

# HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION: A COMPARISON OF MOTHER TONGUE TEXTBOOKS IN TURKEY AND FRANCE

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**Abstract** – *Textbooks are major instructional tools playing an important role in education at all grades. The purpose of this study is to compare the level of allocation of human rights issues – rights, freedom, democracy, justice, tolerance and peace – in mother tongue textbooks in Turkey and France. For this aim, ten mother tongue textbooks from both countries were examined. Content analysis method was used to analyse the textbooks. As a result, it was observed that human rights issues are included more in Turkish textbooks when compared to French textbooks. It was found that in the textbooks of both countries the ‘rights’ subcategory is included the most while the ‘justice’ subcategory is included the least. While the intensity scores of the ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’ subcategories were listed toward the very end in the textbooks of both countries, the ‘democracy’ subcategory occupies more places in French textbooks whereas the ‘freedom’ subcategory occupies more places in Turkish textbooks. Besides, the intensity scores for the subcategories of ‘rights’, ‘peace’ and ‘tolerance’ hold the first three places in the mother tongue textbooks of both countries.*

## Introduction

**T**he topic of human rights increasingly attracts the attention of the general public in the world (Donnelly, 1989; Akilloglu, 1995; Buergetal, 1995; Çeçen, 1995; Gemalmaz, 2001; Reisoglu, 2001). The term ‘human rights’ implies all the ideal rights that are required to be granted to everyone theoretically at a certain age. When human rights are considered, what comes to mind mostly are the rights that are ‘required’ and the rights under the ‘objectives to be reached’ statements (Kapani, 1981, p. 14). However, today, most of the human rights are contained by positive law and guaranteed with material sanctions (Mumcu, 1994).

Whether human rights can exist and bear a practical value depends on people’s awareness and practise of those rights, and their protection and improvement of those rights. This can be ensured with education in human rights field. Human rights education can be defined as ‘education offered in order to arouse awareness for the cognition, protection, use and improvement of human rights, and for

respect of these rights by everyone in a general sense and by students within the ambience of formal education' (Gülmez, 2001, p. 49).

The most crucial point in human rights education is definitely to transform the knowledge acquired in this field into behaviour. The process to realise this begins with the offering of human rights education *via* a content that is suitable for the person's level. The presence of specialised lessons that will teach human rights systematically and methodically is required. But this is not enough since this field is so comprehensive that it cannot be contained simply in such lessons. Actually, one of the objectives of general education is to give information required for life and ensure the intellectual and moral development of the student with courses in social fields (Vandenberg, 1984).

In order to ensure sustainability in human rights education, the human rights topic should be given place in other courses that are found in the curriculum such as history, geography, sociology, psychology, literature and philosophy (UNESCO, 1969, 1987; also Gülmez, 1998; Karaman-Kepenekci, 2000). The Council of Europe (see Annex of Recommendation No. R(85)7) has suggested that when adolescents' learn about fields that are of abstract quality – such as human rights – courses such as history, geography, social sciences, religious and moral education, language, literature and economics could be made use of.

## **Textbooks and their place in human rights education**

A textbook is the fundamental tool that allows the teacher to use his/her position in a better way and to offer what he/she would like to teach in a more systematic manner; it also allows the student to revise what the teacher explains anywhere, at any time and at any speed. The textbook is prepared or chosen in relation to the teaching of a certain course and it is recommended as the fundamental resource for teachers and students in a certain school, grade and course upon examination of specific criteria. Today, textbooks are undergoing a radical change with respect to form, content and method (Garner et al., 1986; Oguzkan, 1993; Aycan et al., 2001; Gérard, 2003; Ceyhan & Yigit, 2004; Karaman-Kepenekci, 2005).

Textbooks are but one piece of the education puzzle that needs to be reviewed and critiqued (Giannangelo & Kaplan, 1992) and delineate what behavioural objectives can be covered in the course. This can include recommending the structure of the setting in which these objectives are to be achieved. It is a compact, economical, practical device for storing a huge amount of visual stimuli (Baykal, 2004).

At present, although textbooks are not the sole available teaching tool, as a result of the influence of technological developments, they are still the first

and the most important tool used in lessons (Coskun, 1996). According to a UNESCO project, textbooks provide the main resource for teachers, enabling them to animate the curricula and give life to the subjects taught in the classroom (UNESCO, 2007a). In recent decades, UNESCO has developed activities aimed at textbook revision as textbooks are seen as a key component for improving the quality of education and as one of its main strategies in promoting dialogue among and between nations and peoples, and a better knowledge and appreciation of their different cultures, as well as respect for, and acceptance of, cultural diversity (King, 2004). Revision of the school textbooks, or of the teaching materials in a wider sense, is the primary objective of UNESCO.

Today, while resources used in reaching information are greatly diversified, textbooks still play an important role in the development of forms of thinking and mentalities. Textbooks should support the preservation and continuation of cultural traditions, shaping of the identity sensation, realisation of linguistic resemblance and preservation of the national bond by offering the same contents to the entire youth population, using the same language and disseminating the same system of values, and the same historical, literary and even religious references (UNESCO, 2007b).

There is literature that examines the importance of textbooks in human rights education (Power & Allison, 2000; Tibbits, 2002; Kirisika, 2003). A number of studies were conducted to investigate the contribution of some of these textbooks (e.g., of history, social studies etc.) in human rights and citizenship education. For example, Karaman-Kepenekci (1999) examined the level of allocation of the citizenship and human rights issues in 16 Turkish high school textbooks. She found that intensity score of citizenship and human rights issues were higher in the religion, sociology and philosophy high school textbooks than in the other textbooks analysed. In another study, Karaman-Kepenekci (2003) analysed the level of human rights and responsibility issues in three life studies textbooks and four social studies textbooks used in Turkish primary schools. This study concluded that the intensity scores of human rights issues were higher than those of the responsibility issues in these textbooks.

The History Foundation (2003) carried out a project entitled *Promoting Human Rights in Primary and Secondary School Textbooks* in partnership with the Human Rights Committee of the Turkish Academy of Sciences and in collaboration with the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey. This project proposed the re-writing of textbooks so that future citizens would be more aware of the underlying issues.

The United Nations Association of the United States (see Sewall, 2002) carried out a study entitled *Textbooks and the United Nations*. This study revealed that

information about United Nations was almost non-existent in some textbooks in American schools and, where present, was often unclear and superficial. Sewall (2002), the author of the report, explains that the United Nations and its agencies are misunderstood, and that textbooks do not clear up this misunderstanding: the information they provide is often arcane and sketchy.

## **The place of mother tongue textbooks in human rights education**

Turkish language courses are of vital importance in formal education in Turkey. Their main objectives are to teach the mother tongue in the most complete manner, to create awareness with respect to the mother tongue, and to bring up democratic and sensitive individuals with well-developed understanding/ expression skills. In recent years, many studies have examined Turkish textbooks in relation to human rights education as well as linguistics (Polat, 1991; Baysal, 1996; Coskun, 1996; Yörükoglu, 1996; Esen & Bağlı, 2002; Bora, 2003; Ceylan-Tarba, 2003; Çotuksöken, 2003; Gemalmaz, 2003; Tanrıöver, 2003; Timur & Bağlı, 2003; Karaman-Kepenekci, 2005; Aslan, 2006). French textbooks in France and in French schools – with their use of rich texts and contents – have similar objectives and they are considered as the basic teaching course (Programmes de 2002, 2004; Camenisch & Serge, 2006; Centre National de Documentation Pédagogique, 2007; Humanité, 2007).

When mother tongue textbooks, the priority of which is to improve the language and communication skills of individuals, are prepared carefully, they may become one of the most significant tools in offering human rights education. Human rights-related poems, memoirs, diaries, anecdotes, novels and works that speak of struggles to obtain rights and freedom at various times and places may be included in these books. One can also make use of works related to children's and adolescents' rights (Karaman-Kepenekci, 2000). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and texts of international contracts on human rights may be analysed, and then students may be asked to write their own universal declarations on human rights and children's rights (UNESCO, 1969).

The texts selected for use in mother tongue textbooks can play an important role in the implementation of human rights education. Literary texts, with their versatile nature that comes from their contents, educate people in terms of sensitivity. A person with educated feelings manages to comprehend what is felt and, as a result, understands the meaning of humanitarianism and equality. One can also offer an indirect human rights education to students by including works of foreign writers and artists. It is important in mother tongue teaching that students meet with different writers, and thus with different styles (tastes). The

fine feelings acquired through sensitivity education provide the person with the skills to go into details, to comprehend humans and the world (Binyazar, 1996).

Texts that question the violation of human rights should be included in textbooks to be then submitted to students' review and assessment. For instance, students may be asked to empathise with the protagonists in those texts and interpret the situation within the context of human rights. Extracts from newspapers and magazines that recount real and dramatic stories about human rights may be included in textbooks or students may be asked to find such articles. These acquired texts then may be exhibited in classroom literature corners or school notice boards for the benefit of other students (Sever, Kaya & Aslan, 2006).

Comprehension questions may be used to highlight the importance of human rights and citizenship. The textbook may include questions and activities that allow students to share in class their own or their relatives' experiences in connection with violation of human rights. The questions should create environments where different opinions can be expressed with composure; they should trigger critical thinking by the child, particularly on human rights (Aslan & Polat, 2007). The prepared questions should be directed toward the objectives of human rights education, such as expressing oneself, generating authentic thoughts, developing positive relationships, etc. For an effective human rights education, preliminary textbook exercises may include thought provoking and analysis-requiring questions developed by the authors to assist teachers in preparing students for the lesson (Çayır, 2003).

Visual stimulants – such as comic strips, pictures and photos about human rights – may be included in the books and students may be asked to talk about their messages. Text content-related pictures, photographs, illustrations or cartoons by foreign artists might also be included in the books. According to Sever (2007), interpretation of a cartoon from different points of view, and the analysis and expression of its contents from different perspectives prepare natural settings for the formation and acquisition of a democratic culture in an educational environment. They enable students to perceive the fact that people may generate different thoughts on the same or various life situations. For this reason, the visual features of mother tongue textbooks should not be undervalued.

In order to determine the contribution of mother tongue courses in human rights, the level of allocation of topics related to human rights in the textbooks of these courses should be examined. In Turkey, the new primary education curriculum was adopted in 2004. In line with this, the curricula of all the courses, including that of the Turkish language course, taught at elementary level were changed and the new curriculum was implemented at the beginning of the 2005-2006 scholastic year. With regard to France, the textbooks that were prepared in accordance with the new primary education curriculum have been in use since

2002. The Turkish language textbooks prepared according to the new primary education curriculum have still not been examined in terms of their human rights component. Neither has this aspect of these books been compared to that of other mother tongue textbooks used in other countries.

## **Objective of the study**

The general objective of this study is to make a comparison between the mother tongue textbooks in Turkey and France in terms of their level of allocation to human rights issues.

## **Method**

### *Selection of textbooks*

In Turkey, compulsory education consists of primary education, which spreads over eight years to cover ages 6-14; the first five years being the first level and the next three years being the second level (see <http://www.meb.gov.tr>). In France, compulsory education covers the education of children between the ages of 6-16; the first five years of compulsory education are called the primary education level (see Ministère de l' Education Nationale, 2006).

In the study, ten mother tongue textbooks recommended by the Turkish and French Ministries of Education for use by students in the first five years of primary education level were selected for the purpose of examination. These textbooks (five Turkish and five French) are listed in Appendix A.

### *Data analysis*

Textbooks have been analysed through 'content analysis', a qualitative research method frequently used in this type of study. The main purpose in content analysis is to attain concepts and connections, which can serve to explain the collected data (Yıldırım & Simsek, 2005).

### *Procedures*

The first things to determine in content analysis are the subcategories of analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For the present analysis we made use of the subcategories previously defined by Karaman-Kepeneci (1999). These were:

**Rights:** Authorities and benefits recognised and protected by law. Rights are divided into civil, political and social rights.

**Freedom:** Non-existence of constraints and compulsion; having the power of doing anything that is allowed by independence, sovereignty and law.

**Democracy:** Administration of a country by the public, where the majorities in power reflect public popular vote (i.e., power is administered through representatives elected through a free and fair election system by the public).

**Justice:** Being fair, punishing the guilty, and making sure that administrators act in accordance with the law, honesty and conflict resolution.

**Tolerance:** Showing tolerance, respect and liking toward others (including those of different origin), not applying force or pressure, and ability to compromise and forgive.

**Peace:** Orderly and peaceful living, brotherhood, social integrity, safe environment, conflict resolution, and non-existence of anarchy, assault, disorder or tension.

To determine the inter-rater reliability of the content areas, two subcategories and a textbook were randomly chosen (namely the 'Rights' and 'Tolerance' subcategories and 'Turkish Textbook 4') and coded by the co-authors of the paper. An average of 87.5% consistency was noted, implying a good inter-rater reliability (Hall & Houten, 1983). All the reading and comprehension texts, including poems, in the textbooks (i.e., a total of 144 texts in Turkish textbooks and a total of 281 texts in French textbooks) were examined. In other words, we did not use sampling while examining the textbooks. On the other hand, the table of contents, chronology, questions, bibliography, glossary, prepositions, pictures, and photos were excluded.

'Sentence' has been chosen as the unit of analysis while analysing textbooks. We determined the frequency of occurrence of the designated subcategories in each sentence. At this stage, the sentences with words matching the subcategories, or explaining designated subcategories, or sentences directly conveying the meaning were taken into consideration. The weight of each aspect was valued as a point. In order to find out the total number of words in the texts, the words in all the texts in the books were counted one by one. The values of subcategories in the textbooks have been indicated in the tables as frequency, percentage and intensity values.

For each textbook, the subcategory percentage and the subcategory intensity score were obtained using the formulas given below:

$$\text{Subcategory percentage} = \frac{\text{subcategory frequency}}{\text{total frequency of all subcategories}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Subcategory intensity score} = \frac{\text{subcategory frequency}}{\text{total word number of the texts}} \times 1000$$

The intensity scores of all subcategories were multiplied by 1000 because the resulting figures while calculating the intensity scores were too small, and dealing with small figures causes difficulty while interpreting. In other words, the multiplication by 1000 was a matter of convenience.

## Findings

### *Analysis of Turkish textbooks*

The first grade Turkish Textbook 1 (TTB 1) is made up of four themes and 16 texts. The second grade Turkish Textbook 2 (TT 2), the third grade Turkish Textbook 3 (TT 3), the fourth grade Turkish Textbook 4 (TT 4) and the fifth grade Turkish Textbook 5 (TT 5) are each made up of eight themes and 32 texts. The titles of some of the themes in Turkish textbooks are as follows: ‘Individual and Society’, ‘Production, Consumption and Productivity’, ‘Health and Environment’, ‘Imagination’, ‘Games and Sports’, ‘Our Values’ and ‘Educational and Social Activities’.

When looking at the dissemination of the subcategories of human rights, it can be seen from Table 1 that in TTB 1 the subcategories of ‘Peace’ (60.4) and ‘Rights’ (49.3) have the highest intensity scores. These are followed by the subcategory of ‘Tolerance’ (13.6). The lowest intensity scores in this textbook belong to the subcategories of ‘Freedom’ (7.0), ‘Democracy’ (5.5) and ‘Justice’ (4.5) – all three having quite close ratios.

In TTB 2, the subcategory with the highest intensity score is ‘Rights’ (77.3). The subcategory of ‘Rights’ is followed by the subcategories of ‘Peace’ (19.1) and ‘Tolerance’ (11.5). The lowest intensity scores in this textbook belong to the subcategories of ‘Democracy’ (4.4), ‘Freedom’ (2.2) and ‘Justice’ (0.2).

In TTB 3, the subcategory with the highest intensity score is ‘Rights’ (41.9). The subcategory of ‘Rights’ is followed by the subcategories of ‘Peace’ (34.2) and ‘Tolerance’ (16.4). The lowest intensity scores in this textbook belong to the subcategories of ‘Democracy’ (4.4), ‘Freedom’ (3.0) and ‘Justice’ (1.7) – again all three having quite close ratios.

TABLE 1: Dissemination of all the categories in Turkish textbooks according to frequency (f), percentage (%) and intensity score (IS)

| SUBCATEGORIES    |    | TURKISH TEXTBOOKS |                   |                   |                    |                   |       |
|------------------|----|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------|
|                  |    | TTB 1<br>(1,988)* | TTB 2<br>(6,587)* | TTB 3<br>(8,091)* | TTB 4<br>(10,401)* | TTB 5<br>(9,903)* | TOTAL |
| <b>Rights</b>    | f  | 98                | 509               | 339               | 994                | 828               | 2768  |
|                  | %  | 35.1              | 67.4              | 41.2              | 57.8               | 65.9              | 57.3  |
|                  | IS | 49.3              | 77.3              | 41.9              | 95.6               | 83.6              | 347.7 |
| <b>Freedom</b>   | f  | 14                | 14                | 24                | 79                 | 56                | 187   |
|                  | %  | 5.0               | 1.9               | 2.9               | 4.6                | 4.5               | 3.9   |
|                  | IS | 7.0               | 2.2               | 3.0               | 7.6                | 5.7               | 25.5  |
| <b>Democracy</b> | f  | 11                | 29                | 36                | 87                 | 37                | 200   |
|                  | %  | 3.9               | 3.8               | 4.4               | 5.1                | 2.9               | 4.1   |
|                  | IS | 5.5               | 4.4               | 4.4               | 8.4                | 3.7               | 26.4  |
| <b>Justice</b>   | f  | 9                 | 1                 | 14                | 45                 | 8                 | 77    |
|                  | %  | 3.2               | 0.1               | 1.7               | 2.6                | 0.6               | 1.6   |
|                  | IS | 4.5               | 0.2               | 1.7               | 4.3                | 0.8               | 11.5  |
| <b>Tolerance</b> | f  | 27                | 76                | 133               | 159                | 80                | 475   |
|                  | %  | 9.7               | 10.1              | 16.2              | 9.2                | 6.4               | 9.8   |
|                  | IS | 13.6              | 11.5              | 16.4              | 15.3               | 8.1               | 64.9  |
| <b>Peace</b>     | f  | 120               | 126               | 277               | 356                | 248               | 1127  |
|                  | %  | 43.0              | 16.7              | 33.7              | 20.7               | 19.7              | 23.3  |
|                  | IS | 60.4              | 19.1              | 34.2              | 34.2               | 25.0              | 172.9 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     | f  | 279               | 755               | 823               | 1720               | 1257              | 4834  |
|                  | %  | 100               | 100               | 100               | 100                | 100               | 100   |
|                  | IS | 140.3             | 114.7             | 101.6             | 165.4              | 126.9             | 648.9 |

\* Total number of words in textbook

In TTB 4, the subcategory with the highest intensity score is ‘Rights’ (95.6). The subcategory of ‘Rights’ is followed by the subcategories of ‘Peace’ (34.2) and ‘Tolerance’ (15.3). The lowest intensity scores in this textbook belong once again to the subcategories of ‘Democracy’ (8.4), ‘Freedom’ (7.6) and ‘Justice’ (4.3).

In TTB 5, the subcategory with the highest intensity score is ‘Rights’ (83.6). The subcategory of ‘Rights’ is followed by the subcategories of ‘Peace’ (25.0) and ‘Tolerance’ (8.1). In line with the findings for the other four textbooks, the lowest intensity scores in this textbook belong to the subcategories of ‘Freedom’ (5.7), ‘Democracy’ (3.7) and ‘Justice’ (0.8).

The statements below, quoted from the Turkish Textbooks, can be given as examples of the ‘Rights’ subcategory:

‘Children, if you encounter a producer or a vendor-related problem with the products you have purchased, call 175 Consumer’s Line ... A responsible consumer is the one who seeks remedy. Never abstain from seeking remedy ... ’ (TTB 4, p. 62)

‘ ... Student: Why do women not have the right to be elected? Why cannot they become members of parliament?  
Atatürk asked: What is the main right and duty of a citizen?  
Student: The main right is to vote, the main duty is military service.’  
(TTB 5, p. 41)

The statements below, again quoted from the Turkish Textbooks, can be given as examples of the ‘Rights’ and ‘Democracy’ subcategories:

‘ ... That is, where there is democracy, people have rights. Old or young, poor or rich, women or men, everyone can think, express and do whatever he/she wants to ... ’ (TTB 2, p. 107)

‘ ... In democracies, people have to respect others’ rights when using their own rights. They cannot violate others’ rights ... ’ (TTB 2, p. 108)

The statements below, quoted from the Turkish Textbooks, can be given as examples of the ‘Rights’ and ‘Justice’ subcategories:

‘ ... Well done, my girl! You did not do us wrong. Just like you, people should always respect each other’s rights ... ’ (TTB 4, p. 19)

‘O Sinan, chief architect Sinan! You have done the right, fairest thing. That is what I would expect from you.’ (TTB 5, p. 79)

The statements below, quoted from the Turkish Textbooks, can be given as examples of the ‘Peace’ subcategory:

‘ ... He initiated the Turkish War of Independence against the enemies who occupied our country. This war, of which he was the commander-in-chief, resulted in victory ... ’ (TTB 2, p. 27)

‘ ... Friends, peace is essential in this world; peace at home, peace in the world! Follow every call for peace ... ’ (TTB 4, p. 31)

‘ ... Look, we have not lived through a war. But we learn some things about the war in the movies we watch at the cinema, and on television ... That is not what real war is like ... ’ (TTB 4, p. 26)

‘ ... Secure life is to know that we can eat when we are hungry and to sleep in our beds comfortably. It is to be in peace ... ’ (TTB 5, p. 112)

The poem quoted below, from one of the Turkish Textbooks, can be given as an example of the ‘Tolerance’ subcategory:

‘Tolerance,  
Be tactful, with a smile on your face;  
Do not aggrieve anyone with bitter words.  
Hoping that you have nice days ahead,  
That is how each citizen should be; tolerant.’ (TTB 4, p. 16)

The statements below, quoted from the Turkish Textbooks, can be given as examples of the ‘Freedom’ subcategory:

‘ ... He always worked for the freedom of the nation ... ’ (TTB 2, p. 26)

‘It was not easy to come to this point, children. It was not easy to reach the commonwealth, and our independence ... ’ (TTB 4, p. 26)

‘ ...We all knew that the most important thing for human kind is freedom and independence ... ’ (TTB 4, p. 29)

### *Analysis of French textbooks*

French Textbook 1 (CP) consists of four units and 60 texts; French Textbook 2 (CE 1) consists of 12 units and 38 texts; French Textbook 3 (CE 2) consists of six units and 68 texts; French Textbook 4 (CM 1) consists of six units and 22 texts; and French Textbook 5 (CM 2) consists of six themes and 93 texts. The titles of some of these units are as follows: ‘Welcome to CP’, ‘Day by Day’ and ‘From Invention to Invention’ (CP); ‘Mystery and Peanuts’, ‘Fany and her Dream’, ‘Plants Living in Wetland Environments’, ‘On the Saint-Malo Beach’ and ‘Bread

for Friends' (CE 1); 'Grammar', 'Conjugation', 'Orthography', 'Vocabulary' and 'Reading' (CE 2); 'Monsters and Stories', 'Detective Stories', 'Various Stories' and 'Stories of Metamorphosis' (CM 1); and 'Grammar', 'Vocabulary' and 'Text Grammar' (CM 2).

When the dissemination of the subcategories is considered, it can be seen from Table 2 that the 'Rights' subcategory (69.0) has the highest intensity score in CP. This subcategory is followed by the subcategories of 'Peace' (19.2), 'Tolerance' (13.8) and 'Democracy' (13.6). The lowest intensity scores in this textbook belong to the subcategories of 'Freedom' (3.6) and 'Justice' (1.0) – both scoring very lowly.

In CE 1, the subcategory with the highest intensity score is 'Rights' (50.8). This subcategory is followed by the subcategories of 'Peace' (21.5) and 'Tolerance' (10.8). The lowest intensity scores in this textbook belong to the subcategories of 'Freedom' (5.5), 'Democracy' (2.8) and 'Justice' (2.3).

In CE 2, the subcategories with the highest intensity scores are 'Rights' (46.6) and 'Peace' (20.9). These subcategories are followed – quite at a distance – by the subcategories of 'Tolerance' (7.1), 'Democracy' (6.7), 'Freedom' (5.5) and 'Justice' (2.4).

In CM 1, the subcategories with the highest intensity scores are 'Rights' (33.3) and 'Peace' (25.6). These two are followed by the subcategories of 'Democracy' (11.3), 'Tolerance' (9.9), 'Freedom' (2.2) and 'Justice' (1.7).

In CM 2, the subcategories with the highest intensity scores are 'Rights' (52.2) and 'Peace' (26.6). These are followed at some distance by the subcategories of 'Freedom' (6.8), 'Tolerance' (6.5), 'Democracy' (4.7) and 'Justice' (1.9).

The statements below, quoted from the French Textbooks, can be given as examples of the 'Rights' subcategory:

'You have just one right, and that is the right to remain silent ... When her father told her so, her grandmother remained silent with displeasure. It was not surprising since children did not have the right to speak during meals.' (CM 2, p. 130)

'Until 1848, only very wealthy people had this right (the right to vote) ... It was necessary to pay taxes to be able to vote. France is the first country that granted the right to vote to all its male citizens over 21 ... but only to males. It was considered that instead of dealing with politics, women had other duties. They waited until 1945.' (CM 2, p. 213)

'In the Middle Ages, the king granted some city states the right to organise their own commune lives such as fighting against fire, ensuring the security of the residents, maintaining and illuminating the streets, establishing a market ... That is how the first communes arose ...' (CM 2, p. 72)

TABLE 2: Dissemination of all the categories in French textbooks according to frequency (f), percentage (%) and intensity score (IS)

| SUBCATEGORIES    |    | FRENCH TEXTBOOKS |                  |                   |                  |                  |       |
|------------------|----|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------|
|                  |    | CP<br>(5,013)*   | CE 1<br>(6,870)* | CE 2<br>(11,638)* | CM 1<br>(8,078)* | CM 2<br>(7,890)* | TOTAL |
| <b>Rights</b>    | f  | 346              | 349              | 542               | 269              | 412              | 1918  |
|                  | %  | 57.5             | 54.2             | 52.2              | 39.6             | 52.9             | 51.3  |
|                  | IS | 69.0             | 50.8             | 46.6              | 33.3             | 52.2             | 251.9 |
| <b>Freedom</b>   | f  | 18               | 38               | 64                | 18               | 54               | 192   |
|                  | %  | 3.0              | 5.9              | 6.2               | 2.7              | 6.9              | 5.1   |
|                  | IS | 3.6              | 5.5              | 5.5               | 2.2              | 6.8              | 23.6  |
| <b>Democracy</b> | f  | 68               | 19               | 78                | 91               | 37               | 293   |
|                  | %  | 11.3             | 3.0              | 7.5               | 13.4             | 4.7              | 7.8   |
|                  | IS | 13.6             | 2.8              | 6.7               | 11.3             | 4.7              | 39.1  |
| <b>Justice</b>   | f  | 5                | 16               | 28                | 14               | 15               | 78    |
|                  | %  | 0.8              | 2.5              | 2.7               | 2.1              | 1.9              | 2.1   |
|                  | IS | 1.0              | 2.3              | 2.4               | 1.7              | 1.9              | 9.3   |
| <b>Tolerance</b> | f  | 69               | 74               | 83                | 80               | 51               | 357   |
|                  | %  | 11.5             | 11.5             | 8.0               | 11.8             | 6.5              | 9.5   |
|                  | IS | 13.8             | 10.8             | 7.1               | 9.9              | 6.6              | 48.1  |
| <b>Peace</b>     | f  | 96               | 148              | 243               | 207              | 210              | 904   |
|                  | %  | 15.9             | 23.0             | 23.4              | 30.5             | 27.0             | 24.2  |
|                  | IS | 19.2             | 21.5             | 20.9              | 25.6             | 26.6             | 113.8 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     | f  | 602              | 644              | 1038              | 679              | 779              | 3742  |
|                  | %  | 100              | 100              | 100               | 100              | 100              | 100   |
|                  | IS | 120.2            | 93.7             | 89.2              | 84.0             | 98.7             | 485.8 |

\* Total number of words in textbook

The statements below, quoted from the French Textbooks, can be given as examples of the ‘Tolerance’ subcategory:

‘Bread, a type of food found in many parts of the world: in North America, Europe ... In those places, bread is the symbol of unity and cooperation among people. A friend is someone with whom you share your bread. Friendship is strengthened with this basic gesture: To split your bread to eat together’ (CE 1, p. 164)

‘Tolerance helps to establish friendship. Everyone is different at school as in anywhere else. Why do we cast them out and make fun of them? We surely do not have to love everyone. But everyone has the right to live on earth honourably, and without being treated contemptuously and suffering wrong. Being tolerant means respecting others, and the way they live and think. It is to see the things that bring us closer more than those that distinguish us from each other.’ (CP, p. 165)

The statements below, quoted from the French Textbooks, can be given as examples of the ‘Peace’ and ‘Freedom’ subcategories:

‘Once upon a time, a kingdom in China was facing the danger of a civil war and a foreign war. The King had a wise man brought to his palace and asked him to bring reconciliation and peace back to his kingdom.’ (CM 2, p. 132)

‘Verdun War caused such pain that it is one of the most commonly known and most murderous battles of the First World War ... More than 300,000 French and as many Germans lost their lives in that war.’ (CM 2, p. 125)

‘Our understanding of war is different than that of the Indians. They consider war not as the combat between two nations to gain the respect of other nations; instead, a regular display of their own warriors’ courage is in question. That is, for them a war consists primarily of small raids.’ (CM 2, p. 32)

‘When the savage man and women take shelter in the cave and light a fire, the savage animals get round to see what is going on. The dog, the horse and the cow traded in their freedom for some food they were offered.’ (CM 1, p. 154)

The statements below, quoted from the French Textbooks, can be given as examples of the ‘Freedom’ and ‘Democracy’ subcategories:

'We are in 1794. It is late in the Revolution. In all villages in France, a Liberty tree is being planted as the symbol of the new Republic.' (CM 2, p. 24)

'Thank you Prince! You gave me back my old physical fitness and freedom.' (CM 1, p. 141)

### *Comparison between the Turkish and French textbooks*

When the sum of the dissemination of all subcategories are considered, it is observed that the human rights issue is more frequently mentioned in Turkish textbooks (648.9) than in French textbooks (485.8). When a comparison among all course textbooks is made, one notes that the human rights issue is mentioned most frequently in TTB 4 (165.4), TTB 1 (140.3), TTB 5 (126.9) and CP (120.2).

When the subcategories are considered separately, it can be observed that in both French textbooks and Turkish textbooks, the 'Rights' subcategory attains the highest position with regard to intensity score. In both countries, this subcategory is followed by the 'Peace' and 'Tolerance' subcategories. The 'Democracy' subcategory is more intense in French textbooks than it is in Turkish textbooks. It can also be observed that the 'Rights', 'Peace', 'Freedom' and 'Tolerance' subcategories are given more prominence in Turkish textbooks. Another striking finding is the fact that the 'Justice' subcategory is the least present, and at an almost equal rate, in the textbooks of both countries.

## **Discussion**

In this comparative study, the first thing to note is that human rights education is given more prominence in Turkish textbooks than in French textbooks. This largely results from the understanding adopted by the new primary education curriculum and the subsequent obligation to prepare textbooks that take this curriculum into consideration (Ceyhan & Yigit, 2004). In the new primary education curriculum – which was piloted during the 2004-2005 scholastic year and then implemented at the first level of all the primary education schools in Turkey during the following scholastic year – the inclusion in each textbook of the human rights topic as an intermediary discipline was accepted as a principle. One reason for this may be the lack of a discipline on human rights education and related textbooks in the first five years of primary education in Turkey. In other words, the human rights education topic is interspersed in educational curricula and, thus, in textbooks. This situation is explained in the introduction to the new primary education curriculum:

'Curricula attach importance to the improved awareness regarding human rights. Personal inviolability, which is accepted as the essential human right within the philosophical and practical context, takes free-thinking rights, rights for the security of rights, social and economic rights and political rights into consideration. Besides, the curricula do not allow for discrimination against differences such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, nation, origins, political views, social class and physical/mental health states of persons.' (Ministry of National Education, 2005, p. 29)

The most important reason for the lesser inclusion of human rights education in French textbooks may be that human rights education is offered directly in the 'Living Together' courses taught for half an hour each week in the first and second grades; in 'Collective Life' courses taught again for half an hour each week and in 'Civic Education' courses taught for one-and-a-half hours each week in the third, fourth and fifth grades. This means that in French schools, out of a total of 26 hours per week, human rights education is allocated half an hour in the first and second grades and two hours in the third, fourth and fifth grades.

Civic education is the other major area of education at this level. It is during the last years of primary school that a pupil truly learns how to build relationships of mutual respect and thoughtful cooperation with his or her friends and teachers. This leads to an initial awareness of civic values. During regular meetings in the timetable (one hour every fortnight), this type of education tries to inculcate the habit of envisaging the problems posed by living together. In these courses, the primary objective is not the acquisition of knowledge, but the application of learned behaviour. This course has to enable the integration of each student to the classroom and school environment, and the realisation of character development and freedom. Besides, it orients the student to think about abstract problems that come up in school life. This would ensure that students have a clearer consciousness about personal freedom, the pressures of social life and the verification of common values. Through the use of the acquired knowledge, this course encourages the child to expand his/her views of other communities, communes, nations, Europe and the rest of the world. In this course, concepts such as citizenship duties, commonwealth and commitment, rights, authority, legality, justice and democracy are also accentuated. Civic education is not only offered in a single one-hour lesson, but in all fields of school life.

As a melting pot for equal opportunity, school fulfils this role even more so when it builds a shared common culture; this means, first of all, acquiring an essential preliminary common store of knowledge. That is, the mastery of the basic skills of reading, writing and counting – a simple yet demanding priority

which, further down the line, enables college to fulfil its role. The school, as the melting pot for the elaboration of responsible and united citizenship, must encourage the building of shared values by making these values known, understood and practised.

In fact, the underlying guideline behind 'Living Together' is to accompany the child in his/her gradual acceptance of living with other persons and its restrictions, as well as building up his/her personality. In 'Living Together' courses, students begin to accept the evaluation of their own behaviours from the points of view of their friends or in a more general sense. They discover that the constraints of living together are the warranty of their own freedom. They learn to reject violence; to prevent conflicts and disagreements and to fight against the problems confronted in daily life; to approve themselves and others; to respect the rules, others and common life; to interact and communicate with their friends and with adults; to take part in group activities and to take the first step toward citizenship.

It was observed that in both countries, the 'Rights' subcategory was included the most textbooks (except TTB 1). A study conducted by Karaman-Kepenekci (1999), in which she examined high school textbooks, reached a similar conclusion. Along the lines of the present study, in Karaman-Kepenekci's study, the intensity score of the 'Rights' subcategory in Turkish language and literature textbooks was found to be much higher than those of the other subcategories.

The intensity score of the 'Democracy' subcategory comes toward the bottom end in the textbooks of both countries (except in CM 1). This makes it more important for the teacher to discuss at appropriate times in mother tongue courses, which have an artistic dimension as well as a social dimension, what democratic government is. In other words, when texts related to this category are being studied, the significance of democracy, what democratic values mean and the advantages that democratic governments bring to people can be discussed with the assistance of the teacher. In French textbooks, for instance, when the texts 'The Action of the Sage' (CM 2, p. 132), 'I am Writing a Historical Document' (CM 2, p. 24), 'The Prince and The Noble Girls' (CM 1, p. 141) and 'Right to Vote' (CM 2, p. 213) are being studied, the teacher may spend more time on the 'Democracy' subcategory. In Turkish textbooks, especially in TTB 2 (p. 105), when the story 'Democracy is Everywhere' is being studied, the significance of democracy and of living with democratic beliefs at home, at school and at work may be emphasised. By doing so, even though democracy holds a relatively small place in textbooks, one ensures the internalisation of the democracy topic by students.

It emerged from this study that the 'Democracy' subcategory is slightly more intense in French textbooks than it is in Turkish textbooks. This finding may be related to the French Revolution in 1789, when the French citizens rose in rebellion against the oppressive feudal system. This event set the social ground of

democratic life in literary texts, including textbooks. The social and literary impact of this revolution, which paved the way for fundamental concepts such as freedom and democracy, is well known (Kapani, 1981). In most of the textbooks, the protagonists include a prince, princess, king and queen – the underlying implication however is the ‘Democracy’ subcategory. In addition to such stories, the French textbooks include short texts that directly assist students to understand the concept of democracy and its importance.

Although the ‘Freedom’ subcategory does not hold a prominent place in the textbooks of both countries, it is included more in Turkish textbooks. This Turkish prevalence results from the frequent mentioning in all Turkish textbooks, except in TTB 1, of the freedom topic in texts with an ‘Atatürk’ theme which recall the Turkish struggle for independence<sup>1</sup>. It can thus be seen that the relative frequent mentioning of the ‘Freedom’ subcategory in Turkish textbooks can be explained with the historical facts that the Turks lived through.

Another striking finding is the fact that ‘Justice’ is the least included subcategory in both Turkish and French textbooks. This result is not consistent with Karaman-Kepenekci’s (1999) high school study, involving Turkish language and literature textbooks, which reported higher levels of inclusion for this subcategory. Still, mother tongue textbooks, in which mostly literary texts are found, may offer nice opportunities for human rights education by including examples of justice-related works from the Turkish and world literature. Although the textbooks examined in this study pay only minimal attention to the ‘Justice’ subcategory, a mother tongue teacher who believes in the importance of justice in society can do much to rectify this seemingly, at least at first, disadvantageous situation. For instance, when studying texts included in this ‘forgotten’ subcategory (e.g., ‘Gift’ [TTB 4, p. 17] and ‘Getting the Best and the Most Favourable’ [TTB 5, p. 77] in Turkish textbooks, and ‘Hameln’ [CE 1, p. 93] and ‘The Musicians of Bremen’ [CE 1, p. 161] in French textbooks), more time can be dedicated and, furthermore, a genuine discussion environment may be created using real-life related events or texts from other books. Students need to realise that, even though their textbooks seem to give little importance to the ‘Justice’ subcategory, it still constitutes a fundamental step in human rights education. Students may be further helped to learn about this subcategory by making use of different tools, such as, role playing, question-answer methods and cartoons (Sever, 2007), pictures, newspaper articles, poems, memoirs, diaries, anecdotes and novels (Binyazar, 1996; Karaman-Kepenekci, 2000). Another possibility would be to ask students questions that will make think, question, criticise, solve problems presented in class, generate authentic thoughts and develop positive relations especially about the ‘Justice’ subcategory (Çayır, 2003; Aslan & Polat, 2007).

It is also worth pointing out that the intensity scores of the ‘Rights’, ‘Peace’ and ‘Tolerance’ subcategories hold the first three ranks in all the textbooks, except in CM 1 and CM 2. The fact that the ‘Peace’ and ‘Tolerance’ subcategories hold the second and third ranks in most textbooks, apart from being an indication of their generally high intensity scores, results from the sufficient inclusion of subjects such as humanitarianism, tolerating and respecting diversity, peace, friendship, tolerance, solidarity and cooperation in the selected textbooks.

The ‘Peace’ subcategory is included more in Turkish textbooks than it is in French textbooks. This can be explained with the inclusion in Turkish textbooks of texts that reflect positive opinions of Atatürk and of the peace protagonists in literary texts within the ‘Atatürk’ theme. In fact, Turkish textbooks frequently quote Atatürk’s ‘Peace at home, peace in the world’ statement and also very frequently emphasise that peace is very important for people, society and the world we live in.

## Note

1. Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the hands of the World War I allies, and the subsequent plans for its partition, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, a Turkish army officer, established a provisional government in Ankara and subsequently defeated the forces sent by the allies. His successful military campaigns led to the liberation of the country and to the establishment of the Republic of Turkey.

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## APPENDIX A

### The Textbooks used in this Study

#### Turkish Textbooks

1. Erol, A., Bingöl-Özger, M., Yalçın. Ç. S., Demiroglu, R., Irmak, A., & Ceylan, M. (2006) *Primary School Turkish Textbook 1* (in Turkish). Istanbul: Kelebek Matbaacılık.
2. Coskun, O., Emecen, M., Yurt, M., Dedeoglu-Okuyucu, S., & Arhan, S. (2006) *Primary School Turkish Textbook 2* (in Turkish). Istanbul: Ihlas Gazetecilik AS.
3. Ardanuç, K., Çökmez, A., Küçüktepe, B., & Toprak, G. (2006) *Primary School Turkish Textbook 3* (in Turkish). Ankara: Cem Web Ofset.
4. Çanakcı, H., Yardımcı, S., Yetimoglu, E. B., Tasdemir, K., & Özyaykut, S. (2006) *Primary School Turkish Textbook 4* (in Turkish). Istanbul: Star Medya Yayıncılık AS.
5. Gören, N., Yener, Z., Ildeniz, A., Aksal, H. S., & Sarıöz, N. (2006) *Primary School Turkish Textbook 5* (in Turkish). Ankara: Pelin Ofset.

#### French Textbooks

1. Camo, M., & Pla, R. (2006) *Je Lis avec Dagobert, CP*. Paris: Hachette Livre.
2. Assuied, R., Buselli, D., & Ragot, A. M. (2006) *Parcours, Maîtrise de la Langue, CE 1*. Paris: Hatier.
3. Lucas, J. L., & Lucas, J. C. (2005) *A Portée de Mots, CE 2*. Paris: Hachette Livre.
4. Schöttke, M. (2006) *Facettes Littérature / Ecriture Observation Réfléchie de la Langue, CM 1*. Paris: Hatier.
5. Léon, R. (2005) *Français Des Outils, pour Dire, Lire et Ecrire, CM 2*. Paris: Hachette Livre.