehension questions consisting of open-ended questions were finalized.

The third study group, in which modified and authentic texts were compared in terms of reading comprehension, consists of 92 students. 50 girls and 42 boys from four different seventh-grade classes were used in the achievement test. Due to the difficulty of intervening in classes within the scope of the study, matching could not be resorted to in the groups. However, an examination was conducted on whether the reading comprehension achievements and social lives of the classes to be applied showed similar characteristics. First of all, all four classes are located in schools situated in the central

districts of two different metropolitan cities. Through preliminary interviews held with the Turkish teachers of all classes, the opinion emerged that the general achievement statuses of these classes were at a similar level. However, the Reading-Comprehension Test (Ülper et al., 2017), prepared for middle school level students, was used for the purpose of comparing the students' reading comprehension achievements with each other. It was administered to four different groups within one lesson hour and scored by the researchers according to the directive of the measurement tool. The obtained scores were analyzed with the One-Way ANOVA test. According to the obtained result, no significant difference was detected among the reading comprehension achievement scores of the four classes ( $F(3,88) = 2.24$ ,  $p = .090$ ). The mean scores and student numbers of the classes are as follows: 7/C = 19.6 ( $n = 22$ ), 7/D = 21.8 ( $n = 25$ ), 7/E = 18.8 ( $n = 18$ ), 7/K = 20.6 ( $n = 27$ ). Although there was no statistical score difference between the classes, it was observed that the mean scores of two classes exceeded 20 points. For this reason, observing that these two classes should not be in the same group, the modified text and authentic text application groups were selected randomly. Thus, classes 7/D and 7/E were assigned as the modified text group, and classes 7/C and 7/K as the authentic text group. The score difference between the groups formed in this way was also examined with the independent samples t-test. According to the obtained result, no significant difference was observed between the modified ( $M = 20.6$ ,  $SD = 4.33$ ) text group of 43 people and the authentic ( $M = 20.2$ ,  $SD = 3.98$ ) text group of 49 people in terms of reading comprehension scores ( $t(90) = 0.483$ ,  $p = .630$ ; Levene's  $F(1, 90) = 0.235$ ,  $p = .629$ ; Kolmogorov-Smirnov  $D(90) = .127$ ,  $p = .101$ ). In the continuation of the study, these groups were named the modified text group and the authentic text group.

#### **Data Collection Tools**

Two texts, one narrative and one informative, and reading comprehension questions were used for data collection in the research. First, work was carried out on the selection of texts. In determining the texts, texts that were suitable for the themes of the middle school Turkish course and had not been used in Turkish textbooks before were researched. For this purpose, primarily the texts used in Turkish textbooks within the last 20 years and the section on the qualities of texts to be included in textbooks of the Turkish Course Curriculum were examined (MoNE, 2019; Tekşan et al., 2023). In line with this examination, texts that frequently appeared in textbooks and were highly likely to have been encountered by students previously were excluded from the scope of the study. Furthermore, children's literature products were also excluded as they would not require modification. Thus, the works titled "Dağa Çıkan Kurt" by Halide Edib Adıvar, "Çağlayanlar" by Ahmet Hikmet Müftüoğlu, "Millî Savaş Hikayeleri" by Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, "Türkler'in Kültür Kökenleri" by Ergun Candan, "Türk Dil Bilgisi" by Muharrem Ergin, and "Kültür ve Dil" by Mehmet Kaplan were examined by the researchers. These authors and works were selected because they were aligned in a specific direction in terms of thematic and linguistic features. It was aimed that the narrative texts be taken from authors competent in their field in accordance with the National Resistance and Atatürk theme, and the informative texts in accordance with the Our National Culture theme. The fact that these works could not be used directly in textbooks due to their linguistic features, despite being high-quality works, was effective in forming the sample in this study. Following the examination of narrative style, subject, and theme, the text "Sümbül Kokusu" (Scent of Hyacinth), suitable for the National Resistance and Atatürk theme for the narrative text, and the text "Dil Nedir" (What is Language), suitable for the Our National Culture theme for the informative text, were determined. The story titled "Sümbül Kokusu" was written by Ahmet Hikmet Müftüoğlu in 1918. The text "Dil Nedir," selected as the informative type, was chosen from Muharrem Ergin's book titled "Türk Dil Bilgisi." The opinions of three experts in the field of Turkish education were consulted regarding the suitability of these texts for the themes and for modification. Additionally, Durmuş (2013b) stated that among the grounds for text modification, there are cases such as the modification of historical texts and the modification of texts prepared for adults. Based on these opinions and reasons for text modification, the modification and reading comprehension question writing process for the texts whose suitability was approved began. In text modification, the use of only the intuitive method was prevented by utilizing the Turkish course curriculum, sections not understood by students, A Frequency Dictionary of Turkish (Aksan et al., 2016), and A Frequency Dictionary of Contemporary Turkish (Tezcan-Aksu & Adalı, 2018). Along with these, Turkish readability was also checked using the Ateşman (1997) and Çetinkaya-Uzun (Çetinkaya, 2010) formulas.

After the operations were performed, the opinions of three Turkish field experts were consulted regarding the changes that might occur in the deep structures of the texts. The experts were presented first with the authentic and then the modified versions, and they were asked about the preservation status of the subject, main idea, character traits, and aesthetic value in these texts. Thus, it was aimed to preserve elements such as the main subject, main idea, character traits of individuals, plot, time, and setting in the texts. In the modifications made, efforts were made to preserve the aesthetic value by intensively performing sentence splitting operations and simplification with equivalent words. As a result of the feedback received, the text modification process was completed. Indeed, as discussed in the literature, it has been frequently stated that modified, intervened texts may undergo a “loss of aesthetic value” (Carroli, 2008; Gilmore, 2007; Young, 1999). Consulting expert opinion in order not to compromise the specific value of the text while making modifications gains importance here in terms of ensuring that the relevant intervention does not create a loss of value in the text (Uygur, 2024). On this occasion, the authentic value, thematic structure, and emotional depth of the text were attempted to be preserved with the help of expert opinion and corpus-based tools. Subsequently, the stage of writing reading comprehension questions for both texts was initiated. At this stage, open-ended questions were written, and the questions were given their final forms with expert opinions. Detailed information regarding modification and reading comprehension questions is presented below.

**Modifications Regarding the *Sümbül Kokusu* Text:** “Sümbül Kokusu” (Scent of Hyacinth), which can be considered a historical text, was subjected to a multi-layered modification process specific to the text type so that 7th-grade students could more easily access the text’s emotional depth and historical context. In this process, the simplification strategy was predominantly utilized. In determining words not frequently used in contemporary Turkish, objective sources such as A Frequency Dictionary of Turkish (Aksan et al., 2016) and A Frequency Dictionary of Contemporary Turkish (Tezcan-Aksu & Adalı, 2018) were used alongside the intuitive evaluations of the researchers. These lexical simplifications covered expressions such as muzmahil olmak (to collapse), metrûk (abandoned), civanmert (noble-hearted), me’yûs (hopeless), and şebenderhane (consulate). These were replaced with current and understandable equivalents in a way that would preserve the literary atmosphere of the text. In this process, in order to preserve the literary texture of the text, the modification of words whose meanings students were thought to be able to deduce from the context was avoided. In addition to these arrangements at the lexical level, long and descriptive sentences filled with nested clauses that slowed down the narrative flow of the text were split into shorter and dynamic sentences to make the plot more followable. Another important intervention specific to this text was the application of the shortening strategy. Some long descriptive passages aimed solely at creating atmosphere, which did not directly contribute to the main conflict of the text and the inner world of the characters, were removed from the text to keep the reader’s attention on the main plot. For example, the paragraph starting with “Here is a summer evening, Kalender’s cheeks...” in the authentic text, which describes a summer evening, was removed from the text because it did not directly contribute to the progression of the story. All these and similar interventions aimed to ensure that the target audience understands the spirit of the National Resistance and the internal conflict experienced by the heroes in the authentic text more easily and establishes a stronger bond with the text.

To conduct a preliminary evaluation of these interventions made, both the authentic and modified texts were read by the first study group consisting of 22 students. According to what these students stated, the words and phrases not understood in the authentic text were in the following contents: muzmahil (13), metruk (14), şehvani (13), revolver (13), pazı (13), dimağında (13), tayyarelerine (12), tahtelbahirlerine (12), mukabele (12), ma’mur (12), ma’mulati (12), darü’l felasifelerinden (12), te’cil (11), tahsil (11), tabiiyyat (11), nurani (11), me’yus (11), kaşanelerinden (11), işportalar (11), civanmerttir (11), cerideyi (11), revolverini (10), mühimmat (10), muzlim (10), ma’muresi (10), istinatgahı (10), gamlı (10), dretnotlarına (10), şebboylar (9), rayihalar (9), matemli (9)... A total of 148 words/phrases were indicated in the list continuing in this manner. Students marked on the text the sections where these words appeared as not understood. It was reported by students on the text that sections with many unknown words were also not understood. In the modified text, 56 words with unknown meanings were reported. The most frequently repeating examples from these sections are as follows: pazı (11), loş (8), viranesi (7), takatsizdi (7), müracaat (7), şebboylar (6), ud (6), simalarıyla (6), gamlı (5)...

When the authentic text was examined according to Ateşman (1997) and Çetinkaya-Uzun (Çetinkaya, 2010) readability formulas, the results in Table 1 were obtained. Regarding the word and sentence counting directive, Çetinkaya (2010) was taken into account. According to the obtained results, it is observed that the Ateşman (1997) readability score increased by approximately two points. The existence of sections directly removed from the text, the frequent inclusion of word modification in the text, and the fact that sentence shortening was not done excessively may have been effective in this situation. The primary goal in the interventions made was that the artistic expression of the text should not be damaged. Therefore, processes of oversimplifying the sentence structure that could affect the expression were resorted to less.

**Table 1.** Readability Results of the Narrative Text

Text	Sentence Count	Word Count	Syllable Count	Character Count	Ateşman	Çetinkaya-Uzun
Authentic	116	882	2402	5896	69.57 (Medium)	40.67 (Educational Reading – 8th and 9th Grade)
Modified	113	762	2083	5128	71.40 (Easy)	41.24 (Educational Reading – 8th and 9th Grade)

The comparison of the modified text created after these stages and the authentic version is as follows (strikethrough indicates removed or simplified sections, and underlined sections indicate additions made):

Sümbül Kokusu

Bugün pazardı. Budapeşte ~~Darülfünunu Tabiiyyat şubesinde tahsil etmekte~~ Üniversitesinde Doğa Bilimleri alanında okumakta olan Hüseyin Arif, ~~Macar payitahtının loş,~~ Macaristan başkentinin rutubetli, güneşsiz ve loş sokaklarının birinde, bu milletin talihi gibi, gamlı, ~~metrük boşaltılmış~~ bir apartmanında ~~fakirane~~ yaşamaktaydı. Yoksul odasının kenarında, tahta bir masanın üstünde duran bir gün evvelki ~~erideyi~~ gazeteyi aldı. Tekrar okumaya başladı. Çanakale'ye dair ~~Dersaadet'ten~~ İstanbul'dan, Berlin'den, Londra'dan gelen telgrafları süzdü inceledi! Karadan ve denizden hücum devam ~~ediyor,~~ ediyordu. Boğaz'a döktüğümüz ~~terpiller~~ toplanıyor, mayınlar toplanıyordu. Kumkale'ye, Seddülbahir'e, Anafarta'ya çıkan İngiliz, Fransız askerleri ~~ilerliyorlar...~~ ilerliyorlardı...

Her satır bir hançer, her nokta bir kurşun gibi beynine saplanıyordu. ~~Muzmahil idi~~ Çökmüştü. Yüreğini kaplayan ateşli bir acı göğsünü yakıyordu. Romanya, ülkesinden mühimmat geçirtmiyordu. Bizim de silah ve cephane tezgâhlarımız ~~kâfi~~ yeterli değildi. İstanbul'un ~~müdafaasından~~ savunmasından ümidini kesmişti. Hâlbuki İngilizler, Fransızlar, cihanın bu iki ~~müterakki~~ gelişmiş milleti yerden, gökten, denizden, yıldırımlarıyla, volkanlarıyla, cehennemleriyle, kapımızın önüne gelmişlerdi. Onların ~~dretnolarına,~~ tayyarelerine, ~~tahtelbahirlerine~~ mukâbele edecek ~~nemiz~~ zırhlı gemilerine, uçaklarına, denizaltılarına karşılık verecek neyimiz vardı? Bir göğüs, bir pazı... İşte bu kadar!

Hay Allah'ım! Bu göğüs çökecek, bu pazı kıvrılacak.

Şimdi vatani, İstanbul; bütün ~~camileriyle,~~ saraylarıyla ~~camileri,~~ sarayları, mavi göğü, mavi ~~deniziyle,~~ saz benizli, denizi, solgun yüzlü narın kadınlarıyla kadınları, ince uzun boylu sinirli ~~gençleriyle~~ gençleri, ağır ve ~~me'yûs~~ ümitsiz yürüyüşlü ihtiyarlarıyla gözünün önüne ~~geliyorlar~~ geliyor...

İslâm'ın gözü, Türkün Türk'ün kalbi olan ~~bu,~~ renk ve nur durağı ~~memleket~~ İstanbul pek temiz, pek ~~ma'mûr~~ bakımlı, pek güzeldi. Onun yıkık duvarları, Avrupa'nın dargın sisler, durgun isler altında, kaba, kirli, kara, ~~matemli~~ kâşanelerinden yaşlı köşkerlerinden daha güler yüzlüdür... Onun çarpık kavuklu, yan fesli harap mezarlıkları, buraların ~~Dârü'l felâsifelerinden~~ felsefe fakültelerinden, kütüphanelerinden daha manalı, daha düşündürücüdür... Oranın hamalları, fakirleri buranın lortlarından, milyonerlerinden daha asil, daha ~~evanmerttir...~~ yüce gönüllüdür. Buranın düzgün, kara sokaklarından oranın beyaz, mavi kaldırımlı eğri yolları, daha ~~nûrânî~~ ışıklı, daha neşelidir...

Avrupa'nın bir şehir büyüklüğündeki fabrikalarından, içlerinde bir hünervereleustayla bir çırak çalışan küçük dükânların ma'mûlât dükânlarının ürünleri daha sanatlı, daha kıymetlidir...

Kalbinin en derin, en ateşli köşesinden bir çığlık kopardı:

– Allah! Ey İslâm'ın Allah'ı!.. Düşman, vatanımı çiğnemesin, çiğnetme!

Bulutlu düşünceler dimâğın zihnini kapladığı sırada uzun siyah kirpikleri arasından iki şimşek çaktı. Damla damla ağladı. Bu bir rahmetti. Gözlerini sıktı. Dar ve muzlim karanlık odacığında gezinmeye başladı... Sonra masasının gözünü çekti. Ufak, paslı bir revolver çıkardı. Fişeklerini yokladı. Ninesinin, ablasının, sevdiklerinin hayallerini gözleriyle öptü. Kâğıt ve kalem aldı... Takatsizdi. Avluya nâzır bakan pencereyi açtı. Bir parça hava istiyordu.

Pencere önünde duran ve dört gün evvel ev sahibesinin hediye ettiği küçük saksıdaki sümbüle doğru eğildi. Onu kokladı... İrkildi... Çekildi. Düşündü... Ağlayarak tekrar saksının üstüne kapandı... Kaldı... Sağ avucuyla çiçeği yüzüne, gözüne çekti, sürdü. Yine kokladı, kokladı, kokladı. Dimâğında Zihninde bir baygınlık, gönlünde bir aşk, bir secde istiğrak ile kendinden geçme isteği vardı... Kendisini kaybetti.

Bu sırada kapı vurulmuştu. Dudakları çiçeğin kıvrımları arasında olduğu hâlde mecalsiz hâlsizce "Gel!" dedi. Karşısında Mehmet Siyavuş'u buldu. Hemen saksıyı kavradı.

– Şunu kokla, kokla Mehmet, dedi.

Mehmet Siyavuş arkadaşının perişanlığından, heyecanından ürkmüştü. Yavaşça içini çekti.

– Hayır, iyi kokla! Derin kokla! Gözlerini kapayarak kokla! Koklarken gözlerinin önüne ne geliyor? Neresi geliyor? Söyle, Allah aşkına bütün ruhunla, bütün nefesinle kokla!..

Arkadaşının yüzüne doğru çiçeği tutuyor, itiyordu. Mehmet Siyavuş:

– İstanbul kokusu!

– Değil mi? Değil mi? Fakat neden böyle?

– Hani mart içinde, nisan, mayısta Köprübaşı'nda, sokak köşelerinde geniş işportalar, kola takılan ince uzun sepetler içinde laleler, zerrinler, şebboylar, menekşeler. "Bahariye İlkbahar kokuları!" diye bağırarak kara yağız, bıçkın kıyafetli satıcıların önünde demet demet saçılan bu râyihalar güzel kokular... Beşiktaş'ın, Eyüp'ün fulya tarlaları kokuları... Ruhani Ruhani bir medeniyet, kutsi kutsal bir nezaket kokuları...

Ah! Vatan!

"Misk Mis gibi kokusu canlarda tüter."

Güneşi böyle, göğü böyle kokar değil mi? Viranesi böyle, ma'mûresibakımlı yeri böyle kokar. Sarayı böyle, kulübesi böyle kokar değil mi? Fakat bu mübarek bahçe elimizden gidiyor, İstanbul'u kaybediyoruz.

– ...

Şimdi korkunç bir sükûtsessizlik... İki genç boyunları bükülmüş, kalpler durmuş, gözleri fırlamış düşünüyordular...

– Evet, nasıl karşı duracağız?

– Nasıl karşı duracağız?

– Bu sefer mutlaka... Yok, söylemeye dilim varmıyor.

– Oooof!

—Allah aşkına şu sümbülü bir daha kokla!

İşte bir yaz akşamı, Kalender'in yanakları, saçları, elleri okşayan yumuşak, tatlı, ılık, şevvanî rüzgârı ki ruhu mavi nurlara sarar... İşte küpeştesi mavi ipek örtülü iki çifte narin bir kayığın içinde ak bulutlara bürünmüş iki yıldız, iki yaşmaklı taze hanım, Şair Nedim'in iki berceste mısraı; iki demet sümbül... İşte, yıldızlı bir gece, Anadolu sahilinin arka koruları arasından gelen bülbüllerin elhânına, görünmez bir sandaldan yükselen bir "Hey hey" ahengi bürünüyor, sanırsın ki yıldızlar nur teganni ediyorlar ve çiçekler rayiha ötüyorlar.

– Şu sümbülü ver, bir daha koklayayım. İşte, Babialı Caddesi'nden geçen iki üç efendi ki sarımtırak simalarıyla iki üç efendi, zarafeti dünyanın hiçbir tarafında inkâr olunamayan edilemeyen asil ve vakur inhinâlarıyla, aşınlarıyla temenna ediyorlara ağırbaşlı eğilmeleriyle, tanıdıklarıyla selamlaşıyorlar... İşte Bayezit Camii'nde bir teravih namazı ki bütün bir milletin saf ruhu secde hâlinde, Allah'ın huzuruna serilmiş... İşte, bir eski kafesin arkasında şarkı doğunun bütün enin-i şürinini okuyuşürlerini inleyen bir ud sedası sesi! İşte Bolayır'da Namık Kemal'in mezarı! Azizim, camileri, medreseleriyle, imaretleri, saraylarıyla bütün bir medeniyetin, üç yüz milyonluk İslâm'a ait bir medeniyetin, bir mevecudiyetin istinatgâhı varlığın dayanak yeri, Türk'ün, Osmanlı'nın güzelliklerin, büyüklüklerin payitahtı Osmanlı'nın güzelliklerinin, büyüklüklerinin başkenti gidiyor.

– Gidiyor ha!

Hüseyin Arif şimdi fırlamış "Yaşamak alçaklıktır" diyerek revolverini tekrar kavramıştı. Siyavuş üstüne atıldı. "Hayır, sanırım ki böyle odada ölmek alçaklıktır" dedi.

– Ne yapabiliriz?

– Çanakkale'de ölebiliriz.

– Bundan ne olur?

– Analarımızdan evvel kendimizi çiğnetmiş oluruz. Ben gidiyorum.

Hüseyin Arif:

– Ben de geliyorum Mehmet.

Birbirlerinin ellerini sıktılar.

O akşam lokantada rast geldikleri rastladıkları bir gazeteci bunlara demişti ki Çanakkale müdafaası savunması yalnız hilafetin Türkiye'nin istikrarını değil, Almanya ve Avusturya-Macaristan'ın da bekasını temin edecek vekalıcılığını sağlayacaktır. Bu, Rusya'nın izmihalin yok oluşunu hazırlayacaktır. Ve tarih, Türkiye'nin ehemmiyetini önemini o zaman anlayacaktır.

İki gün içinde eşyalarını sattılar. Üçüncü gün pasaportlarını vize ettirmek için şehbenderhaneye konsolosluga müracaat ettikleri. Bu sırada "Talebinin Öğrencilerin askerlikleri te'vil edildi" "ertelendi." diyen kâtibin memurunun duygusuz gözlerine baktılar ve. Ardından ceketlerinin iliklerine yakalarına taktıkları bir sümbül çiçeğini derin derin koklayarak ve önlerine bakarak usulca, "Biz gönüllü gidiyoruz!" dediler.

Ahmet Hikmet Müftüoğlu

Çağlayanlar, 3 Şubat 1334

(Değiştirilmiştir)

*Modifications Regarding the Dil Nedir? Text:* The text "Dil Nedir?" (What is Language?), possessing academic and abstract content, was subjected to a unique and systematic modification process to increase the conceptual clarity and logical consistency required by the informative text type. In the lexical simplification stage of the text, words not frequently used in contemporary Turkish were determined using A Frequency Dictionary of Turkish (Aksan et al., 2016) and A Frequency Dictionary of Contemporary Turkish (Tezcan-Aksu & Adalı, 2018), as well as based on the intuitive evaluations of the researchers. Accordingly, academic terms such as içtimai (social), müessese (institution), vasıta

(tool/means), kaide (rule), and hüviyet (identity) were updated with more common scientific language usages while preserving semantic accuracy. Beyond lexical simplification, long, complex, and nested sentence structures, which were the most fundamental problematic aspect of the text, were analyzed. The fact that the average sentence length of the authentic text was 11.8 words made this syntactic intervention mandatory. These structures, harboring philosophical arguments, were divided into simpler and more understandable sentences, each expressing a single logical step. The most critical strategy specific to this text was elaboration (that is, semantic expansion) applied in sections that were important within the text but deemed insufficient to be explained at the middle school level. The most prominent example of this is the concretization of the expression “language is a system of secret agreements,” which was thought to create uncertainty for the reader, with the sentence “That is, its beginning is not determined and how it functions is uncertain.”

To evaluate the effectiveness of these applied strategies and the increase in the text’s accessibility, the authentic and modified texts were presented to a pilot group of 22 students. According to what the students stated, the words and phrases not understood in the authentic text were as follows: içtimai (22), tabii (21), müessesedir (20), vasıta (17), mefhumları (11), kaideleridir (10), temayyüllerinden (9), meçhulümüzdür (9), hüviyete (9), fertlerin (9), cemiyetin (9), mahiyeti (8), hususiyetlerine (8)... A total of 102 words/phrases were indicated in the list continuing in this manner. Students marked on the text the sections where these words appeared as not understood. It was reported in writing by students on the text that sentences containing many words with unknown meanings and long sentences were also not understood. In the modified text, 50 words or phrases with unknown meanings were reported. Examples from these sections are as follows: zira (7), muhafaza (4), kavmi (4), olageldiğine (3), istisnalar (3), ilkelerdir (3), fertleri (3), ...

When the authentic text was examined according to Ateşman (1997) and Çetinkaya-Uzun (Çetinkaya, 2010) readability formulas, the results in Table 2 were obtained. Regarding the word and sentence counting directive, Çetinkaya (2010) was taken into account. According to the obtained results, it is observed that the Ateşman (1997) readability score increased by seven points, and the Çetinkaya-Uzun (Çetinkaya, 2010) readability score increased by three points. Thus, it can be interpreted that the text’s readability level became easier.

**Table 2.** Readability Results of the Informative Text

Text	Sentence Count	Word Count	Syllable Count	Character Count	Ateşman	Çetinkaya-Uzun
Authentic	70	827	2197	5332	61.26	38.31 (Educational Reading – (Medium) 8th and 9th Grade)
Modified	79	795	2063	5012	68.31	41.62 (Educational Reading – (Medium) 8th and 9th Grade)

The comparison of the modified text created after these stages and the authentic version is as follows (strikethrough indicates removed or simplified sections, and underlined sections indicate additions made):

Dil Nedir?

Dil, insanlar arasında anlaşmayı sağlayan ~~doğal~~tabii bir ~~aracıdır.~~ vasıta, kendisine ~~özgün~~mahsus kanunları olan ve ancak bu kanunlar çerçevesinde gelişen canlı bir ~~varlıktır.~~ temelvarlık, ~~temeli~~ bilinmeyen zamanlarda atılmış ~~bir~~ gizli anlaşmalar sistemidir. Yani başlangıcı belirli değildir ve nasıl işlediği belirsizdir. ~~Ayrıca anlaşmalar sistemi,~~ seslerden örülü toplumsal~~örülümüş~~ içtimai bir yapıdır.~~müessesedir.~~

Doğal Bir Araç ~~Tabii bir vasıta~~

Dil, insanlar arasında anlaşmayı sağlayan ~~doğal~~tabii bir ~~aracıdır.~~ vasıta~~dır.~~ İnsanlar; duygularını, düşüncelerini, fikirlerini, ~~hükümlerini~~ birbirlerine aktarmak, ~~isteklerini~~nakletmek, ~~meramlarını~~

birbirlerine anlatmak için dil denen araca başvururlar, denilen vasıtaya başvururlar. Fakat dil insanların kullandığı herhangi bir aracavasıtaya benzemez. Onun araçlığıvasıtahğı sadece anlaşmayı sağlaması bakımındadır. Bireylertemin etmesi bakımındandır. Fertler ve nesiller arasında anlaşma aracivasıtası olarak iş görür. Fakat bu işi görürken daima bağımsızmüstakil bir kimliği vardır, hüviyete sahiptir. İnsanlar ona istediğiistedikleri gibi hükmedemezler. Yani onu kontrol edemezler. Onu olduğu gibi kabul etmeyeetmeğe, onu bir aracvasıta olarak kullanırken onun özelliklerinehususiyetlerine dikkat etmeyeetmeğe, onun doğasına uymayakhususiyetlerine uymağa mecburdurlar. Çünkü dil yapaysun'ı bir araç, maddivasıta, maddî bir aracvasıta, bir âlet değildir. O doğaltabiî bir araçtır. Araç görevivasıtadır. Vasıta vazifesi görür, fakat doğaltabiî bir varlığı vardır. Bu Dil bu bakımdan dil, canlı bir aracavasıtaya benzer.

MeselaMeselâ at da bir araçtırvasıtadır, otomobil de bir araçtır. İnsan otomobili vasıtadır. Fakat insan otomobile istediği şekilde yönlendirebilir fakat atın doğasınahükmedebilir, at karşısında ise ancak onun tabiatına uygun hareket etmek zorundadır. Otomobile istediği şekli verir, onun biçimini istediği şekle sokar, onu istediği gibi kullanır, isterse uçuruma götürebilir, sevk edebilir. Fakat atın biçimini değiştiremez, onu istediği gibi kullanamaz, istediği yere götüremez. Ata ne ederseniz edin, sevk edemez. Başını kesseniz ata korktuğu yerde bir adım attıramazsınız. İşte dilin araçlığı da böyledirvasıtahğı böyle bir vasıtalıktır, atın araçlığıvasıtahğı gibidir. Anlaşmayı sağlamak bakımından bir araç gibi iş görür fakat doğal bir varlığa sahiptir.

#### Canlı Bir Varlık bir varlık

Doğal Tabiî bir araçvarlık olan dilin kendisine özgümahsus birtakım kanunları vardır. Bunlar dil kurallarındırkaideleridir. Dil kuralları, kaideleri dilin yapısına hâkim olan, dilin bünyesinden ve eğilimlerinden doğan bazı ilkelerdir, yapısından ve temayüllerinden doğmuş bulunan birtakım prensiplerdir. Bunlar dille birlikte varmevut olup onun yapısının özelliklerini gösterir, hususiyetlerini ifade ederler, temayüllerinin istikametlerini gösterirler. Dil, canlı bir varlıktır.

Zaman zaman birtakım değişiklikler geçirebilir. Kendi yapısından, kendi bünyesinden doğan çeşitli sebeplerle de bazı gelişmeler gösterir. Bu gelişmeler ve değişiklikler ve gelişmeler ona, uzun tarihi boyunca, daima gelişenserpilen ve zaman içinde akıp gelen bir görünümmanzara verirler.

Bu yüzden dilin tarihinde birtakım aşamalarmerhaleler, birtakım gelişme evrelerisafhaları göze çarpar. Fakat bütün bu değişiklikler ve gelişmeler dil kuralları, kaideleri çerçevesinde ortaya çıkar, cereyan ederler. Dile yeni kelimeler kazandırmak için dışarıdan yapılacak müdahalelerin de daima bu kuralları, kaideler çerçevesinde olması gerekir. Kendi kanunlarına aykırı zorlamaları dil hiçbir zaman benimsemez. Canlı bir varlık olarak yapısı bireylerin, fertlerin ve toplumların ona karışmasına hiçceemiyetlerin istedikleri şekilde karışmalarına müsait, uygun değildir. Onun bireylere fertlere ve toplumlara bağlı emiyetlere tâbi olmayan bir düzeninizamı vardır. Bu düzeninizamı meydana getiren şey, kendi kanunları ve kurallarındır, kendi kaideleridir. Bu kurallar dışındakikaideler dışına çıkacak bir müdahale dile hiçbir şey kazandırmaz. Dil ancak kendi bünyesine uygun normal bir müdahaleyi kabul eder. Normal bir müdahale ise sadece dilin doğal gelişimtabiî gelişme yolunu açık tutmaktır. Yani yalnızcadışarıdan dile, ancak, dilin doğal gelişimini tabiî gelişmesini önleyen bir durum varsa dile dışarıdan, müdahale edilmelidir. Zira bazen dilin bünyesini saran yabancı unsurlar yabancı, zararlı otlar gibi gelişimine zararlı olur. Böyle durumlarda dilin doğal gelişme yolunu açık tutmak için, dile yardım etmek için müdahale etmek lazımdır. Böyle bir yardım ise ancak dile kendi kuralları içinde kalarak yaklaşmak şartı ile faydalı olabilir. Çünkü dil kendi kanunları, kendi kuralları içinde gelişen canlı bir varlıktır, dilin tabiî gelişmesine engel olurlar. Böyle durumlarda dilin tabiî gelişme yolunu açık tutmak için yabancı unsurları temizlemek üzere dile dışarıdan yardım etmek mümkündür ve lazımdır. Böyle bir yardım ise ancak dile kendi kaideleri içinde kalarak yaklaşmak şartı ile faydalı olabilir. Çünkü dil kendi kanunları, kendi kaideleri içinde gelişen canlı bir varlıktır.

### Gizli Anlaşmalar Sistemi

Dil bir gizli anlaşmalar sistemidir. Canlı ve cansız varlıkları, kavramları, hareketleri karşılayan kelimeler ve üzerinde, kelimelerin nasıl sıralandığı üzerinde bir toplumun tüm birbirleri ile münasebetleri ve fikirleri anlatmak için yapılan kelime sırası üzerinde bir cemiyetin, bir kavmin, bir milletin bütün fertleri gizli anlaşmalar, gizli sözleşmeler yapmış durumdadır. Bu yolla suretle bir toplumun tüm bireyleri cemiyetin bütün fertleri bir varlığı hep aynı kelimeyle aynı kelime ile karşılarlar. Mesela bütün Türkler bildiğimiz sert şeyeye taş, suya su, ışığa ışık demek için âdeta sözleşmişlerdir. Bu sözleşmeyi, bu gizli anlaşmayı her topluma, her kavim ayrı ayrı bir şekilde yapmış, böylece her milletin kavminin ayrı bir dili olmuştur. Aynı bir varlığa Türkler taş, Farslar seng, Araplar hacer demiştir. Kelimelerin ilişkileri demişlerdir. Aynı duygu ve düşünceleri anlatmak için kelimelerin münasebeti ve sıralanışı da milletlere göre farklıdır. Çünkü her toplumun kendine özgü kavminin ayrı bir gizli anlaşmalar sistemi vardır. Bu bir kavmin bütün fertleri arasında mevcut olan bu gizli anlaşma ve sözleşmelerin temeli bilinmeyen zamanlarda atılmıştır. Dil insanla birlikte var olduğuna göre bu gizli anlaşmaların kökleri ilk insanlara kadar gider.

Yalnız, bu gizli anlaşmaların doğuşu ve niteliği bilinmemektedir. Varlıkların ve hareketlerin sözlerle karşılandığı gibi bu karşılayışın ayrı kavimlere göre farklı oluşunun da sebeplerini ve niteliğini bilmiyoruz. Bu konudaki bir görüşe göre dilin sebepleri ve mahiyeti meçhulümüzdür. Bu hususta mevcut kanaat dillerin doğuşunda doğadaki seslerin insanlar tarafından taklit edilmesi çok önemlidir. Tabiatdaki sesleri taklidi mühim bir yeri olduğu merkezindedir. Bugün her dilde ses taklitlerinden doğdukları açık olan bazı kelimeler de vardır. Fakat istisnalar hariç sözcüklerin çoğunun böyle bir taklit bir kaç istisna dışında büyük kelime kütlelerinin herhangi bir ses taklidi izi taşımadıkları da ortadadır.

### Toplumsal ve Millî Bir Kurum

Dil toplumsal bir kurumdur. Bireylerin üstünde, bütün toplumun bir cemiyetin malı olan ve bütün bir topluma emiyeti içine alan kuvvetli bir kurumdur. Toplumların emiyetidir. Cemiyetlerin en büyük dayanağı dildir. Dil, bir topluma emiyeti ayakta tutan, bir topluma emiyetin varlığını sağlayan, devam ettiren, bir topluma emiyette sarsılmaz bir birlik yaratan kurumdur. Bu bakımdan emiyet olarak dilin oynadığı rol çok büyüktür. Bu bakımdan dil, milleti oluşturan teşkil eden unsurların başında gelir.

Bir milleti, bir kavmi bazen tek başına ayakta tutar, millî benliği muhafaza ederek, onu yok olmaktan, eriyip başkalaşmaktan kurtarır. Demek ki dil bir milletin en büyük millî kurumudur. Bu toplumsal emiyet ve millî kurumun emiyetinin malzemesi ise seslerdir, yapısı seslerden örülmüştür. Sesler yan yana gelerek kelimeleri ve kelime dizilerini meydana getirir. O hâlde dil, seslerden yapılmış bir bütün, seslerden kurulmuş bir yapı, büyük bir sesler sistemi, seslerden örülmüş toplumsal emiyet bir kurumdur.

Muharrem ERGİN

(Değiştirilmiştir)

### Comprehension Questions

Since the goal was for the comprehension questions to cover both the modified and authentic texts, the preparation of questions for the informative and narrative texts began after the text modification process. Thus, a 10-item pool was prepared by the researchers for both texts (informative and narrative). Three of these questions were written in accordance with higher-order thinking skills located at the analysis, evaluation, and creation steps of the taxonomy (Kanık-Uysal, 2022). Since studies in the literature indicate that multiple-choice questions often fail to go beyond the understanding and application steps (Kanık-Uysal, 2022), the questions in this study were structured as open-ended. A graded scoring key (rubric) was prepared for the evaluation of the questions. In this scoring key, lower-order questions were scored as 0, 1, 2; whereas questions regarding higher-order thinking skills were

scored as 0, 1, 2, 3. Following these procedures, opinions were obtained from three experts. Two of the experts are faculty members with PhDs in Turkish Education, and one in Measurement and Evaluation in Education. The experts evaluated the comprehension questions according to the criteria of (i) cognitive level according to Bloom's revised taxonomy, (ii) compliance with open-ended item writing principles in Turkish teaching, (iii) content validity, (iv) linguistic and structural clarity for students, and (v) suitability for scoring. These criteria are based on the open-ended item preparation and evaluation principles suggested in Özçelik (2016) and Brookhart (2010). In line with these expert opinions, the number of questions was reduced to seven for the informative text and eight for the narrative text. Two of the seven questions in the informative text are related to higher-order thinking skills, while the others are lower-order questions. The minimum score obtainable is 0, and the maximum score is 16. Of the eight questions in the narrative text, two are higher-order and six are lower-order questions. The minimum score obtainable is 0, and the maximum score is 18.

After these stages, a pilot application was conducted on 34 students in the second study group. In this application, it was examined whether the instructions of the questions were clear and understandable, the students' levels of correctly understanding the question, and whether the answers overlapped with the expected cognitive level. Structured criteria were determined for the evaluation of clarity. Accordingly, (i) conceptual clarity, (ii) suitability of the language used for the age and cognitive level, (iii) whether it contained ambiguity that could lead to polysemy, and (iv) whether it reflected the expected thinking level of the student were taken into account for each question. In addition to this evaluation, during the application, students were explicitly asked whether the questions were understood, whether their meanings were clear, and whether there were unknown or obscure words within the question. Furthermore, student answers obtained in the pilot application were classified to serve as examples for the graded scoring key, and the final scoring guide was created. In the scoring structure of the questions in the study, generally, 0 points means "empty or irrelevant answer," 1 point means "partially correct but incomplete or superficial answer," 2 points means "complete and correct answer," and 3 points (for higher-order questions) means "analytical or inference-based, comprehensive, and correct answer." To concretize the application of the rubric, for instance, to the question "According to the text, what is the reason for Hüseyin Arif being in Budapest?" in the narrative text, a student who gives an incomplete answer like "For education" receives 1 point, while a student who gives a complete and text-based answer like "To receive education in the field of Natural Sciences at the university" receives 2 points. The full version of the scoring key containing detailed grading for all questions is presented in the Appendices.

The questions prepared for the informative text are as follows:

1. According to the text, why must humans behave in accordance with the nature of language?
2. What could be the purpose of the analogy made with the horse-automobile comparison in the text?
3. Which features are emphasized in the text by stating that language is a living entity?
4. In your opinion, what could be the reasons for different nations expressing the same concepts with words different from other nations?
5. According to the text, how should interventions on language be, and when can they be made?
6. Explain the expression "Language is a system of secret agreements" based on the text.
7. Do you agree with the idea that language has a protective effect for a nation? Why? Explain with your reasons.

The reading comprehension questions prepared for the narrative text are as follows:

1. According to the text, what is the reason for Hüseyin Arif being in Budapest?
2. Give two examples from the text regarding the attitudes of Hüseyin Arif and Mehmet Siyavuş showing their patriotism.
3. In which aspect are the British-French and the Turks on the battlefield compared in the text?
4. About which subject is Arif hopeless in the first part of the text?
5. What is the smelling of the hyacinth flower by the characters a symbol of?
6. What are the dominant emotions in the text?
7. What is the most comprehensive judgment that can be deduced from the text?
8. Do you find it right for the characters to leave Budapest and return to defend their country? Why?

### *Data Collection*

The texts and reading comprehension tests prepared for data collection were administered to students in a face-to-face classroom environment. In all applications, the same instructions were given to the students; points such as which text they would read, how they would answer, and whether there was a time limit were explained verbally in a standard manner. Students were asked to read silently, answer the questions carefully after finishing the text, and request extra paper if needed. No guidance in the nature of directing, leading to the correct answer, or providing hints was provided to the students during the applications. No intervention was made other than timekeeping or test direction. All applications were carried out under the supervision of the researcher and the classroom Turkish teacher, without disrupting lesson hours. Additionally, 12-point font size and 1.5 line spacing were used in the printed materials in all applications.

The first study group was utilized in the text modification process, and applications were completed in a total of four lesson hours, being one lesson hour per week for four weeks. First, the modified and authentic texts were presented to the students in terms of words and sentences with unknown meanings. Students were asked to mark on the text the words and sentences they did not know the meaning of or had difficulty understanding. This stage aimed to provide student-focused data for text modification operations.

Data from the second study group were collected in two weeks. Authentic texts were presented to half of the group, and modified texts to the other half. The prepared draft reading comprehension questions were also answered at this stage. One text was presented to the students per week. No time restriction was presented to the students in each text application. However, it was observed that student readings and answers were completed in 60 minutes. At this stage, the answers given by the students and the comprehension process were used to evaluate the understandability and applicability of the questions.

The third study group is the group where experimental applications were carried out, and the data collection process lasted for three weeks. Before starting the application, the equivalence of the groups was checked with the reading comprehension test. The narrative text was administered in the first week of the application, and the informative text in the third week. No application was conducted in the second week. The application was carried out in two groups as the modified (experimental) and authentic (control) groups. Since the groups were selected from different schools, classes were not combined; four different classes were used. In the administration of both texts, students were instructed to read silently, not to use additional resources (dictionaries, etc.), and to answer open-ended questions with their own expressions. Instructions and application conditions were kept equal in all groups. Prior to the application, the equivalence of the groups was checked by administering a reading comprehension pre-test to both groups. Following the applications, post-test data were collected via reading comprehension questions.

### Data Analysis

In the data analysis, the assumption of normality and other parametric conditions were considered; assumptions were checked for each test and reported in the findings section. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to examine the differences between groups while controlling for the effect of participants' pre-test scores. This method ensures that differences between groups are evaluated independently of baseline achievement levels. All analyses were conducted using the Jamovi (The Jamovi Project, 2023) open-access statistical software. Inter-rater reliability was calculated using the *seolmatrix* module available in Jamovi (Gamer et al., 2019; Seol, 2024).

Three expert raters were used in scoring the reading comprehension questions. The agreement between these raters was examined using Fleiss' Kappa, Krippendorff's Alpha, and Kendall's *W* coefficients. Fleiss' Kappa coefficient examines the agreement between scores given by more than two raters (Fleiss, 1971), and Landis and Koch (1977) stated that a result between .21 - .40 indicates fair agreement. Krippendorff's Alpha coefficient examines the agreement between any number of raters, does not require a minimum sample size, is compatible with nominal, ordinal, interval, ratio, and other measurement tools, and indicates perfect agreement as its value approaches 1 (Krippendorff, 2011). Kendall's *W* statistic also indicates the agreement between more than two raters with values between 0-1 (approaching 1 indicates high consistency between raters) (Field, 2024). Inter-rater reliability for the narrative and informative texts is given in Table 3. Accordingly, it can be stated that the agreement between raters is at an acceptable level. Therefore, the average of the scores given by the three raters was used in comparisons between groups.

**Table 3.** Inter-Rater Reliability of Reading Comprehension Questions

Text	N	Raters	Fleiss Kappa			Krippendorff Alpha		Kendall's W		
			Kappa	Z	p	Alpha	W	X <sup>2</sup>	p	
Narrative	90	3	.433	24.6	<.001	.952	.976	261	<.001	
Informative	91	3	.337	17.2	<.001	.845	.919	248	<.001	

Narrative\_Text: Fleiss Kappa 95% CI ( $k=1000$ ) = .358, .515; Informative\_Text: Fleiss Kappa 95% CI ( $k=1000$ ) = .265, .419

### Ethics Committee Approval

The research was conducted with the permission of the Ordu University Rectorship Social and Humanities Research Ethics Committee, dated 15.06.2022 and numbered 2022-156. Additionally, ethical procedures suggested by the American Educational Research Association [AERA] (2011) and the American Psychological Association [APA] (2020) were meticulously followed.

## Findings

In this section, ANCOVA findings regarding the comparison of scores obtained from reading comprehension questions for the narrative text and the informative text are presented, respectively. Additionally, comparisons of reading comprehension scores are also presented as graphs.

Table 4 presents the comparison of reading comprehension scores obtained by the groups administered the modified and authentic texts.

**Table 4.** ANCOVA Results of Reading Comprehension Scores for the Sümbül Kokusu Text

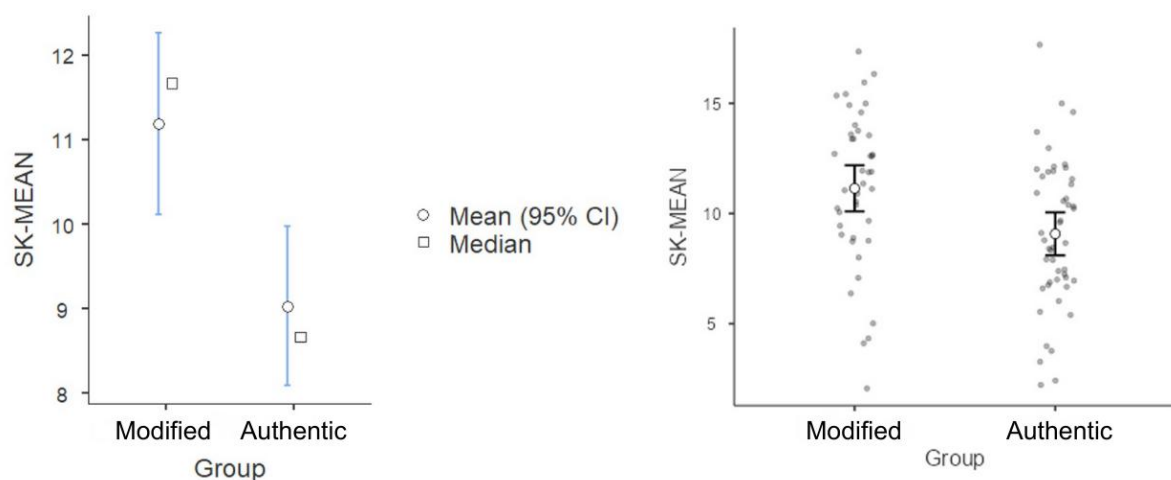
Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	$\eta^2_p$
Reading Comprehension (Covariate)	37.1	1	37.1	3.22	.076	.036
Group (Mod.-Aut.)	95.0	1	95.0	8.25	.005	.087
Residuals	1000.8	87	11.5			

The assumption of normality was verified by Shapiro-Wilk ( $S-W = .993, p = .913$ ) and Kolmogorov-Smirnov ( $p = .929$ ) tests. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was verified by Levene's test,  $F(1, 88) = .308, p = .580$ .  $SS =$  Sum of Squares;  $MS =$  Mean Square;  $\eta^2_p =$  Partial eta squared.

The narrative text application was carried out with a total of 90 students, 42 in the modified text group and 48 in the authentic text group. Subsequently, reading comprehension questions related to the "Sümbül Kokusu" text were directed to both groups. Prior to the analysis, assumption checks were performed. Normality was verified by Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests ( $p > .05$ ), and homogeneity of variances was ensured by Levene's test ( $p = .580$ ). ANCOVA results showed that after controlling for pre-test scores, there was a statistically significant difference between the groups in terms of reading comprehension scores ( $F(1, 87) = 8.25, p = .005, \eta^2_p = .087$ ). This reveals that the modified text group ( $M = 11.2, SD = 3.54$ ) obtained significantly higher scores than the authentic text group ( $M = 9.03, SD = 3.34$ ) (see Table 5). The calculated partial eta squared value ( $\eta^2_p = .087$ ) indicates that this difference has a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988). The effect of pre-test scores, which was the covariate in the model, on post-test scores was not found to be statistically significant ( $p = .076$ ).

**Table 5.** Descriptive Statistics for the Narrative Text

	Group	N	Missing	M	SD	Min.	Max.
Sümbül	Modified	42	1	11.19	3.54	2.00	17.3
Kokusu	Authentic	48	1	9.03	3.34	2.33	17.7



**Figure 2.** Comparison of Modified and Authentic Reading Comprehension Scores in the Narrative Text

In Figure 2, it is observed that the mean reading comprehension scores of the modified text group in the narrative text application are higher compared to the authentic text group. The graph shows the mean scores and 95% confidence intervals for both groups. The modified text group has a higher mean value, and its confidence interval is situated above that of the authentic text group.

The examination of reading comprehension scores for the modified and authentic informative texts is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** ANCOVA Results of Reading Comprehension Scores for the Dil Nedir Text

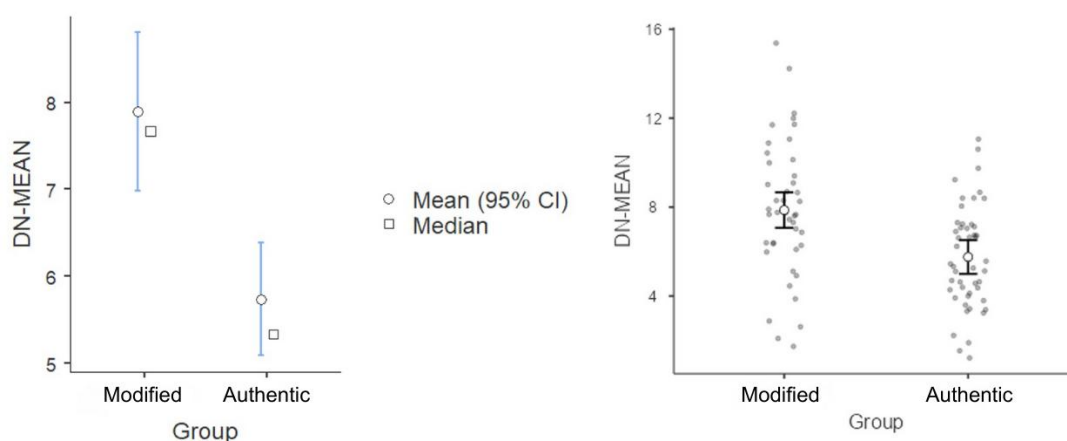
Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	$\eta^2_p$
Reading Comprehension (Covariate)	26.2	1	26.22	3.77	.055	.041
Group (Mod.-Aut.)	100.7	1	100.73	14.48	<.001	.141
Residuals	612.2	88	6.96			

The assumption of normality was verified by Shapiro-Wilk ( $S-W = .989$ ,  $p = .653$ ) and Kolmogorov-Smirnov ( $p = .586$ ) tests. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was verified by Levene's test,  $F(1, 89) = 2.04$ ,  $p = .157$ . SS = Sum of Squares; MS = Mean Square;  $\eta^2_p$  = Partial eta squared.

The informative text application was carried out with a total of 91 students, 43 in the modified group and 48 in the authentic group. Reading comprehension questions regarding the text "Dil Nedir?" were directed to both groups. Prior to the analysis, assumption checks were performed. Normality was verified by Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests ( $p > .05$ ), and homogeneity of variances was ensured by Levene's test ( $p = .157$ ). ANCOVA results showed that after controlling for pre-test scores, there was a statistically significant difference between the groups in terms of reading comprehension scores ( $F(1, 88) = 14.48$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .141$ ). This reveals that the modified text group ( $M = 7.89$ ,  $SD = 3.05$ ) obtained significantly higher scores than the authentic text group ( $M = 5.74$ ,  $SD = 2.29$ ) (see Table 7). The calculated partial eta squared value ( $\eta^2_p = .141$ ) indicates that this difference has a large effect size (Cohen, 1988). The effect of pre-test scores, which was the covariate in the model, on post-test scores is not statistically significant ( $p = .055$ ).

**Table 7.** Descriptive Statistics for the Informative Text

Group		N	Missing	M	SD	Min.	Max.
Dil Nedir	Modified	43	0	7.89	3.05	1.67	15.3
	Authentic	48	1	5.74	2.29	1.33	11.0



**Figure 3.** Comparison of Modified and Authentic Reading Comprehension Scores in the Informative Text

Additionally, the graph visually presenting the score difference is presented in Figure 3. When the graph is examined, it is observed that the modified text scores take higher values on average within the 95% confidence interval. The highest value the authentic text scores can take is lower than the lowest value the modified text scores can take.

## Conclusion and Discussion

Within the scope of this research, authentic and modified versions of the same texts were presented to seventh-grade students, and reading comprehension questions prepared for these texts were administered. According to the findings obtained from the research, it was determined that students' comprehension levels of the modified text were significantly higher than their comprehension levels of the authentic text in both narrative and informative texts based on the quantitative results. In the measurement performed using open-ended questions, the mean score of the modified text group was calculated as 11.20 in the narrative text and 7.89 in the informative text. In contrast, the mean score of the authentic text group was 9.03 in the narrative text and 5.74 in the informative text. A difference of 2.17 points ( $M_{mod.} = 11.2, M_{aut.} = 9.03$ ) was obtained in the narrative text application, and a difference of 2.15 points ( $M_{mod.} = 7.89, M_{aut.} = 5.74$ ) in the informative text application. These differences correspond to approximately 12-13% of the total score in both tests. These general results demonstrate the effectiveness of text modification. However, the fundamental contribution of this study to the literature is presenting with quantitative evidence how the effect differentiates depending specifically on the text type, rather than repeating the general finding. The most original and central finding of the study is showing that the effect size of text modification in informative texts (large effect) is statistically much more distinct compared to narrative texts (medium effect). This differentiated effect can be explained by the difference in cognitive support systems that text types offer to the reader. Narrative texts possess natural narrative scaffolds such as plot, character development, and causality chains that help the reader construct meaning. It may be possible for the reader to follow the general meaning of the text by overcoming certain linguistic difficulties thanks to these scaffolds. In contrast, as stated in the literature, the fact that expository texts are more challenging than narrative texts (Dickens & Meisinger, 2017) may stem from these texts being conceptually more dense and linguistically more fragile. Meaning in such texts depends largely on the correct decoding of specific terms and complex sentence structures. Furthermore, since narrative scaffolds are fewer, linguistic barriers carry the potential to directly transform into a comprehension barrier. Therefore, the stronger effect of text modification on informative texts can be explained by this intervention directly targeting the most fundamental comprehension barrier. This finding offers an important theoretical perspective to the literature by suggesting that text type can be a critical factor in the success of the intervention.

In applications conducted with both narrative and informative texts, reading comprehension scores for modified texts are higher than those for authentic texts. The data are consistent with the results of studies in the literature. Applying elaborative modifications and improving coherence within the text content enhance the reading comprehension skills of native speakers (Beck et al., 1984). Bayraktar and Durukan (2020), in their application employing surface structure changes on both narrative and informative texts, determined that modified texts were understood better and stated that students reported positive views regarding these changes. The simplification of texts significantly improves reading fluency and comprehension, particularly for weak readers and those with weaker cognitive skills (Javourey-Drevet et al., 2022). It is also observed in the literature that text simplification is particularly conducted for weak readers and provides benefits. Text simplification may play an important role in improving reading comprehension for individuals experiencing difficulty in understanding informative texts, especially when the cognitive and linguistic needs of readers are taken into consideration (Arfé et al., 2018). It has been observed that texts simplified via the Open Book tool are more easily understood by both adults and adolescents with high-functioning autism (Cerga-Pashoja et al., 2019). Text simplification can have a positive effect on reading fluency and comprehension in children with reading difficulties (Gala et al., 2018). Along with these, it is stated that text difficulty level is also influential on reading comprehension. In primary school students, increased text difficulty is generally associated with decreased reading fluency and is negatively related to reading comprehension (Amendum et al., 2018). The reading proficiency of third-grade students is similarly affected by text complexity and length; comprehension in longer texts at the same level of complexity is lower compared to shorter texts (Mesmer & Hiebert, 2015). Text complexity negatively affects reading outcomes, particularly oral reading fluency and free recall, in middle school students (Spencer et al.,

2018). Within the scope of the research, reducing the difficulty level of the texts was also aimed. The detection of a difference in terms of reading comprehension in the modified texts supports these findings.

Simplification in vocabulary was frequently resorted to in the text modification applied in the research. In the pilot application conducted after modification, students also stated that words with unknown meanings were more frequent in the authentic text. The result of the research also supports that the simplification of words within the text can be beneficial in terms of reading comprehension. A meta-analysis of 37 studies investigating vocabulary interventions from kindergarten to 12th grade showed that such interventions improve comprehension, provide benefit especially to students with reading difficulties, and a correlation was observed between vocabulary and comprehension effects (Elleman et al., 2009). In the study conducted by Javourey-Drevet et al. (2022), simplified texts were read faster than authentic texts. In this study, we see that four of the students stated that the authentic text contained a large number of unknown words, and therefore they read the authentic text more slowly. Morphological knowledge significantly affects reading comprehension, contributing 2% to 9% of unique variance to reading comprehension (Foorman et al., 2012), and awareness regarding the structure and meaning of morphologically complex words plays a critical role in this process (Carlisle, 2000). As can be seen, vocabulary and morphological awareness related to words have been important factors in terms of reading comprehension in the research conducted. The cognitive mechanism underlying this vocabulary effect can be explained by the relationship between the reader's limited working memory capacity and the cognitive load created by the text. Reading is a complex action requiring both lower-level cognitive processes such as word recognition and higher-level cognitive processes such as understanding the whole text simultaneously. The existence of a direct relationship between reading skill and working memory capacity is also investigated (Daneman & Carpenter, 1980). When readers encounter a large number of words whose meanings they do not know, they may be compelled to allocate a significant portion of their limited mental resources to lower-level processing procedures such as decoding these words. This situation may leave fewer cognitive resources for higher-level comprehension processes such as constructing the general semantic structure (situation model) of the text and making inferences (Kintsch, 1998). At this point, Cognitive Load Theory offers an important explanatory framework. According to this theory, an effective instructional design must minimize extraneous cognitive load, which is not directly related to learning and leads to unnecessary mental effort (Sweller et al., 2019). When viewed from this perspective, the text modification in our study can be seen as a specific instructional intervention that reduces this extraneous load created by the effort to decode unknown words, particularly through lexical simplification. Therefore, the success of this intervention can be evaluated not only as eliminating unknown words but also as a cognitive support mechanism that helps the reader mobilize their mental resources for comprehension by using their limited working memory more efficiently (Baddeley, 2003). Furthermore, in research conducted on the reading habits of middle school students, students preferred the number of unknown words in the texts they read to be few rather than none (Aydın & Ayrancı, 2018). In the modified text as well, words whose meanings were not directly known were left in the text by preserving or highlighting the context. Thus, knowing most of the text vocabulary rather than all of it can also be characterized as effective on reading.

The effect of readability on the results obtained, as in this study, was previously determined in a study conducted by Durukan (2014) using different texts. In that study, a direct correlation was detected between the readability levels of the texts and comprehension rates. Furthermore, adolescents' reading comprehension is affected by both readability and cohesion, and texts that are easier to read and have high cohesion significantly increase adolescents' performance (Reed & Kershaw-Herrera, 2016). According to Bağcı-Dağdeviren (2024), for effective reading instruction, readers having the opportunity to read texts suitable for their levels can be effective in developing reading comprehension and a positive attitude toward reading. Text simplification helps students with low literacy levels, non-native English speakers, and those struggling with reading comprehension problems by increasing readability and understandability (Al-Thanyyan & Azmi, 2021). Li et al. (2005) determined in the research they conducted with Filipino high school students that texts subjected to intervention in the

form of simplification and elaboration increased the level of reading comprehension. Similarly, Long and Ross (1993) determined that Japanese university students reached a better level of comprehension thanks to L2 simplified texts. Additionally, in the study conducted by Yano et al. (1994), it was found that foreign language learning students who read linguistically simplified texts obtained significantly higher scores in comprehension compared to those who read authentic texts, but there was no significant difference between simplification and elaboration. On the other hand, Maxwell (2011) determined that text modification did not lead to a significant effect when primary school level English learners and informative texts were in question, and suggested that such studies should not be generalized to all grade levels. In the study of Uygur et al. (2025), it was also stated that text modification did not create a significant difference in general comprehension in B1 level adult Turkish learners. In this study, however, it was observed that simplification performed by paying attention to the theme and aesthetic structure with 7th-grade students within the scope of the native language Turkish course positively affected reading comprehension. This difference suggests that the effectiveness of the intervention is not universal and that the reader profile (L1/L2 status, cognitive development level) and the characteristics of the intervention are critical variables. Therefore, this research presents evidence against Maxwell's findings, showing that the intervention can also be effective in informative texts under certain conditions, and provides important data to this discussion from the context of Turkey.

There are also concerns in the literature that text modification processes may damage the aesthetic texture in the authentic structure of texts and reduce the degree to which the author's style is reflected (Yaşar, 2019; Yücelşen, 2014). Thus, the shortcomings of using modified texts are observed. To mitigate this within the scope of the research, expert opinions were consulted after modification and during text selection. However, the use of authentic texts also provides various benefits. Using authentic literature in conjunction with teaching strategies significantly increases students' motivation, enthusiasm, interest, and passion for reading, while it can also expand their vocabularies and prepare them for college and career readiness (Ciecierski & Bintz, 2015). In the context of foreign language teaching, it is also stated that authentic texts contain more cultural information and can foster cultural awareness to a greater extent (Béřešová, 2015). Furthermore, they can attract interest and motivate by exhibiting the qualities that literary works possess (Illés, 2008). The use of language-specific patterns offered by authentic texts, natural language flow, and aesthetic value are among the most important advantages of these texts.

One of the most central findings of the research is that the effect of text modification is more distinct in informative texts (large effect) compared to narrative texts (medium effect). This finding shows a remarkable parallel with a result reached by Bayraktar and Durukan (2020) in the national literature. Bayraktar and Durukan observed that surface structure changes in informative texts created a significant difference at all student levels (low, medium, high) and determined that the intervention was more functional in the informative text type. This study, on the other hand, also presents a different quantitative comparison by calculating effect sizes. The theoretical reasons underlying this situation can be explained by the difference in cognitive supports that text types offer to the reader. The lower effect size in the narrative text may be related to the fact that narration, by its nature, provides the reader with more opportunities to fill in the gaps regarding the text (Göktürk, 2023). Indeed, Yücelşen's (2014) study supports this idea by showing that shortenings in modified stories do not deviate significantly from their authentic versions in terms of meaning. Since the informative text structure does not allow much for this, it can be said that it is not as favorable as the narrative text in terms of harboring enough clues to compensate for the insufficiency of vocabulary knowledge during reading. This situation may be directly related to the fact that expository texts are more challenging than narrative texts, as stated in the literature (Dickens & Meisinger, 2017). In these texts lacking narrative scaffolds, linguistic barriers may carry the potential to directly transform into a comprehension barrier. Therefore, adaptations targeted at such texts may provide a proportionally greater gain. This situation can be associated with a discussion in the scientific text adaptation literature. For example, Norris et al. (2012) compared two different adaptations of a scientific article: Adapted Primary Literature (APL), which preserves the scientific structure of the authentic article, and Secondary Literature (SL), written in a more narrative style. It was found that SL increased comprehension, while the APL format developed critical thinking

more. The intervention in this study is structurally close to the APL type and shows that such an adaptation creates a strong effect on basic comprehension as well. This situation can be explained by the features of an effective APL defined by Ariely et al. (2019): Preserving the authentic structure of scientific writing while reducing lexical complexity. Therefore, the findings of this study indicate that an adaptation in accordance with APL principles can be an effective approach in terms of comprehension as well.

According to findings, the effect of text modification (simplification, elaboration, explication) on reading comprehension is observed. However, when the resulting score difference is evaluated, it can be stated that text modification should not be a process frequently resorted to at the seventh-grade level. Because although a significant difference occurred, this difference was determined as ~2 points out of maximum scores of 16 and 18. Conducting text modification manually may also not be efficient in terms of time and effort (Uygur, 2024). While manual text modification is viewed as an effective method, developments in this field have brought about automation (Siddharthan, 2014). In this context, the creation of automated text modification systems specific to Turkish may carry the potential to produce texts with high meaning and cohesion. One study suggests that the decline in SAT-verbal scores can be attributed to the cumulative deficit in domain-specific knowledge caused by long-term exposure to simplified school textbooks, which affects students' reading comprehension and verbal achievement levels (Hayes et al., 1996). As can be seen, exposing students to simpler texts for a long time may yield negative results. Additionally, the characteristics of text complexity affect the type of comprehension processes middle school readers form while reading science texts. In the study conducted by Dahl et al. (2021), it was revealed that middle school students made more detailed inferences in science texts containing simple syntax, deep cohesion, and concrete words; whereas they developed more metacognitive and abstract evaluations in complex science texts. In this research, texts were simplified at the level of syntactic structure and vocabulary, but an effort was made to preserve the cohesion structure. It can be said that students exhibiting higher performance in comprehension with texts arranged in this way shows similarity with that study. Furthermore, as can be seen, text complexity affects students' comprehension processes. Here, acting by considering the areas educators need to focus on can be evaluated as important.

Consequently, the findings of this research have revealed that text modification is not a uniform intervention that works to the same extent in every situation, and its effectiveness varies significantly depending on the structural characteristics of the text. This situation suggests that the natural narrative scaffolds (plot, character, etc.) possessed by narrative texts can serve as a kind of cognitive buffer for readers in overcoming linguistic difficulties, but that linguistic accessibility plays a much more critical role in informative texts that have high conceptual density and lack these scaffolds. Thus, it can be stated that in order to understand the success of the intervention, the internal features of the text and the cognitive supports it offers to the reader need to be examined in more depth.

### **Limitations**

There are some methodological limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. The fact that the research has a quasi-experimental design and participants were not randomly assigned may imply that there could be unobserved differences between groups, even though initial reading comprehension levels were controlled with ANCOVA. Additionally, the fact that participants came from different schools might have caused uncontrolled school and teacher effects to play a potential role in the results. Another methodological limitation can be stated as the pre-test measuring general reading comprehension skills (multiple-choice, open-ended, etc.), while the post-test measured only the texts specific to the intervention. In terms of the scope of the research, working with only two different text types, the limited number of students in the study group, and the failure to control for individual reading strategies used by students during applications as a variable restrict the generalizability of the findings. Finally, the fact that the applied text modification intervention included multiple techniques (lexical simplification, syntactic simplification, elaboration, etc.) together prevents determining how effective each technique is on its own.

## Recommendations

In line with the findings obtained from this research and the limitations identified, the following recommendations can be offered:

- In this study, multiple modification techniques were used together with a holistic approach. Moving from this limitation, future studies should investigate the effects of only lexical simplification, only syntactic simplification, or elaboration on reading comprehension separately or comparatively to research which technique is more effective in the Turkish context.
- To overcome limitations such as the quasi-experimental design of this study and recruiting participants from different schools, conducting future research with true experimental designs with random assignment and in environments where external variables such as school/teacher are controlled will increase the internal validity of the findings.
- Finally, to go beyond the quantitative effect of text modification on reading comprehension and to understand the role of uncontrollable variables such as reading strategies, methods such as eye-tracking or think-aloud protocols can be used. This will offer deeper answers to the question “why and how does text modification work?”

## Implications for Practice

The results obtained from this research allow us to offer concrete and evidence-based implications for the field of education regarding text modification:

- First, it was observed that text modification significantly increased reading comprehension, but this increase corresponded to approximately 12-13% of the total score. The most fundamental implication of this situation is that performing text modification manually may not always be an economical process in terms of time and effort. Therefore, the priority strategy for teachers and curriculum developers should be presenting students directly with linguistically accessible authentic texts suitable for their age and cognitive levels. Text adaptation, on the other hand, should be viewed as a targeted support tool, especially for mandatory historical or foundational texts.
- The most critical finding of the study is that the effect of modification is larger in informative texts ( $\eta^2_p = .141$ ) compared to narrative texts ( $\eta^2_p = .087$ ). The implication of this finding for textbook authors and curriculum developers could be as follows: The linguistic structure of texts, especially in fields with high abstract and conceptual density such as Science and Social Studies, is at least as important as their content. Subjecting texts in these fields to a rigorous adaptation process in terms of both theme and word frequency and sentence complexity can affect student achievement by increasing the level of comprehension.

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## Appendices

### 1. Graded Scoring Key for the Narrative Text Scent of Hyacinth (Sümbül Kokusu) Comprehension Questions

Question No	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points
1. According to the text, what is the reason for Hüseyin Arif being in Budapest?	No Response / Other	Education/Learning/Reading (Answers stating only education) <i>Ex: "To get education."</i>	Completing university education/learning (Answers where the level of education is also given) <i>Ex: "He is in Budapest to receive education at the university."</i>	–
2. Give two examples from the text regarding the attitudes of Hüseyin Arif or Mehmet Siyavuş showing their patriotism.	No Response / Other	Sadness upon reading the newspaper / Going to the Gallipoli war / Smelling the hyacinth and remembering the homeland (One attitude given without explanation) <i>Ex: "Wanting to fight for Çanakkale."</i>	Sadness upon reading the newspaper and going to the Gallipoli war, etc. (Multiple attitudes given with explanation) <i>Ex: "Worrying about the homeland and selling everything they have."</i>	–
3. In which aspect are the British-French and the Turks on the battlefield compared in the text?	No Response / Other	In terms of military technology (Answers where details are not fully given) <i>Ex: "In terms of military."</i>	Armored ships, airplanes, and submarines are compared with our chest and our arm (Answers where the compared elements are presented) <i>Ex: "Compares armored ships, airplanes, and submarines."</i>	–
4. About which subject is Arif hopeless in the first part of the text?	No Response / Other	About the war (Only the subject is given) <i>Ex: "About the defense of Istanbul."</i>	He is hopeless about the course of the war in his homeland because the enemy is very strong (Subject given together with reasons) <i>Ex: "About how to prevent the attacks coming from land and sea."</i>	–

5. What is the smelling of the hyacinth flower by the characters a symbol of?	No Response / Other	Homeland/Longing (Presentation of the source of the symbol or only the emotion) <i>Ex: "Symbol of the smell of Istanbul."</i>	Symbol of the longing felt for the homeland (Answering by specifying the emotion) <i>Ex: "It is the symbol of the homeland because it is the smell of their country."</i>	–
6. What are the dominant emotions in the text?	No Response / Other	Longing / Patriotism / Hopelessness / Unhappiness (Presentation of one emotion/patriotism is a must, others are possible) <i>Ex: "Patriotism."</i>	Courage, Longing, Patriotism, Hopelessness, Unhappiness (Presentation of two or more emotions) <i>Ex: "Longing, courage, patriotism."</i>	–
7. What is the most comprehensive judgment that can be deduced from the text?	No Response / Other	Answers related to patriotism (Non-judgmental sentences related to the text) <i>Ex: "Patriotism."</i>	Answers related to patriotism and longing (Sentences reflecting a part of the text) <i>Ex: "Patriotism is important."</i>	Patriotism and longing cannot be hindered (Judgmental sentences reflecting the whole text) <i>Ex: "We must fight for our country at all costs."</i>
8. Do you find it right for the characters to leave the country they are studying in and return to the homeland to fight? Why?	No Response / Other	I find it right / I do not find it right (Ideas presented without reason) <i>Ex: "I find it right."</i>	I find it right because of the importance of the homeland / I do not find it right, they cannot change anything (Idea based on a single reason) <i>Ex: "Yes, it is a nice thing that they try to protect their homeland."</i>	I find it right because patriotism is superior to everything / I do not find it right because their duty is to receive education, they can contribute to the homeland that way, and two people cannot change the war (Answers given based on reasons) <i>Ex: "I find it right because their own hometown, the houses they were born and raised in, their neighborhoods, and their families are there."</i>

## 2. Graded Scoring Key for the Informative Text What is Language (Dil Nedir) Comprehension Questions

Question No	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points
1. According to the text, why must humans behave in accordance with the nature of language?	No Response / Other	Because language is a natural tool. <i>E.g.: "Because language is natural."</i>	Because language is not an artificial or material tool, it is a natural tool. <i>Ex: "Because language is a natural tool, it is not artificial or material."</i>	–
2. What could be the purpose of the analogy made with the horse-automobile comparison in the text?	No Response / Other	To emphasize that language is a natural tool. <i>Ex: "Language is natural, not like a machine."</i>	To emphasize that one must behave in accordance with the nature of language, unlike artificial tools. <i>Ex: "We should not treat language like a machine, it is natural."</i>	–
3. Which features are emphasized in the text by stating that language is a living entity?	No Response / Other	Undergoing change over time / Not being suitable for every external intervention. <i>Ex: "Language changes over time."</i>	It is emphasized that changes occur within its structure over time and that individuals and society cannot interfere with this as they wish. <i>Ex: "Language changes, but people cannot direct this directly."</i>	–
4. In your opinion, what could be the reasons for different nations expressing the same concepts with words different from other nations?	No Response / Other	Lifestyles / geographies / livelihoods / genetic features / communities they interact with, etc. (Single reason). <i>Ex: "Because the places they live are different."</i>	Answers that take two or more of these factors together. <i>Ex: "Both geographical conditions and cultural structure are different."</i>	–
5. According to the text, how should interventions on language be, and when can they be made?	No Response / Other	It should be done within the framework of the rules of the language. / It should be done when there is an effect preventing the natural development of the language. <i>Ex: "Intervention is made if the language deteriorates."</i>	It should be done within the framework of the rules of the language when there is an effect preventing the natural development of the language. <i>Ex: "Intervention is made if the language deteriorates, but in accordance with its rules."</i>	–

6. Explain the expression "Language is a system of secret agreements" based on the text.	No Response / Other	It is not clear when the common vocabulary of nations emerged. <i>Ex: "It is not clear when it was formed."</i>	Nations speak of different concepts with different words. <i>Ex: "Every nation uses different words."</i>	Every nation has vocabulary and syntax principles that they use in common among themselves as if they had agreed to meet concepts. It is not known when and how these emerged. <i>Ex: "It is like a secret agreement as if every nation chose the words among themselves."</i>
7. Do you agree with the idea that language has a protective effect for a nation? Why? Explain with your reasons.	No Response / Other	As our language becomes alienated with foreign words, our nation also becomes alienated from its essence. / As the features of our language are lost, the values that make us who we are also get lost. <i>Ex: "It would be bad if our language deteriorates."</i>	When our language is used more properly, interpersonal relationships become better, and this makes society healthier and stronger. / The more language develops, the more the bond of love and interpersonal relationships develop, and this increases social peace and public security. <i>Ex: "Yes, if we use our language correctly, society becomes better."</i>	Since their language is corrupted, people who have difficulty understanding each other constantly misunderstand each other, and this causes various chaos among the people and weakens the nation. / A nation that forgets its own language and starts using other languages may forget who it is after a while and fall under the sovereignty of other nations. <i>Ex: "If language deteriorates, people won't understand each other, we speak other kinds of things, we won't be united."</i>