



Secondary School Students' Views on the Use of Historical Letters in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Course: Ankara, ODTÜ Geliştirme Vakfı Middle School Example

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Abstract

In today's changing and evolving educational system, the role of teacher is just as an "orchestra conductor". The teacher who planned the learning-teaching process should be able to recite the history of the revolution by using different teaching methods and materials while planning this process, and be able to recover from the single-level narrative and provide the environments where the acquired skills and behaviors can be achieved. In this process, one of the things that will motivate students' learning process and so will be able to save the History of Revolution course from its bad situation is these letters. The purpose of this research is to reveal the opinions of middle school students about the use of letters in the 8th Grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism. The study group using the mixed methodology is composed of 75 students who are studying in the METU Geliştirme Vakfı Middle School 8th Grade in the province of Ankara in the academic year of 2015-2016. A questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions and a standardized open-ended interview were used as data collection tools in the study. Quantitative data collected in the study were analyzed by descriptive statistics and qualitative data were analyzed by content analysis. As a result of the research, it was found out that the use of "letters" in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course positively affected the attitude towards the class and made the lesson more enjoyable and fun.

Keywords

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Introduction

How to make a better-quality education is sought in educational researches and activities are being carried out intensively in this regard. The nations want to solve their educational problems quickly to raise quality human power. In Turkey, great changes have been experienced in the field of education in the last quarter century and it continues to be experienced. The changes that started in the field of education in Turkey also manifested itself in education of history. In recent years, fundamental reforms have been made in teaching of history in Turkey. Social Studies and History education programs has seen a serious change in primary school, middle school and high school. As a result of these changes, primary, middle and high school curricula moved from teacher centered methods to

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methods that focus on students' life, methods that emphasize working on documents like 'social scientists' as a group or individually, methods that respect the individual differences and learning styles. It has also been explained that different instructional strategies and methods should be applied in teaching programs, the use of different teaching techniques and materials, and the development of evidence-based reasoning skills (Ministry of National Education [MEB], 2010).

It is seen that the use of primary resources among the methods and materials used in this emphasized new teaching approach appeared to be the foreground. In Europe and America, educators and historians place great emphasis on the use of primary resources. The use of primary resources allows students to meet important historical concepts. First, the student realizes that all written history are the author's interpretations on past events. With primary resources, students make direct contact with the lives of people who have lived in the past. Thus, history can be "humanized" through primary sources. Among the standards published by the National Social Informatics Council in the United States is the decision that "students should be able to recognize and use different sources (such as letters, diaries, maps, photographs) in constructing the past" (Ata, 2002). The teacher should present a broad set of first hand resources arranged for his / her students. These are written texts, letters, speech parts, diaries and other visual materials, photographs maps, political cartoons, graphics. Finding age-appropriate first-hand resources is one of the most important qualities of an effective teacher, and this method strengthens historical thinking and makes it attractive (Doğan, 2007, pp. 148-149).

Document-based instruction, which emerges as a result of the new understanding of history and which is the core of the new history, points out that students will be excited by historical sources and especially with documents. This process, even if superficial, reveals the idea that the method of history discipline should cover. It has also brought about the processes and skills such as determining a subject that can be studied about the past in various phases of the teaching process, formulating problems with it, investigating and gathering evidence, analyzing and interpreting the evidence and comparing and analyzing the concepts of causality and other important histories (Rogers, 1978; Dickinson vd, 1978; Shemilt, 1980; Andretti, 1993; Fines, 1995; Husbands, 1996; as cited in Dinç, 2012, s. 81).

The intention of meeting students with the documents is not to transform them into historians - perhaps a few students may be enthusiastic about the history of the profession. In fact, the goal is to train good and effective citizens who can use their skills in critical reading while practicing written documents while they are in daily life (Keles et al., 2006). In social studies and history lessons dealing with the issues of the past in primary and secondary education, it is one of the basic aims of the new education concept that students can reach evidence about past events, question them and evaluate them and construct their own historical knowledge. It is understood that the students should establish the cause and effect relations of historical events and events based on historical evidence. The use of historical sources from the first-hand paves the way for students to learn and develop in history lessons of critical and creative thinking. This can be achieved through reading, writing, speaking and group interaction (Doğan & Dinç, 2007). It may be difficult to understand the behavior, the decisions, the orders, the tactics, the reasoning and the instincts of the people concerned without the findings of the primary source such as official correspondence, letters, eyewitness expressions. While teaching 20th-century history, it is necessary to utilize efficiently from local sources "oral history, family letters and photograph collections, local newspaper archives" (Stradling, 2003, pp. 210-214). During the First World War, letters written by ordinary soldiers in the Eastern and Western Fronts point out that they could be a better guide to the feelings of the soldiers in front, compared to the reports prepared by the top commander or by the political leaders. In his work "Letters from Trenton" McCormick, in his study of primary school fifth grade students in the United States, aimed to develop students' critical thinking skills and making students understand a historical event in a correct and meaningful way. In addition, he has also tried to provide meaningful reading experiences with first-hand sources. Student groups used diary, letter, and newspaper reports based on the witness accounts of the Trenton War during the American Revolution (McCormick, 2004, pp. 5-12).

For many students, history appears as a sequence of facts, dates, and events stored in a textbook. The use of primary sources such as letters, memoirs, diaries can change this view. When students use these resources, they no longer see textbooks as a supplier of truth, but only as an interpretation of history and as authors as proofreaders of evidence. Primary sources can be said to help students become aware of the fact that disclosure is essentially objective, regardless of how impartial they are presented (Thirteen, 2009).

The letters shown among the primary sources used in teaching history can be a chance and an alternative to show that students can evoke and explain events; however, students also have the possibility to produce something convincing and biased at the same time (Murphy, 2005, p. 36). Writing a letter to someone like a character from a specific time period is a good example of activity for the class. This activity can be very entertaining for students; Because the student will investigate a special personality from history, then the person with any personal qualities important at this time will determine his / her place and age at the time and will make history and live a journey of history by visualizing the special events that took place at that time. The student who has taken part in learning will thus learn by making history and living (Successfulteaching, 2008). It is impossible to deny the power to use real documents and exploration while learning about people who have lived at a different time than them and the events. Exploring history through documents rather than reading and memorizing a few text pages can be more valuable and exciting for students (Musbach, 2001).

It is important that social studies and history teachers are interested in and are aware of the research based on their expertise. The original sources such as newspapers, photographs, postcards and letters are things that affect the student. They affect students because they are real and individual. The use of these resources let students to touch the written history and adds a lot of color and excitement to history. They give a real and vivid qualification and they can display live memories of the period they are writing. It may even be useful to use them in the class (Frendo, 2003, p.26).

Letters can be considered as functional teaching materials for the teaching of the History of Revolution justified below; (Çencen, 2010, p. 124)

- People's longing, being witnesses of emotions and thoughts,
- The fact that art, literature, life, love, friendship, hatred and suffering are alive and at the same time the most elaborate primary resource,
- Better picture than the works of his writers,
- They are not talking about just one thing, one life, one knowledge, one thought; they are talking about life by bringing all these aspects together,
- The writer's life of ideas and emotions can be traced step by step throughout his life,
- Drawing the social, political, cultural and literary panorama of the period they are written,
- Everything is written in a natural, friendly and clear way,
- To promote a person's nature well,
- A more realistic representation of historical personalities than textbooks,
- It is to be able to shed light on the dark side of history.

The limitations of Letters, in terms of education in the teaching of the history of revolution, is that it might interrupt the children's critical thinking because these letters are a product of feelings and thoughts. In this case, letters may prevent the development of contemporary skills aimed by teaching history. Because letters reflect the subjective world of their authors and they can present their world of values and bring the danger of "looking through the writer's eye" for teaching (Şimşek, 2006, p. 65-80).

There are different approaches to letter types. In accordance with the attainment of the affective area in the teaching of History and Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course;

- *Special Letters* (Letter from Col. Öngübaşı Mehmet Tevfik to his home, a letter from his mother to Military Kınalı Hasan and Reserve Commander Kemal Efendi's letter to his father, a letter that 3rd Army Range Inspector Colonel Fuat Hüseyin Efendi sent to a martyr's father from the Caucasus Front),
- *Official Letters* (Letters of Turkish and Russian Commanders on Armenian Atrocity, Letter from Kemal Bey, District Governor of Boğazlıyan, Letter sent by Sultan Vahdettin to Mustafa Kemal Pasha, Letter from Sultan Vahdettin to British General Harrington, Mustafa Kemal Pasha's letter of resignation from military service, Urfa and Airship Kuva-yi National Commander Captain Ali Saip Ursavaş's Letter to the French Occupation Forces Command, Letter to the Commander of the French Garrison from Antep'li Şahin Bey, Antep's Declaration of Hunger and the letter from Antep that explains the situation to the Command of Corps., Letter from Mustafa Kemal Pasha to Marshal Fevzi Çakmak for Afghanistan Turks, Message to the Army from Mustafa Kemal who is given the Gazi Title and Marshal Rütbesi by Law No. 153 by the Grand National Assembly on 19 September 1921 after the Sakarya Victory, Atatürk's Last Message to the Turkish Army (Bayraktaroğlu, 2013),
- *Business letters*
- *Literary letters*
- *Open letters*

The types of letters mentioned above in the course of the subjects of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course and, in particular, the official writings written by the official circles and institutions bearing legal personates; (official letters, circulars, orders, reports) can be used as teaching material.

When the aims of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution course are examined, it can be said that the goals related to the affective field are predominant in the cognitive field (MEB, 2010)¹. In the 8th Grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course curriculum, it is aimed to provide a suitable environment for researching events and facts by using different sources and to ensure that students work individually or as a group on first and second sources like "a social scientist", emphasizing that they will help them to develop their own understanding in a social and cultural context (MEB, 2010). According to the Constructivism approach in the 8th Grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism courses, the fact that students work with documents can provide more permanent learning. In this way, students will be able to respond to the 5N1K formula in order to think critically and make scientific interpretations (Ata, 2006, p.123).

It is expected that the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism class activities will be loved, thoughtful, upsetting, enthusiastic and emotional by students. In the achievement of the purpose of the education-training activities, the teaching materials and equipment are in great responsibility. Within the class, these different emotional states can be provided by drama, case studies and so on, as well as short anecdotes from the life stories of the historical characters, by reading poems, reading letters, showing pictures, playing anthems, giving examples from memories (Acun, 2006, s.155).

¹ In the Turkish Education System, Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course focuses on the events happening in Turkey from the late 19th century until the beginning of the 20th century. Secondary school 8th grade is taught by Social Studies teachers 2 hours per week.

When the relevant literature is searched, it is seen that the academic researches on the use of materials in the fields which are about the teaching of the history of revolution in secondary school are intensified after 2005. In the literature, there are many studies on the methods and materials used in the teaching of the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism and the effects of their use on student achievement and attitude. One of the studies carried out in this sense is in the 8-grade primary school in Turkey. It is a study evaluating Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism in terms of visual materials, the types of visual materials used and the visual materials are compatible with the text (Tüzün, 2008) in the History of Revolution and Atatürkism textbooks (MEB Publications).

Another study, Primary Education "T.C. History of Revolution and Kemalism", and what kind of solutions can be proposed to these problems (Bingöl, 2009).

Another study from the literature is a study that examines and describe how to use 'Puzzle Technique' in the unit 'Kemalism' from middle school 8 grade T.C. History of Revolution and Kemalism course and the effects on concept learning of students.

Sarıyıldız (2012) examined the situations in which middle school 8th graders understand and acquire the concepts in the first five acquisitions of the "Steps in the Path of Contemporary Turkey" section of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course curriculum.

Altıkulaç (2014) evaluated that the use of memoirs in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course increased the academic achievement of the students, developed the attitude towards the lesson and unit and evaluated that historical understanding, analysis and interpretation are effective in the historical empathy dimensions.

Demirezen (2014) examined the activities prepared by considering the new approaches in the course of 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism in terms of teacher and student.

Bayram (2015) examined the effect of the use of box games played on the map on the success and remembrance of the student in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course.

Yılmaz (2016) examined the relation between middle school 8th grade students' academic success and their approach towards Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism in terms of gender, teacher's gender, training centers or taking private lessons, materials that the teacher uses in the class, reading historical novels, watching historical movies, frequency of reading books, the time they spent on the internet searching about history, first term Turkish Republic History of Revolution course grade, their approach towards teachers, seniority of the teacher, education status of the parents, having a study room at home, having a computer at home.

When the above studies are evaluated, it is observed that the materials used in the teaching of certain units in course teaching, the problems encountered in teaching the course and the solution proposal, the method-techniques used in teaching the lesson and their effects on the academic success of the students are concentrated. It is noteworthy that there is a limit in the number of studies related to the use of letters as a teaching material in the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course. In this context, this research is, in theoretical sense, important in terms of putting forward the views of students related to the use of letter as a teaching material in the 8th grade Atatürk Principles and History of Revolution and Kemalism course. It is thought that the theoretical bases of the use of letters in the teaching history of Revolution will be studied and contributed to the field writing. In addition, the research may enable the development of many skills such as empathy, decision making, questioning, and critical thinking skills in the realization of the anticipated emotional goals of this course. The research may also be a source of inspiration in terms of identifying topics for future research due to the fact that it offers up-to-date data.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the study is to reveal the opinions of the secondary school students regarding the use of "letters" in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course. The following answers were searched in the research:

1. What are the views of middle school students about the benefits of using letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism?
2. What are the views of middle school students about the situation of requesting the use of letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course?
3. What are the proposals of secondary school students to make the use of letters more qualified in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course.

Method

In this research, mixed methodology has been utilized. Mixed Methodology shows that the researcher is using different aspects of quantitative and qualitative methods by combining them at all stages or in many stages. In mixed methods, quantitative and qualitative research methods can be used either dominantly or equally (Cresswell, 1994). In this research, because of data collection from two or more different types, qualitative features such as elasticity analysis, statistical analysis, quantitative features such as statistical analysis, interview and observation, allowing the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, the generation of new information in different styles, its suitability for its purpose, mixed method science has been used. The two-phase method, which is one of the mixed method science and mixed method types, is used in this research for reasons such as increasing the validity and reliability of the research, enabling multi-dimensional evaluation of events by introducing different perspectives, using the questionnaire as a quantitative method, were used (Crook and Garratt, 2005).

Study Group

At the selection of study group participating in the study, simple unselected sampling method was used from unselected sampling methods. Due to the sampling of selected units giving possibility to be equal to each sampling unit, in this study METU Geliştirme Vakfı Secondary School was chosen according to simple unselected sampling method (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016). In addition, when the study group was determined, parents' educational status, family income level, etc. were influential. In addition to determining the socioeconomic levels, the frequency of letters used by teachers has also been influential. In this context, before the study, the school's social studies teacher was interviewed and the classes in which the teacher did not use letters related to history teaching in the direction of the statement were determined. The study group of the study consists of 75 students from 8/E, 8/F, 8/H classes from the METU Geliştirme Vakfı Middle School in the city of Ankara in the 2015-2016 school year. As a result of the interview with the teacher in the selection of these classes, the nonuse of the letter during courses has been effective.

Descriptive data on the characteristics of the students in these classes are given below:

Table 1. Findings Related to the Gender of the Students who Participated in the Study

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Female	33	44
Male	42	56
Total	75	100

The gender of the students participating in the survey is given in Table 1. According to this, 56% (42 people) of the participants are male and 44% (33 people) are female students. Although this distribution is suitable to make a comparison based on the gender variable, the gender is not a significant variable in the research and does not reveal a gender based difference of the obtained data.

For this reason, no test was conducted to determine the relationship between the gender variable and the dependent variable.

Table 2. Information on the Education Level of Mothers of the Students Who Participated in the Study

Mother's Education Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	-	-
Primary School	-	-
Middle School	-	-
High School	8	10.6
University	53	70.6
Graduate	14	18.6

Information on the education level of the mothers of the students participating in the survey is given in Table 2. The level of education of the mothers of the participants from the data; 10.6% are high school, 70.6% are university and 18.6% are graduate. Although this distribution is suitable to make a comparison based on the education level variable of the mothers, the education level of the mothers in the study was not significant and the obtained data did not show a difference based on the education levels of the mothers. For this reason, no test was conducted to determine the relationship between mother's education level variables and independent variables.

Table 3. Information on Educational Status of Fathers of the Students Participating in the Study

Father's Education Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	-	-
Primary School	-	-
Middle School	-	-
High School	7	0.93
University	51	68
Graduate	17	22.6

Information on the level of education of the fathers of the students participating in the study is given in Table 3. It is understood that 093% are high school, 68% are university and 22.6% have graduate education. Although this distribution is suitable to make a comparison based on the educational level of the fathers, the education level of the fathers was not significant in the study and the obtained data did not show a difference based on the education level of the fathers. For this reason, no test was conducted to determine the relationship between the education level of the fathers and the independent variables.

The main purpose of investigating the level of parental education is not to make any comparisons but to use as a supporting data in determining the opinions of the children of high education level on the use of letters in teaching History of Revolution.

Data Collection Tool and Development

The data collection tools used in the research varied according to the purpose and sub problems of the research. In this context, the questionnaire developed by the researcher was used in the quantitative dimension of the research. However, the qualitative dimension of the study utilized the standardized open-ended interview form.

In the quantitative research process, the data were collected by means of a questionnaire developed by the researcher, taking into account the attainable achievements of the course. The reason why a survey is used a means of quantitative data collection tool is because it's suitability for the survey for the purpose of researching larger samples, and the more economical time in terms of data collection through observation and interviews (Büyükoztürk et al., 2016). The researcher has scanned the relevant field literature and created a material pool for quantitative expressions in the questionnaire. For the

validity of the coverage, the opinions of three history education specialists working at Gazi University, Istanbul University and Çukurova University were taken. After the changes made in line with the opinions of the field experts, in accordance with the assessment and evaluation experts and Turkish language experts, at first, consisting of 20 items, some items were taken out and made it 14 item questionnaire as a final form. The questionnaire form, for the reliability analysis, was applied to 75 students in the classes 8/E, 8/F, 8/H from METU Geliştirme Vakfı Middle School and Was recorded as a database in the SPSS 14.0 program and the internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) value was calculated as 0.828 in the statistical analysis. The reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above is considered as a sign of the reliability of the scale (Sipahi et al., 2010). In addition, the reliability of the questionnaire has been expressed in terms of expert opinion, and the items in the questionnaire serve for purpose and are clear from the mistakes.

A standardized open-ended interview was used as a qualitative data collection tool in the study. The standardized open-ended interview in the study was developed for the deeper understandings of middle school students' views and thoughts on the use of letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course. Interview in the research have been used because of their ability to instantly give feedback to answers, to have the flexibility to adapt to different and instantly changing conditions, to get complex and empirical information in full and in depth, to change the number and sequence of questions (Ekiz, 2003; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

In the research, firstly literature search was conducted and the theoretical sources including interview and preparation information such as how the interview form should be structured and how to prepare the questions were searched. Later on, an interview form consisting of a total of 2 questions was prepared by the researcher in line with the aim and scope of the research. The interview form was prepared in the form of an open-ended standardized interview for reasons such as ensuring the inclusion of all dimensions and questions about the research problem, the absence of questions or the necessity of placing subjects at a particular priority, and the ability to change sentence structure and style. (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, p. 132). In the interview form, "What are the views of middle school students about the situation of requesting the use of letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course?" and "What are the proposals of secondary school students to make the use of letters more qualified in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course?" questions were directed to students. The validity and confidence of the interview form developed by the researcher was shaped by discussing with three academicians who specialize in history education primarily at Gazi University, Istanbul University and Çukurova University, and applied to thirty students who were enrolled in the METU Geliştirme Vakfı Secondary School 8th grade in the 2014-2015 academic year. The results of the preliminary study were reviewed again and the final form was given to the interview form.

The questionnaire contains 4 items to determine the demographic characteristics of the students. It was asked to evaluate the 14 items on a five-point scale, which were based on quantitative evaluation and considered to reflect students' thoughts on using letters in their lessons. The survey items are of the Likert type of 5; It is organized and scored as Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), Strongly agree (5). The lowest score is 1, the highest score is 5. In this sense, the scoring is as in Table 4 below²:

Table 4. Anket Maddelerinin Puanlaması

Option	Positive Statement	Negative Statement
Strongly Disagree	1	5
Disagree	2	4
Neutral	3	3
Agree	4	2
Strongly Agree	5	1

² In this study, the score of Tazbaşaran's Likert Type Scale Preparation Guide was adopted for each item (Tezbaşaran, 2008).

In this questionnaire, in the qualitative part, students were also given open ended questions that they can state their opinions of the questions in addition to these "What are the views of middle school students about the situation of requesting the use of letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course?" and "What are the proposals of secondary school students to make the use of letters more qualified in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course?" two questions. In this way, the students were given the opportunity to freely and detailedly express their thoughts on the use of "letters" in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course. In this study, frequency (f) and percentage (%) values are shown comparatively in order to indicate the frequency of student opinions on the use of "letter" in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course. Thus, the qualitative data were digitized to increase the reliability of the data, to reduce bias, to provide a comparison between the data, and then to enable a large sample to be retrieved and re-tested (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016, p. 177).

Application Process of the Study, Data Collection and Analysis

The application of the quantitative and qualitative part of the research is the process of applying a questionnaire composed of 14 questions consisting of opinions about the benefits of using letters in the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course and an interview of 2 questions to 75 students from three different classes who were studying in in METU Geliştirme Vakfı Middle School in Ankara on 11.03.2016. In this process, a detailed discussion was held with the social studies teacher before the application of the quantitative and qualitative sections. The purpose of the interview was explained in detail; the questionnaire to be implemented is shown to the teacher by showing the contents. How the questionnaire and the interview form will be applied in the course, what the teacher will do in this process is explained in detail. In the application process, the researcher entered the classroom with the teacher. The teacher introduced the researcher to the students and made a small introduction to the content of the application to be done. Later, the teacher called upon the researcher stating that he would provide the necessary information. In this context, the researcher made explanations to the level of the students for the questionnaire form and interview form consisting of total 14 items including the opinions of the students about the purpose of the research and the opinions about the benefits of the use of letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course. He gave examples on the questionnaire and interview form he made while making the statement, and the research was carried out. Data related to the research were collected from 75 students of three different classes who were studying at Ankara, METU Geliştirme Vakfı Middle School during 2015-2016 education year. However, when checking whether the questionnaires were filled in properly, 8 unsuitable surveys were not included in the data analysis. Participants were informed about the subjects such as the purpose of the research, the scientific work and the identity information to be kept hidden while the data were collected. Percentage and frequency values were used and interpreted in the analysis of the quantitative data in the questionnaire. Qualitative data were subjected to descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis has also been used in this study because it is the type of analysis that is often cited directly in order to reflect the views of the interviewed or observed individuals in a striking way. Open ended questions constituted the basis of qualitative data. Comments, clarifications and suggestions made by students on open-ended questions; the most commonly used similar partners and similar expressions are evaluated together and listed as general themes and interpreted in tabular form. The first path suggested by Wolcott in the analysis of qualitative data is based. In this analysis, the data are presented to the reader in a descriptive way, by lecturing as closely as possible to the original form of the collected data and, if necessary, citing directly from what the researchers have said (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016, p.239-243). In accordance with the principle of confidentiality in the survey, each student was coded by giving a nickname (Ö.19, Ö.37, Ö.64) and direct quotations were made from the expressions of the students, and the findings obtained by the questionnaire were tried to be diversified and enriched. Thus, it is thought that the data will be analyzed more objectively.

Results

A total of 75 questionnaires were examined in this research which was carried out in order to learn the opinions of students related to the use of "letters" in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism. Regarding the quantitative data obtained in the research, the following findings were obtained about the usefulness of "letter" in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course:

Findings and Interpretation Regarding the First Subproblem:

In the analysis of the first sub-problem of the research, the situation of the students' opinions about the usefulness of "letter" in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course was examined. The findings obtained in the descriptive analysis in this context are shown in Table 5 below:

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage Values of the Students Who Report Their Opinions on the use of Letters

Proposals		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course provide an increase of interest towards Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course.	f	-	-	1	21	53
	%	-	-	1	28	71
Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course help to connect the past with today.	f	1	-	3	30	41
	%	1	-	4	40	55
Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course help to visualize historical events.	f	-	5	3	32	35
	%	-	6	4	43	47
Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course contribute to success in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course.	f	2	1	28	24	20
	%	3	1	37	32	27
The heroes of the historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course are very influential.	f	-	2	1	25	47
	%	-	-	-	33	63
Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course increase interest and curiosity towards the past.	f	-	-	12	32	31
	%	-	-	16	43	41
Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course are a guide in learning many moral principles (good-bad, right-wrong, etc.).	f	-	1	3	36	35
	%	-	1	4	48	47
Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course add excitement to the lesson.	f	-	-	4	23	48
	%	-	-	5	31	64
Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course make the learning process easy and fun.	f	-	-	8	50	17
	%	-	-	10	67	23
Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course can shed light on the dark side of history.	f	-	2	9	44	20
	%	-	3	12	58	27
Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course describe historical figures more realistically than textbooks.	f	-	-	4	25	46
	%	-	-	5	33	61

Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course can draw the social, political, cultural and literary panorama of the period they are written.	f	-	1	6	38	30
	%	-	1	8	51	40
Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course can testify to people's longings, feelings and thoughts alive.	f	-	-	5	32	38
	%	-	-	6	43	51
Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course are effective in improving my positive attitude towards Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism.	f	-	-	2	34	39
	%	-	-	3	45	52

Table 5 shows the ratios of answers given by the 8th grade students to the items related to the use of letters in the Atatürk Principles and History of Revolution course. According to this, about 99% of the participants, students strongly agree or agree in their opinions about the use of letters in their lessons with the suggestion that "The historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course provide an increase of interest towards Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course."

The achievements that are abstract like Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism, that are "being verbal expression dominant" and unless this understanding is not broken and unless this course is not sufficiently enriched with teaching materials, will stay only written on the pages of the curriculum. By using letters as a teaching material, it will be easier to materialize the course, so they can motivate the learning process and increase the interest to the lesson and thus contribute to the liberation of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course from this negative situation. From this point, it can give some ideas about the effectiveness of using letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course on students' interest and positive attitudes towards the lesson.

Of the students, 55% strongly agree, 40% agree, 4% neutral and 1%strongly disagree with the proposition "Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course help to connect the past with today".

The letters that can be used in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course describe a life outside of students' own time and living conditions. Between past and present, letters can be seen as a bond, a bridge. Through letters, students can have direct contact with the lives of past people. Thus, letters can help the students connect with the past and the present, see their progress over time, start to see their own world in conditions, and understand how helpful the past in shaping today.

Of the participants, 46% of strongly agree, 43% agreed, 4% neutral and 7% disagree with the article "Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course help to visualize historical events". Based on the opinions of the pupils that strongly agree or agree with this recommendation; by using letters in class, children can visualize historical events and historical figures in their minds. Thus, they can play an important role in reaching a more meaningful perspective in their minds by approaching phenomena with a very perspective point of view.

The greatest proportion of students who are neutral in their views on the use of letter is 37% with the statement "Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course contribute to success in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course". This finding can be attributed to the fact that there is no study on the effect of the use of letters in the teaching of the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course on the students' academic achievement.

Of the students, 63% strongly agree and 33% agree with the proposition "The heroes of the historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course are very influential".

Of the participants, 41% strongly agree, % 43 agree and %16 neutral with the proposition "Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course increase interest and curiosity towards the past". The high attendance rate of the students in the survey suggests that the letter has a positive effect on increasing the interest and curiosity of the students in the past so that the letter is a major factor in the student's journey to the past.

Students who participated in the research stated positive opinion on the proposition "Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course add excitement to the lesson". Although it is seen that most of the issues related to Atatürk and Kemalism are handled within the cognitive field when the 8th Grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course is examined, the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course is related to the affective field (Koçak, 1999, pp. 25-26). Students' strongly agree or agree with this item can be considered as an important role for letters in the realization of affective goals in students.

Of the participants, 23% totally agree, 67% agree and 10% are neutral with the item "Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course make the learning process easy and fun". With positive opinions on the proposal by the students and its high percentage, the use of materials such as letters in the course can be regarded as a sign of the difference in the learning process. Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course, supported by different materials, can be effective in attracting students, making the learning process fun, creating a history awareness, and persistent knowledge learned.

Of the students, 27% strongly agree, 58% agree, 12% are neutral and 3% disagree with the article "Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course can shed light on the dark side of history". In the light of this finding, by using letter in the teaching of the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course, it is possible to illuminate the corners of the past darkness.

Of the students, 61% strongly agree, 33% agree and 5% are neutral with the proposition "Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course describe historical figures more realistically than textbooks". With these findings, the use of letters in the course of the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism can bring about the historical personalities for the students and allow the students to discover how the determined historical period took place. It can help students to empathize with the personalities in the letters. Students who read letters can access information about historical personalities that are not included in textbooks.

Of the students, 40% strongly agree, 51% agree, 8% are neutral and 1% disagree with the article "Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course can draw the social, political, cultural and literary panorama of the period they are written". Letters, moving from this finding, by describing the general appearance, social, political, economic and etc. of the period they are written, can bring in the ability to question, validate and the ability to evaluate as a whole.

Of the participants, 51% strongly agree, 43% agree and 6% are neutral with the item "Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course can testify to people's longings, feelings and thoughts alive". It can be said that the participation rate of the students in the survey points to the fact that historical letters play an important role in the development of the empathy skill which the education of history of revolution aims to earn.

Of the students, 52% strongly agree, 45% agree and 3% are neutral with the item "Historical letters that can be used in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course are effective in improving my positive attitude towards Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism".

As seen in the Table 5, students' high rate of "strongly agree" and "agree" statements show that attractive materials like historical letters are needed because they increase students' interest and curiosity toward the past, attract more attention from students, contributes to students' recollection of historical events in their minds, help students to remember historical information more easily, play an important role in the realization of the affective goals of the course, motivate students to make history more exciting and learn more, develop better understanding of the meaning of the past. Positive feedbacks to proposals of students participating in the research, and high rates of these positive feedbacks, shows that historical letters, which can draw attention create a difference in the learning process of the students. Supporting the teaching of History of the Revolution with different materials, forming links with life, can be effective in making the learning process fun while drawing the students' attention, forming the history consciousness and being persistent.

Findings Regarding the Second Subproblem

In the analysis of the second sub-problem of the research, the opinions of middle school students about the situation of requesting the use of letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course were examined. This is aimed at acquiring in-depth knowledge about the ideas and views on the use of letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course. The common and similar answers given by the students who filled out the interview form were categorized and tabulated, and prepared their percentages according to the categories created. It is also enriched and interpreted by quoting directly students' expressions. In the interview, 96% of the students stated that they wanted to use the letter in their lessons and 4% stated that they did not want to use the letter.

Percentage distributions of the responses given for the second sub-problem are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Opinions of the Students about the Use of Letters in the Teaching of the 8th Grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Course

	%
Making the course fun and engaging	30
Being exiting	20
Rescue the lesson from monotony	15
Helping in understanding the lesson	12
Learning topics from different sources	11
Revitalizing historical events	5
Concrete abstract concepts	3

As seen in Table 6, 30% of the students stated that the use of letters in the teaching of 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism will bring the lesson in a fun and interesting way. One of the student views on how to make the course fun and engaging (Ö25) is like this: "I want it to be used in lessons. My positive comments about the use of letters; letters provide a better understanding of the past period, lessons become more entertaining and interesting. The use of letters in lessons will excite me". Another student, by saying "I want it to be used in lessons. My positive comments about the use of letters; it increases my interest in the lesson and my success becomes greater. It enables me to connect the past and today. It sheds light on the past. Classes become more interesting. I think I will learn more. It revitalizes historical events in my mind.", emphasize the usefulness of the use of letter in 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course.

According to students participating in the interview, the use of letters in the teaching of the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course will save the lesson from monotony, help understand the lesson and help revive historical events in the mind. Related to this respect, one of the students (Ö37) state these: "I want it to be used in class. My opinions about it being used in class: The lesson gives us a better understanding of the issues and the extent to which the events in history were under great difficulty. It makes the lesson enjoyable".

3% of the students stated that the use of letter in teaching 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course could help to concrete the abstract concepts. Related to this, another student (Ö19) states these: "I want it to be used in class. My opinions about it being used in class: I think that resources that deal with more concrete and human relations in more detail can help me. To teach lessons with resources like letters is more fun and enjoyable". (Ö64) states something similar: "I want it to be used in class. My thoughts about it being used in class: The letters are proofs that portray the events of that period in my mind. It concretes the abstract concepts. It helps me to understand events in the past better. Lessons becomes more fun and enjoyable". The opinions of some of the other students who are prioritizing the use of letter in class are as follows: "I really want my teacher to use in lessons. Because this lesson is boring to me. Using materials like letters becomes fun, and even lessons learned better" (Ö18). "Letters are emotional materials that allow us to learn better" (Ö12). "The letters provide facilities for me to learn the subjects I have problems in learning in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course. For this reason, it should be used frequently by my teacher" (Ö22).

4% of the students who participated in the interview stated that they did not want to use letters in the 8th grade Republic of Turkey History of Revolution and Kemalism course. One of the students states this: "I don't want it to be used in class. Because letters are based on interpretation, we can not reach a certain knowledge. And I get confused".

Of the students, %30 states that the use letter in 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course will make the class interesting and enjoyable; %20 says that it will be exiting; %15 says it will break the monotony of the class; %12 states that it will help in understanding the course better; %11 says it will make it easier to learn the topic from different sources; %5 states that it will help revitalizing historical events; and %4 says it will help making abstract concepts concrete and lastly %4 says that they don't want it to be used in the course.

Findings Related to the Third Sub-problem

In the analysis of the third sub-problem of the research, an open-ended question was asked to examine the opinions of middle school students regarding the use of letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course. This question is aimed at obtaining in-depth knowledge about the thoughts and opinions of the students on the improvement of the use of letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course. The common and similar answers given to the questions by the students participating in the research were separated into categories and tabulated, and prepared the percentages in line with the categories created. It is also enriched and interpreted by directly quoting students' expressions.

The percentage distributions of responses given for the third subproblem are given in Table 7.

Table 7. Opinions of the Students on the improvements for the use of letter in the 8th Grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Course

	%
Include more in textbooks	76
Usage according to topics	18
Providing teachers with proper education of using letters	6

76% of the students who participated in the interview emphasized that, in their opinions about the improvements for the use of letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course to make the use of letters more qualified, letter should be given more space in the textbooks. The views of some of the pupils who put this aspect of the use of letters in the foreground can be expressed as follows: "There are plenty of stories and memoirs in the course book, but the letters are given very little space. For this reason, letters should be given more space" (Ö18). "There are many beautiful stories, memoirs and poems related to the subject while discussing some subjects in the course book. Letters should also be used frequently" (Ö26).

18% of the students pointed out that, in their opinions about the improvements for the use of letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course to make the use of letters more qualified, the letter should be used in line with the subject. One of the student views; "I want the letter used in history lessons. I would be especially impressed with the handling of the issues such as the Sakarya War and the Dardanelles War with letters and songs. But I do not think every topic can be studied with the letter. The lesson will be more enjoyable if my teacher teaches with proper letters to the topics" (Ö19). Another student (Ö04): "I do not want letter to be used in every lesson. But I want to use letters on some topics. Because the letters will have an effect on my spiritual feelings that the course intends to give me. For example, the use of letters sent from the families of the soldiers to the frontline and vice-verse will make it easier for us to learn topics".

6% of the students who participated in the interview emphasized that, in their opinions about the improvements for the use of letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course to make the use of letters more qualified, teachers should be given proper education about using letters in classrooms. One of the students (Ö8) says: "My teacher should use letters in my lessons. It should not be too often. Also, my teacher should know how to use letters. S/he should not teach every topic with letters" and points out the need for teachers to take education on how to properly use letter, poem, song etc. in class.

Related to the third sub-problem, students emphasize that, in the improvements for the use of letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course to make the use of letters more qualified; it is needed to give more space for letters in textbooks, to use them according to the topics and to give training to teachers on how to use letters properly. In this context, students' emphasize on the need for more space for letters in textbooks to improve the use of letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course to make the use of letters more qualified overlaps with the results of Kaymakçı's study (2013) examining the Usage Status of Oral and Written Literary Genres in Social Studies Textbooks.

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course is a course that aims to raise individuals who know the conditions under which the War of Independence was born and how it developed, who have important knowledge about Atatürk's Principles and Revolutions and Atatürk's Thought System, who understand the core of Atatürk's Principles and Reforms, who defends Atatürk's Principles and Reforms, who are affiliated with the citizenship of the state, who will always be proud to be a free and independent member of this nation at all times, who, therefore, are faithful to the ideal of the Turkish people, whom they belong to, are always connected to the free and independent life, who accept mind and conscience as their guide. The content of Atatürk's Principles and History of Revolution course will enable both traditional and contemporary teaching methods to be used effectively. In the 8th Grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course curriculum, it is suggested to use first and second-hand sources. This study was carried out in order to reveal the opinions about the use of letter in the 8th Grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course, and the results are as follows:

The students who participated in the research indicated high positive opinions on the usefulness of "letter" usage in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course. Kaymakçı (2010), in his study "The effects of the use of worksheets in the teaching of social

studies on the students' academic achievement and attitudes towards the lesson", found that the most successful study leaf was "I am writing a letter". There are studies on historical documents and written evidence increasing attitudes towards the course in social studies and history lessons, motivating and making the student effective. The results of Dogan (2007), Alabaş (2007), Keles, Ata and Köksal (2006) and McCormik (2004) paralleled the results of this research.

Students who participated in the study indicated that, in their opinions about the use of letters in 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course, it will make the course enjoyable; it will save it from monotony; learning the topic from different sources will make it easy to learn; it will revitalize the history in their mind; and, it will make the abstract concepts concrete. However, %4 of the students do not want letters to be used in teaching 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course.

In the improvements for the use of letters in the 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course to make the use of letters more qualified; it rises to prominence to give letters more space in textbooks, to use them according to the topics and to give training to teachers on how to use letters properly.

In the light of the findings from the sub-problems of the research, it is proposed to use letter as an instructional material in gaining affective skills in 8th grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course. In his study "Teaching of the topics in Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course in Primary school", Emiroğlu (2002) suggests that these elements, which are part of this rhythm that adjusts the rhythm of the teaching and facilitates learning, makes it easier to learn, and that learning at upper level will be effective.

Accordingly;

8th Grade Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism teaching program should include examples of activities aimed at using letters,

Carrying out scientific studies on the effects of using letter in Turkish Republic History of Revolution course on students' success and their attitude towards the course,

Preparation of departments and web archives where primary resources are kept for students in the school libraries that are available for Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism course,

Giving more room for letters in textbooks in the direction of curriculum,

Researchers being able to conduct this research with a larger number of groups in a public school and work on learning teachers' opinions about the use of letters in their lessons are among the propositions.

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