

Use of Historical Novels in the Teaching of Social Studies: An Analysis of National Struggle Novels from Turkish Literature

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Abstract: *Any document, written or unprinted, is a source of history and social studies. Written sources include letters, documents, official correspondence, legal texts, reports, catalogs, diaries, logbooks, edicts, newspapers, magazines, annuals etc. Historical novels are also shown as secondary sources containing historical information. Historical novels can be used to enrich and exemplify meaning within the teaching of concepts, values and skills that are the basis of the social studies curriculum. The aim of this study is to analyze the two historical novels of Turkish Literature in terms of social studies teaching (Halide Edip Adivar's *The Shirt of Flame* and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's *Stranger*) whether they can be used in the teaching of Turkish history subjects in the social studies course. That is an interdisciplinary research that the document analysis method was used as a basic method. Interdisciplinary studies are considered to be a combination of skills for a common study (examination or project). We try to look at one discipline from another disciplinary perspective used cross-disciplinary approach in our research. Referring to the research findings, it can be said that two historical novels, which are research subjects, are suitable for the purposes of social studies course.*

Keywords: Social Studies, Historical Novel, National Struggle

1. Introduction

Social studies is an interdisciplinary field that tries to make child, understand the knowledge of earth, social relations, society and the country easier. The lesson named Social Studies -whose name is also the name of the field that makes researches about it- is a lesson whose target audience is mainly twelve years old, tries to bring in children with the necessary knowledge, abilities and values for their future, in their own level of understanding. In the lesson, the children are given information about both the history of their country, geography and an effort to create good citizen is also glittered for the eyes. Besides the disciplines of history and geography; sociology, psychology, anthropology, economy, politics, archaeology and literature fields are benefitted from as an integrated figure in the aim of reaching the determined learning outcome. According to Sözer (2008), social studies is a lesson that leaves child face to face to the social problems, that enables child to integrate into social life and it is the lesson in which the child develops her/his social identity.

One of the main aims of social studies' lesson is to teach history. The history teaching is defined as a social agent that is responsible for "cultural transmission" in the aim of providing cultural sustainability and sustainability of countries' existence. While the students interpret the primary and secondary sources, they distinguish the different point of views and their abilities that they get as they use the sources. Moreover, they get chance to observe print and other sources through which they can make reasonable responses from a critical point of view about the sources' reliability (Doğan & Kabapınar, 2010).

One of the main materials except for the textbooks of social studies, are literary products. Literature is one of the most effective branches of arts that support a nation's sustainability, that helps the creation of national identity and, that enhances autonomy and liberty. It would be impossible not to think that the crisis threatens the Turkish identity and its existence, the war that corrupt and destroy, the attacks which threatens the Turkish national identity, even aiming to annihilate it, of course affects the literature. For instance: WWI and War of Independence etc. (Ercilasun, 2014). Oral and written literature, create a rich source for social studies and they contribute social studies to reach its learning outcome. In the aim of developing the students' reading and understanding abilities, one can benefit from one of the many literary genres listed as the following: Novel, short story, poetry, memoir, logbooks, travel writings, articles, biography, legends, myths, proverbs, riddles, and folktales (Öztürk & Otluoğlu, 2011).

If the historical events can't be directly observed, how can we be sure that the events happened in reality? How can we believe whether what historians say are not actually a product of imagination, false stories or just a fiction? (Gardiner, 1961). There is no way of putting forward what really happened in the history because the events don't repeat and they can't be predicted (Acun, 2006). However, the history researches, in order to maintain objectivity, they depend on sources (evidences). The historical sources are categorized into two as the primary sources and secondary sources. Secondary sources generally include history books, textbooks, and films that contain comments related to historical events. On the other hand, primary sources present the evidence in different forms as written, visual, oral or archaeological evidence (Vella, 2005). It is very important to

choose from a historical source, sorting it out and come into conclusions (McKellar, 2003). As one reads from a historical source, he needs to consider the teller's existence: What is the function of the teller in the text? Was he able to erase himself from the story, is he pretending as the teller or is he presenting the events from an objective commentary? Is he functioning as a reflective figure, in other words, does he evaluate upon his own telling (Dobson & Ziemann, 2009)? Historical novel represents a lived experience by filtering it with fictionalized reality. In other words, it is a genre in which reality and fiction is represented concentrically (Tilbe & Civelek, 2006). Historical novel author shapes a historical fact around a fictive frame with his own thesis and thoughts (Göğebakan, 2004). It can be put forward that the history in the novel is based on real events and reality but the novel's base is fictive, it is fiction. That's why novels may be objected. According to Aristoteles, fiction, the artist's creation is much more influential than the reality because history is related to reality, in other words, what is happened. Artist, on the other hand, uses what is possible. Artist arranges this possibility (fiction) in such an order that, it nearly carries a scientific generality (Moran, 1974; akt. Ercilasun, 2014).

The use of individuals in the historical novels reserves a significant position. It is a common, accepted characteristic of historical novels, they are fictionalized around common, mundane individuals (Lukacs, 2000: akt. Tilbe & Civelek, 2016). The author uses ordinary individuals- that possibly lived in the determined period- to protect the objectivity and through their lives: Author tries to reflect period's facts.

According to Clausewitz (1991), the war is nothing but a widened duel, it is an action of strength using in order to make enemy accept our will. History and war teachings are generally perceived as parallel, identical terms. Modern history teaching methods support prioritizing social history and reducing the number of war contents in the teaching curriculums. So, is the war always bad or always good? Although the answer to this question is on debate, the discourse related to the field sees war as content for education and it is told that the meaning of war is relative, considering the context and the content. For example, The War of Independence, its aim and its results are an ultimate positive term for Turkish History (Aktaş 2010).

The spirit of The War of Independence should touch the heart of children and it should make students be able to create empathic boundaries with the people in the past. For example Halide Edip Adıvar's *Türkün Ateşle İmtihamı* should be used, because it is a key work that can provide an understanding of the period for the youth. To these, we can add other novels related to Turkish War of Independence. The book that is going to be used, should be able to transmit Anatolian people's excitement and enthusiasm and their hope for the future during the years of War of Independence. It shouldn't be forgotten that the knowledge of the events may be forgotten, however, the excitement and enthusiasm will bound generations together (Safran, 2006).

2. Method

The aim of this study is to analyze the four historical novels in terms of teaching social studies (Halide Edip Adıvar's *The*

Shirt of Flame, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's *Stranger*) which can be used in the teaching of Turkish history subjects in the social studies course. Social Studies education is carried out through concepts, values and skills. These concepts, values and skills are listed in the Social Studies teaching program. We try to analyze two novels in the direction of concepts, values and skills. Within the scope of this study, a signification work has been done by looking at Literature discipline from the perspective of Social Studies discipline.

Interdisciplinary studies are considered to be a combination of skills for a common study (examination or project). We also try to look at one discipline from another disciplinary perspective used *cross-disciplinary* approach in our research. Cross-disciplinary approach includes both the width and depth of interaction between disciplines.

Document analysis method was used as a basic method in this study. Document analysis includes the analysis of the written material that contains information about the fact or the facts which are aimed to be searched. Document analysis is a data collecting technique that is inevitable for almost any research. If there is no document, there is no history (Madge, 1965). Which documents are important and which of them can be used as a data source is closely related to the research problem. For example, in a research related to education, the following documents can be used as a data source: textbooks, curriculum directives, school correspondences, student records, meeting protocols, the files and records of student guidance services, teacher and student handbooks, student homework and exams, the lesson syllabuses and module schedules, teacher files, official documents about education etc. (Bogdan and Biklen 1992). As an addition to this list, memoirs, logbooks, diaries, private letters, confessions, personal documents and files, periodic written sources, printed media, magazines and books can also be a content of document analysis (Bailey, 1982).

3. Findings

3.1. The examination of novel "Stranger" with regard to social studies lessons

A brief summary of the novel is as follows:

"Ahmet Celal is 35 year old man. He is a son of a pasha. He participates in WWI as reserve officer. He returns from the war losing his arm. He's sorry for no longer being able to fight back. When Istanbul is invaded, he goes to his aide's, Mehmet Ali's village but his mind is on the ongoing war. In the village, he orders newspapers every day to follow the updates. He explains the importance of the latest news to the villagers whenever he finds opportunity. The people of the village are bounded to Salih Ağa who is responsible for villagers' poverty and ignorance. The villagers believe whatever Salih says. With the influence of Salih Ağa, they exclude Ahmet Celal and they start calling him "stranger". Getting tired and sad of this, young officer gets dressed and he goes on a stroll. One day he comes across with Emine and pays her attention. However, Emine is the wife of Mehmet Ali's brother, İsmail. The days pass. The village gets invaded by the Greeks. The Greeks, burn and destroy the village, they torment the villagers. The majority of the villagers are killed

at the center of the village together. Ahmet Celal and Emine want to escape from the chamber of death to save their lives. They're shot behind and both of them get injured. They reach to the graveyard of the village with a lot of difficulties. They wait until the morning. They'll get set in the next day but Emine is not able to walk due to her injuries. Ahmet Celal gives Emine his memoir and goes to oblivion. After The War of Sakarya, the enemy retreats from the area. The council researching for enemy torment comes to the village and they find a torn memoir in the ashes of human bones. This is the memoir that is given to Emine by Ahmet Celal in which the memories of Ahmet Celal is written.

Table 1: The list of values, concepts and skills in the novel of "Stranger" is given below

Values	Concepts	Skills
Emphasis on family unity	Family	Perception of time and chronology
Independence	Republic	Critical Thinking
Solidarity	Change	Communication
Aesthetic	Emotion	Decision making
Hospitality	Opinion	Problem solving
Respect	Migration	Observation
Inquiry	Aesthetic	Location Detection
Patriotism	War	Time Detection
Justice	Settlement	Detecting Exchange
	Homeland	Social Participation
	Nation	Empathy
	Faith	Political Literacy
	Trust	
	Love	
	Sacrifice	

Examples from the novel to the main values, notions and the skills of social studies teaching (Karaosmanoğlu, 2004):

Justice: "At that moment, the mystery on the spirit of Nasıralı Nebi's was becoming more and more clear. I was understanding; why he kisses the leprous, why he spends his time with punks and the wretched, why he runs away from the tables of the riches and hides in the tables of the hungry, why he was strolling with the beggars and chat with the mads instead of the community of the wise. He said: the real happy ones are the hungry people because they'll eat one day. The real happy ones are the nudes because they'll wear one day. The real happy ones are the ones tormented because they'll see the justice one day."

Independence: "Here, their faces are turned to enemy, such patriots are hit behind by the people they protected. Here, how many times the national symbol of liberty is tried to be blocked and how many times the city he lived in encircled with the weapons of rebellion. Here I'm the madman of this motherland and crazy for the nation, here, I, the veteran of the war, Ahmet Celal, all alone."

Political Literacy: "According to him, the path Kemal Pasha opened is cul de sac and it is quite dangerous. It is cul de sac because Sultan is not with him he says. Sultan has already made peace with the enemy. Then there is the Queen named Europe. She interfered. She said: "I can deal with your troubles"."

Patriotism: "Motherland needs such master soldiers like you. If you don't go frontline today and hit, tomorrow you'll need to hit right in front of your door."

Observation: "The plain and harsh winds of the winter season started. Ah these winds on the silent and profound flatlands of Anatolia... Confused camel trains on the deserts, hundreds of owls on a ruined town, heartbreaking screams of a sea accident, a mountain's fall, burst of a giant crater, a snowfall, a flood, nothing, nothing is as corrupted and as scary as these wuthering winds."

War: "Anatolian villagers' cereal storehouse is empty, but Turkish intellectual started a war to the great powers. Ali Kemal calls it madness in Istanbul. I, am watching it as if it is an exciting sight-seeing"

Time perception and chronology: "It is no doubt such wagons followed Turkish people in great conquers and battles: Maybe there was no difference between Atilla's wagon and this one. Oğuz branches up on Anatolia, must have spread with these creaking voices. Probably it is possible to see this sorrowful and strange wagon type in a position like a fossil right in the heart of the soil. But with all these historical apprehensions, it is really difficult to find a mythical thing out of this concept."

3.2. The examination of "The Shirt of Flame" with regards to social studies teaching

A brief summary of the novel is as follows:

"Peyami is an old foreign affairs minister who lost his legs in The War of Independence and because of the bullet in his head, he falls in dreams frequently. He writes what happened to him in the hospital he stays. He starts telling the story from the years of ceasefire. Peyami an officer from ministry of foreign affairs is a son of a rich family. Peyami's close friend Cemal, is an injured commissioned officer who participated in WWI. Cemal introduces Peyami to squadron leader İhsan. Cemal and İhsan frequently meet and talk about the situation the country is in. Cemal's sister Ayşe, resides in İzmir. İzmir is invaded in 15th of May 1919. Invaders murder husband of Ayşe, Mukbil Bey and his son and they injure Ayşe on her arm. Ayşe can't stay in İzmir and she comes to İstanbul. İstanbul lives distressed days. Peyami, Cemal, İhsan and Ayşe participate in Sultanahmet meetings. İstanbul is invaded by English. 3 friends and Ayşe to join the forces of Kuvay-I Milliye and support The War of Independence they go to Anatolia. Ayşe joins İhsan's troop as a nurse. Peyami and İhsan starts loving Ayşe secretly. Kezban, whose family was massacred by the Greeks, loves İhsan with an unreturned love and she also wants join İhsan's troop voluntarily. Ayşe, İhsan and Cemal become martyrs of The War of Independence. Peyami is heavily injured and carried to the hospital. He writes his memoirs in the hospital. He dies while the bullet is being taken. Doctors suggest that the memoirs written by Peyami affected by the bullet in the head because in the military records, there are no registered names as Ayşe and İhsan."

Table 2: The list of values, concepts and skills in the novel of “The Shirt of Flame” is given below

Values	Concepts	Skills
Fairness	Nation	Observation
Independence	Peace	Empathy
Patriotism	War	Location Detection
Freedom	Faith	Perception of time and chronology
Solidarity	Trust	Social Participation
Employee	Love	Empathy
Sensitivity	Sacrifice	Political Literacy
Love	Homeland	Social Participation
Tolerance	Country	Realize mold judgment and prejudice
Hospitality	Family	
Helpfulness		
Industriousness		
Responsibility		

Examples from the novel to the main values, notions and the skills of social studies teaching (Adıvar, 2007):

Peace: “Actually... I wanted peace and ceasefire. In fact, I found it quite irrelevant to see billions of people tightening each other's throat. Moreover, our participation in this war made me troubled but all the long years of these wars didn't create a new feeling on me.”

Social Participation: “I can't draw the history of my friendship with Celal. One thing I know is that first time in my life I felt profitless friendship just like a passion. We were together all day and every day, he gets me after 4 o'clock from the gates of foreign affairs. We were going to coffee house under Meserret Hotel, there we were meeting with his officer friends. All of them were good boys.”

War: “An enormous voice, a thick, black smoke and soil clouds, a sudden scream... Eternally escaping groups of people whose breathe can be felt within the smokes. I leaned my back to a store and I heard back of my knees started melting. I opened my eyes. Only the canons of foreign affairs were tearing the sky apart from far away. On the ground there was the remaining of houses, arms, legs and human parts.”

Realize Mold-Judgement and Prejudices: “All the humanity of the world suddenly stamped darkness on our foreheads. We were the ones killing the Armenians and we were the ones uniting with the enemies of civilization, Germans. Thus, we were the enemy of the civilization. We were the ones that were cruel, barbaric and that are to be extinguished. We weren't hopeless, if we were to correct our wrongs and understand the civilization with our joyful child-like souls. The Europe would pay back our rights when we prove that we're not cruel, and what are told are nothing but lies.”

Political Literacy: “Yesterday you made a ceasefire and left our weapons to us. Today you are sending killers and thieves to our country with the company of your glorious fleet. You left green İzmir with blood and fire. Look at its streets, uniformed thieves and killers murder people with bullets and gunstocks.”

Time perception and chronology: “When the doctor told me that Istanbul is invaded by the English, the parliament

was closed and the PM's were sent to Malta and many men and women went to Anatolia, I got dizzy feeling what poor Ayşe was going through with all this excitement and sorrow.”

4. Conclusion

Unlike Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Kazım Karabekir, Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Asım Gündüz, Bekir Sami Günsav, Kazım Özalp and Ali Kılıç -who are the grand soldiers of Turkish history- who reflected their own memories in their writings, Halide Edip Adıvar and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu dealt with the national struggle times with a literary mode.

The two novels that are analyzed, with their information provided, explained realities, events and represented historical individuals carry a role of documentary. They are seen to be novels conceptualizing frontlines that is to say hot war. It is possible to reach historical facts in the Documentary novels (Ercilasun, 2014).

Ünlü (2016), in his research conducted, comes into a conclusion that in the social studies lessons, teachers are able to use literary products in every steps of the lesson considering product preference and students' levels. Çengelci (2013), in his findings from his research on the materials benefitted in the lessons, show that the literary products are not efficiently benefitted from in social studies lessons.

According to the research results, it can be said that the two historical novels of Turkish Literature (Halide Edip Adıvar's *The Shirt of Flame* and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's *Stranger*) can be used in the teaching of Turkish history subjects in terms of social studies teaching. Literature works might be useful in teaching of social studies. It is thought that the two selected novels within the scope of the research may be effective in the teaching of the Turkish War of Independence. Turkish literature has many works that can be used in social studies course.

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