



## Reflective thinking in Turkish language education

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**Abstract.** Humans' ability to think is the most important quality that distinguishes them from other living beings. From this aspect, thinking has always been a concept that scientists have been contemplating on. Thinking skills are generally discussed in the literature with different perspectives and classified under critical thinking, creative thinking, reflective thinking, analytical thinking, aesthetic thinking, etc. Despite the fact that these concepts are not different and independent from each other in terms of their content, they differ in terms of usage areas and teaching methods in which they are situated. Within the context of teaching language and thinking together, Turkish language courses are considered as one of the most significant courses in students' acquisition of these skills. Therefore, in this study, the concept and skill of reflective thinking is discussed in the context of Turkish language education with an attempt to reveal the significance and place of reflective thinking in Turkish language lessons. Moreover, teachers are given recommendations on practices and approaches to teach reflective thinking.

**Keywords:** Reflective thinking, Turkish language lesson, reflective teacher

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### INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the needs of our age, it is only possible to attain the trained manpower with sufficient competencies through education. "Raising individuals who think, produce ideas, learn and express their learning correctly and also use them actively in life is among the main objectives of education" (Çarkıt, 2013, p. 1). Humans' ability to think is the most important quality that distinguishes them from other living beings. From this aspect, thinking has always been a concept that scientists have been contemplating on. Whereas Gibson (1998, p. 308-309) sees thinking as a complex mental process that humans use to make sense of their environment, Morgan (1984, p.128) interprets it as an individual's reactive symbol against stimuli from the environment. According to Kazancı (1989), thinking is the whole of mental actions that an individual manifest against situations that disturb him in various ways throughout his life. On the other hand, Cole and Scribner (1974, p. 145) believes that thinking is the process of reaching new information using the information available and going beyond the existing information. Based on these definitions, we can consider thinking as a mental process that individuals consciously perform, that differentiate humans from other living things, provide human beings with the opportunity to go beyond the information at hand, and are often used actively in the face of a problem or difficulty.

Thinking not only separates humans from other living beings but it also makes significant contributions to their lives. Kazancı (1989, p. 1-2) lists these contributions as follows:

- Thinking leads the individual to a specific purpose.
- Thinking offers the individual the role of being prepared for the problems or difficulties that he or she will face.
- Thinking is the source of development, change and progress in all areas.
- Thinking provides the necessary foundation for individuals and societies to attain a reliable and continuous lifestyle.

In this sense, we can say that thinking has a very important role in the formation of a lifestyle within the limits of both individuals and societies. "Life expects people to become better problem solvers, better decision-makers and more creative individuals" (Doğanay, 2014, p. 306). And, this is accomplished through thinking. A person who thinks makes sense of the

incidents that happen by looking at their reasons. They interpret and analyse the incidents by considering the circumstances. They immediately notice the prejudices and subjective thoughts inside the content they read or listen to. They develop their lives on the basis of objective criteria. They do not give up in the face of the problems they encounter and look for solutions to these problems. They respect different opinions and develop a lifestyle to benefit from the experiences of others when faced with difficulties. Hence, in order to acquire all these qualities, individuals need to be trained for being a good thinker. In that, the path to becoming a good thinker is through effective education. Therefore, teaching how to think has been a subject of research.

When it comes to the process of thinking, mental skills come to prominence. "This is why scientists not only conduct research on improving mental skills on one hand, but also convey the findings of these research into the field of education" (Güneş, 2007, p. 1). In this process, thinking skills gain prominence and are being placed in the curriculum. Superior thinking skills are highly emphasized especially in the Turkish language education field of our country, and Turkish language lessons are also seen as a teaching tool for these skills besides language teaching. Regarding this, in 2018, the Turkish Language Curriculum (TLC) was updated according to the needs of the age. With the updates, the program aims "to equip students with qualities that include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competencies, enable individuals to participate effectively and constructively in the changing social and working life, and resolve conflicts when necessary" (MoNE, 2018, p. 5). In order to achieve these goals, it becomes a necessity to have students attain superior thinking skills.

Superior thinking skills are generally discussed in the literature with different perspectives and classified under critical thinking, creative thinking, reflective thinking, analytical thinking, aesthetic thinking, etc. (Levis Smith, 1993; Güneş, 2012; Çakır, 2013). Despite the fact that these concepts are not different and independent from each other, they differ in terms of usage areas and teaching methods.

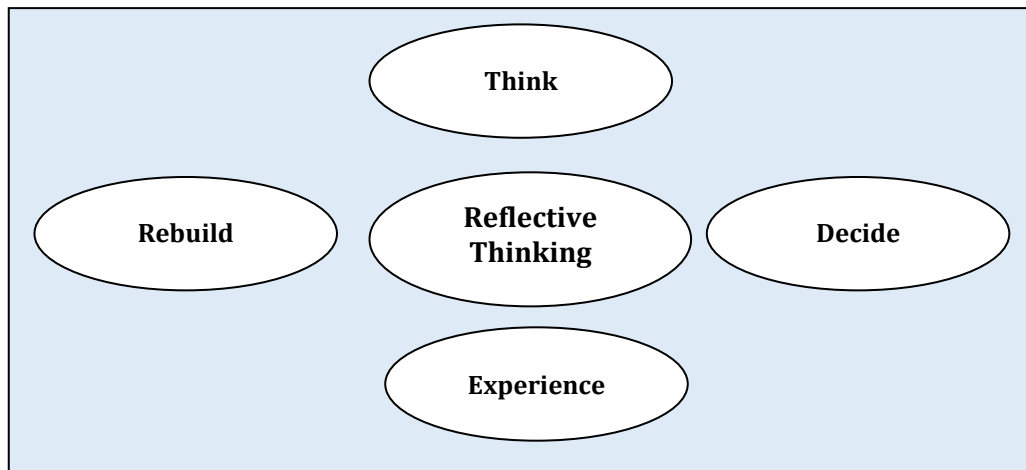
An individual who has gained the right-thinking skills is a person who will succeed not only in academic but also in daily life. In this regard, Turkish language course as well as Turkish language teachers play an important role in students' acquisition of these skills together with the language. According to Duban and Yanpar-Yelken (2010, p.346), in order to have students acquire these skills, first of all, teachers need to be equipped with these skills and be able to develop and use them continuously. As mentioned above, reflective thinking is one of the superior thinking skills and is quite a significant and necessary information so as to reflect the information learned into daily life. This study firstly emphasizes the general framework of reflective thinking and addresses how this can be conveyed into the learning environments. Next, the concept of reflective thinking and skill has been evaluated within the context of Turkish language education with an effort to reveal the importance and place of reflective thinking in Turkish language lesson. The achievements related to reflective thinking in 2018 TLC were identified and analysed. Moreover, methods and practices aimed at gaining reflective thinking to teachers were introduced and various suggestions were presented. Thus, it is aimed to contribute to the literature on teaching process of reflective thinking.

### **What is Reflective Thinking?**

At the center of reflective thinking is the concept of reflection. Reflection in teaching is called the process of being able to restructure individuals' lives and commentate on them (Stevens & Cooper, 2009). In the process of reflection, the importance of life rather than itself is brought to attention and tried to be understood (Ergüven, 2011). Accordingly, reflective thinking is a conscious and logical decision-making process rather than thinking about the consequences of decisions (Taggart & Wilson, 2005, p. 1). This process has an important role in individuals' taking the responsibility of their decisions. Reflective thinking is the ability to think about the events and phenomena that occur in the learning environment during and after the education process and to make new arrangements within the framework of these thoughts (McCullum, 2002). In this context, reflective thinking allows thoughts to acquire different dimensions. Accordingly, those who think reflectively are constantly in search to make the learning process

more qualified. Dalgıç (2011) states that reflective thinking is the process of interpreting and improving one's own actions by gaining awareness on his or her behaviour, experiences, sensations and observations and analysing them. In this context, reflective thinking is a process of deep thinking which requires the individual to contemplate on his or her behaviours and actions of any kind thus reorganize the situations deemed deficient or imperfect. This situation lays a sense of responsibility on the individual towards his or her actions.

Reflective thinking allows students to think deliberately during the lesson so that students connect their preliminary learning with their newly acquired information (Genç, 2016). So, this opens the way to benefit from experiences in real life. Reflective thinking helps teachers to develop both language and thinking skills of students (Şahin, 2011). In this sense, reflective thinking not only improves the conceptual world of student's mother tongue but also enriches the world of thinking. In the process of reflection, the individuals analyse the incidents occurring around them and make a decision about these incidents (Cengiz & Karataş, 2016). Individuals can reflect within the framework of their experiences. Therefore, reflective thinking always keeps the individual active. The individual who gains experience in certain subjects contemplates on these experiences and gets an opportunity to correct the situations he or she seems to be flawed. From this aspect, reflective thinking continuously takes place in a cyclic process. In this cyclic process, the individual gets the opportunity to solve the problems he or she faces. Within this context, reflective thinking contributes to the development of individuals' problem-solving skills. The reflective thinker finds the opportunity to try his or her experiences on different problems. The reflective thinking cycle as adapted from the literature review can be shown as follows.



**FIGURE 1.** *Reflective thinking cycle*

According to Pollard (2008), the source of the reflective thinking concept used today is based on Dewey's studies in the context of reflective thinking. Dewey's (1933) reflection concept sheds light on today's reflective thinking practices. Dewey (1933) explains the concept of reflection around four aspects (cf. Rodgers, 2002, p. 845).

- Reflection is a process that provides the student with continuity of learning within the framework of a deep understanding, allows both individuals and societies to progress and enables individuals to make sense of their future experiences.
- Reflection is a systematic and disciplined way of thinking based on scientific research.
- Reflection gives the individual the responsibility to live in interaction with others in society.
- Reflection allows individuals to respect and value the development of both themselves and others.

When the qualities of reflection put forth by Dewey (1933) are examined, it can be stated that the framework of reflective thinking practices performed in today's educational environments is determined by these qualities.

## Learning Environments in Reflective Thinking

In educational settings, reflective thinking requires a student-centred approach. It allows to rebuild student experiences through reflection in learning environments. (Henderson, 1996). The student, who is constantly active, reflects on the new information or behaviours he or she has learned and takes responsibility to reflect this information to daily life. In this context, the students identify their own incomplete or flawed learning and is responsible for compensating them. In the process, they gain experiences to achieve their goals and can reorganize their wrong or flawed behaviour or information by reflecting on these experiences. Reflective students, who use their experiences effectively on the problems they are faced with, also know that there may be different solutions to these problems. Therefore, they see the problems as an opportunity to gain new experiences.

Reflective learning can only be realized in democratic classroom settings where students can feel comfortable. In that, individuals reflect in environments filled with positive emotions and reflective thinking aims to develop positive emotions (Sönmez, 2014). This is because students feel free in such environments. According to Rodgers (2002), reflective learning is a process that extends from theory to practice. In reflective learning environments, students not only determine their own goals and but also make their own decisions about the ways and methods they will follow to achieve their goals (Ünver, 2003). The duty of teachers in this process is to provide students with this opportunity and to organize the learning environments within this framework.

In reflective learning environments, students should first acquire the skill of asking the right questions. For, the basis of reflective thinking is to ask questions (Haigh, 2000). According to Cengiz and Karataş (2016), the questions asked by students reveal their quality of thinking, which gives clues about the level of students' reflection skills. The ability of students to ask the right questions on the problems indicates that they have approached the solution of the problem. So, just as in the scientific research process, reflective thinking is the process of identifying the problem and searching for solutions by asking the right questions on the identified problem. It is the teacher who will provide this process to students in learning environments. Therefore, in order for teachers to provide reflective thinking skills to their students, first of all, they must be good reflective thinkers (Rodgers, 2002). Semerci's (2007) study on the qualities that reflective teachers should have is noteworthy. In this study, the qualities of reflective teachers were compiled from the related literature and listed as follows.

- Reflective teachers are constantly changing and developing professionally.
- Reflective teachers adopt the principle of lifelong learning.
- Reflective teachers evaluate the continuous teaching process according to observation and student feedback.
- They are open to criticism. They tolerate all kinds of criticism regarding the teaching process.
- In addition to the lessons, they renew themselves based on the feedback from parents, managers and colleagues.
- They keep a journal within the context of questions such as "How can I make the lesson more qualified?", "What other methods can I use in class?".
- They hold themselves responsible for the training activities
- They manage the conflicts in class well. They become an example to their students with the habit of solving problems with scientific methods.
- They guide students to see beyond time and lesson.

Teachers who have all these qualities can provide reflective thinking skills to their students both by being a role model and by means of their teaching activities. In a globalizing world order, educating students equipped with mental qualities that enable a healthy assessment of the world they live in has become the main duty of modern education systems. The way to do this is to provide students with reflective thinking skills as well as other thinking skills. This can only be achieved in the learning environments created by teachers who are equipped with these skills.

## The Place and Importance of Reflective Thinking in Turkish Language Education

The Turkish language course, which is the mother tongue course, has a very important role in students' reflective thinking skills. The goal of having students acquire superior thinking skills in Turkish language courses starting with the 2006 Turkish Language Curriculum, where constructivist approach was adopted, was also continued in the 2018 Turkish Language Curriculum. Prepared in line with the needs of the modern individual in the face of the rapid change experienced in scientific and technological sense, the aim of the 2018 TLC is to train students as reflective thinkers. The program aims to educate individuals "who can produce information, use it functionally in real life, solve problems, think critically, who are entrepreneurial, committed, have communication skills, empathize, contribute to society and culture" (MoNE, 2018, p. 7). When the stated aims are examined, it is seen that they list the qualities of reflective thinking. In this sense, Turkish language lessons are considered and designed as a thinking skills course besides language teaching. In addition, it is stated that language acquisition affects students' thought development and that an achievement acquired by students will have an effect on another field (MoNE, 2018, p. 8).

In 2018 TLC, students are expected to acquire the ability of reflective thinking and to reorganize their achievements by reflecting them on other fields. Turkish language lesson is quite suitable for this by nature. For example, a student who will gain an effective reading or speaking habit will use these skills throughout his life. Again, it is inevitable for a student having learnt the spelling rules to apply these rules in their writing in other courses or in daily life. According to Şahin (2011), students demonstrate different abilities in the Turkish teaching process and engage in an effective language learning process within the framework of their educational and communicative interests and needs. Students who are actively involved in the process need to be supported in these areas by asking questions, doing drama, making comparisons, creating concept or mind maps, which are exactly what reflective learning makes possible. According to Bölükbaş (2004), students' capacity of productivity and creativity develops in the reflective learning environments, their mobility and vitality increases, and students can make self-assessments and measure their own progress. Turkish language lessons planned according to reflective teaching prepare the ground for them to acquire these qualifications.

Reflective thinking requires the effective use of certain skills. Reflective thinkers are first of all expected to be active in terms of both gaining experience and mental processing skills. They are expected to make sense of life with the right questions and to rebuild the information within the framework of the stimuli they encounter. They also need to conduct continuous self-evaluation and interact with the environment. In this context, the following objectives of the 2018 TLC directly have the qualities of reflective thinking. The program aims to:

- Develop the skills of researching, exploring, interpreting and structuring information in the mind,
- Improve the skills of accessing, editing, questioning, using and producing information from printed media and multimedia sources,
- Ensure that they understand, critically evaluate and question what they read (MoNE, 2018, p. 8).

In this sense, it will be useful to consider the achievements associated with reflective thinking at the level of 5,6,7 and 8th grade of the 2018 TLC. The following table shows these achievements. Söylemez's (2018) study was used to associate these achievements with reflective thinking and also three Turkish language education experts were consulted. While associating the identified achievements with reflective thinking, it was based on the principles of restructuring information and experiences (Stevens & Cooper, 2009) and reorganizing in the mind (McCollum, 2002). As stated by Söylemez (2018), some of the achievements associated with reflective thinking are supported by critical thinking, creative thinking or problem solving. According to Ersözlü (2008), reflective thinking is not completely independent of other thinking

skills. For this reason, the achievements of such nature are considered to be related to reflective thinking.

**Table 1.** 2018 TLC Achievements associated with reflective thinking

Order No	2018 TLC Achievements Associated with Reflective Thinking (Level of 5, 6, 7 and 8th Grade)
Listening Achievements	
1.	Gives opinions about what they listen/watch.
2.	Applies listening strategies.
Reading Achievements	
3.	Reads the text according to the qualities of the type.
4.	Uses reading strategies.
5.	Interprets the text.
6.	Explains the contribution of nouns and adjectives to the meaning of the text.
7.	Explain the contribution of noun and adjective clauses to the meaning of the text.
8.	Explains the contribution of prepositions, conjunctions and exclamations to the meaning of the text.
9.	Explains the contribution of pronouns to the meaning of the text.
10.	Answers questions about visuals.
11.	Uses information sources effectively.
12.	Interprets the information presented with graphics, tables and charts
Speaking Achievements	
13.	Makes prepared speeches.
14.	Applies speech strategies.
15.	Uses the Turkish words while speaking in place of the words which are borrowed from foreign languages and have not yet settled in our language.
Writing Achievements	
16.	Writes the process steps of a job.
17.	Writes narrative text.
18.	Writes informative text
19.	Applies writing strategies
20.	Writes the process steps of a job.
21.	Uses proverbs, idioms and maxims to enrich his or her writing
22.	Uses the Turkish words while writing in place of the words which are borrowed from foreign languages and have not yet settled in our language.
23.	Fills the forms according to the instructions.
24.	Writes short texts.
25.	Uses graphics and tables to support expression.
26.	Uses phraseology in his or her writings.
27.	Uses complementary verbs accordingly
28.	Presents the results of his or her research in writing
29.	Uses humorous elements in his or her writings

According to Table 1, a total of 29 achievements at secondary school level in 2018 TLC are associated with reflective thinking. Two of these achievements are for listening, 10 for reading, 3 for speaking and 14 for writing. Accordingly, it can be stated that the program aims to provide and develop the reflective thinking skills of the students, especially in the reading and writing processes, and that the students' development in this field is encouraged through reflective reading and reflective writing practices.

It is considered essential to use the reflective thinking skills effectively and to organize the Turkish language lessons according to the requirements of this skill. The competence of learning how to learn expressed in the 2018 TLC can only be achieved by providing students with reflective thinking skills. "Learning how to learn is the individual's competence to pursue learning and to insist on it so that he or she can organize his or her learning action individually or in a group, including effective time and knowledge management (MoNE, 2018, p. 5). In learning how to learn, it is necessary to activate the previous experiences of the individual and to reflect these experiences in new learning environments in order to use knowledge and skills

in daily life. In order to acquire this competence in Turkish language lessons, these skills should be provided to students by performing certain practices. Turkish language teachers can provide these skills and competencies to their students not only by being a good reflective thinker but also through teaching activities to be performed in this sense.

### **Methods and Practices of Reflective Thinking in Turkish Language Lessons**

In this section, the approaches and practices that can be applied in Turkish language lessons for acquiring and developing reflective thinking skills are discussed. It is aimed to give a perspective to teachers who are field practitioners in this respect.

#### ***Reflective journals***

The reflective journals that the students keep for the lesson are very useful learning tools not only to provide students with reflective thinking skills but also to enable teachers to reflect on the teaching process. According to Kuzu and Demirlap (2012), it is very important to practice writing reflective texts in acquiring and developing reflective thinking. Because, in this process, students reflect on their learning processes, they contemplate on the process and have the opportunity to evaluate the learning methods. These journals, which enable students to participate effectively in the learning process, provide permanent learning according to Inonu (2006), who examines the reflective teacher qualities of history teachers and also uses the reflective journals of students. Reflective learning journals make significant contributions to acquiring reflective thinking in order to enable students to present their views, feelings, personal reactions and problems regarding the learning process (Şahan & Kalkay, 2014). In this sense, reflective journals that students will be required to write about the theme, teaching subjects or learning areas in Turkish language lessons will provide a perspective on the teaching process and enable them to take responsibility for their own learning processes. On the other hand, the teacher will see the effectiveness of the teaching methods and practices used and start his or her own reflection process.

#### ***Case Study***

The case study method is a method that includes the stages of organization and interpretation of the necessary information (Merriam, 1988) and can be used to acquire and develop reflective thinking in classroom practices. In the case study method, students are brought face-to-face with real-life experiences to combine theory and practice in the learning environment (Stensmo, 1999). Case study can be used as an effective method in acquiring and developing reflective thinking in Turkish language lessons. Teachers can use the structured case studies adopted from real life that they have previously created and enable students to reveal the embedded information in these case studies using their experience. In this way, students can analyse a real-life incident with their experiences. Students acquire new experiences by addressing the situations presented in case studies in terms of cause and effect relationship. They contemplate on the problems presented in the case study and try to find solutions to them; thus, they can come up with more practical and effective solutions in similar situations they might face in real life.

#### ***Metaphor technique***

Metaphors, which are defined in all spheres of life as making the most complex thoughts, meanings and explanations understood through associations (Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2016), are the expressions of one concept in terms of a certain similarity. Morgan (1998) states that there is a strong relationship between our metaphors and our perception of life, way of thinking and perspective.

In Turkish language lessons, teachers can reveal the students' thoughts with metaphors so that they can use the metaphor technique effectively in teaching reflective thinking. Through the metaphors they create, the students present their existing information and knowledge in line with the effects of the social environment they live in. No metaphor is a spontaneous

concept. Through metaphors, students reflect their frame of mind. In this sense, Turkish language teachers can provide students with reflective thinking skills by using metaphor technique on certain topics they will determine, or they can make learning simpler by using metaphor technique in teaching difficult-to-understand subjects.

### ***Reflective portfolio***

Portfolios are the measurement tools used in process evaluation, where the works of students are compiled and gathered together and which are evaluated according to certain criteria (Göçer, 2014). Portfolios include all kinds of products produced by students and students' interests and needs can be determined with these products (Mills, 1994). In this sense, portfolios are considered to be a reflection tool. Turkish language teachers can compile both informative and narrative writings that they have asked their students to write in reflective portfolios, thus they can follow up the development of students' reflective thinking skills. Reflective portfolios, which are indicators of a dynamic process, enable students to reflect on different topics and give feedback to teachers about their practices. Reflective portfolios that can be considered as purposeful collections not only contribute to students' thinking and reflection skills, but also provide more qualified and meaningful measurement and evaluation applications by means of process evaluation. In this sense, reflective portfolios can be used conveniently in acquiring and developing reflective thinking in Turkish language teaching.

### ***Virtual workshops***

Learning workshops are practices that are considered as a reform in education focusing on the student's learning process rather than the teaching process of the teacher and that allow teachers and students to rethink the learning process (Hiebl & Frang, 2014). In this age of rapid digital transformation, it is out of question for education processes to not get affected by this transformation. In virtual workshop technique, which is an adaptation of learning workshops applied as a group activity into virtual environment, the teacher creates virtual workshops in small groups. In this study, which is an internet-based practice, students communicate with their friends rather than their teachers, and students interact more intensively with their friends in these environments thus learning becomes much easier (Linn, 2000).

Each virtual workshop has an administrator and this administrator is determined by the students by a joint decision. The teacher can create these workshops through the Education and Information Network (EBA). Through these workshops, the teacher who gives a reflection topic to each group can ask these topics to be discussed. At this stage, each administrator ensures that the topic given by the teacher is discussed in virtual workshops and reports on the discussions. Afterwards, the ideas put forward in these workshops are presented in the classroom by a group spokesperson chosen by each group. The teacher examines the reflection reports prepared by each group and records the progress of the students' reflective thinking skills on the follow-up form. Turkish language lesson is very suitable for virtual workshop technique because of the skills and themes that are aimed to be acquired by the students. Turkish language teachers can use this technique easily in their classes and can provide and develop reflective thinking skills for their students. With virtual workshop, students can acquire the following skills:

- Thinking and expressing thoughts,
- Using communication tools effectively,
- Using their experiences,
- Working collaboratively,
- Expressing their thoughts in writing,
- Adopting and abiding group rules,
- Seeing their incomplete information and compensating them

In this sense, as a contemporary and student-centred technique that serves to gain technical reflective thinking skills, this can be used by Turkish language teachers.



### ***Use of digital stories***

Today, as it called the digital age, in addition to the stories written, published and read in electronic media, digital stories have also become a part of the education (Turgut & Kışla, 2015). Digital stories are used in the control of the reader in digital environments and in a process in which he or she is fully active, allows information to be structured in the mind in a meaningful way and ultimately transfer the acquired knowledge into daily life (Tunç & Karadağ, 2013). In this respect, digital stories are seen as important teaching tools in acquiring and developing reflective thinking. According to Avraamidou and Osborne (2009), digital stories allow students to become a storyteller and constructor. Students use critical and reflective thinking skills effectively in the process of creating digital stories, contemplate on the problems of the characters they deal with in the story and make decisions and apply them in order to solve (Benmayor, 2008). Summarizing and dramatizing, creating a story board for the stories created, audio narrations, and digital stories created in the end can be considered as a reflective thinking activity (Saritepeci, 2017). Turkish teachers can benefit from this practice, which can be called as an online learning method, in the stage of acquiring and developing reflective thinking skills.

### ***Problem solving***

To provide students problem solving skills is among the main objectives of today's education system. According to Korkut (2002), problem solving is to develop new solutions by going beyond the previous experiences and the rules learned in solving a problem. According to Sönmez (2014), this method is used to follow the scientific research process and includes the following steps:

- Recognizing the problem,
- Reviewing sources about the problem,
- Creating hypothesis about problem,
- Collecting and organizing data,
- Testing hypotheses,
- Reaching solution.

Problem solving is a method that enables complex mental activities and experiences to be used as well as acquiring new knowledge. In the problem-solving process, students reflect their current knowledge and experience to the problem-solving process. In other words, this method is a student-centred approach that makes reflective thinking necessary and contributes to the development of this skill. In 2018 TLC, it is aimed to raise individuals who produce information, use it functionally in life and solve problems (MoNE, 2018, p. 3). In this sense, Turkish teachers can use the problem-solving method in acquiring and developing reflective thinking skills and enable students to gain experience for reflective thinking skills.

### ***Self-evaluation***

Self-evaluation is an assessment method that contributes to the monitoring and development of the student's success. Göçer (2014) defines self-evaluation as students' judging their own learning processes, learning and achievement results while Kösterelioğlu and Çelen (2016, p. 673) define it as "the process of achieving a judgment about an individual by comparing a measurement result related to himself/herself with certain criteria." Self-assessment, which can be considered as a cycle that allows students to evaluate and judge their own learning processes, thus identifying their deficiencies by reflecting on their own learning processes and compensating for these deficiencies and gaining experience in the re-learning process, is a method in which reflective learning skill is used efficiently. Students should be encouraged to reflect on their learning processes while acquiring information on any subject, and they should be invited to ask questions such as "What have I learned? Which method did I use? What do I need? so that they can question their own learning processes and make a self-evaluation (Cengiz & Karataş, 2016). In Turkish language lessons, this method can be used at every stage. Through self-evaluation, both at the end of the theme and in performance tasks or group work, students can mirror their own learning processes. At this stage, it is very important for Turkish language

teachers to make their own self-evaluations about the teaching processes and to share them with their students in the classroom and to be role models in this regard both in terms of acquiring reflective thinking skills and making self-evaluations in an objective way.

The following skills may develop in students who do self-evaluation (Kutlu et al., 2014).

- Evaluate themselves with an objective view,
- Can handle events and phenomena from different perspectives,
- Participate actively in the learning process,
- Acquires decision-making ability
- Increases interest and motivation for the learning process.

As a result, self-evaluation is a method where reflective thinking skills are used directly and can be applied in every stage of Turkish language lessons.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Reflective thinking is one of the most important skills that the modern human needs in our age. Reflective thinking supports the transfer process of information by providing a critical perspective to the learning process and its contents (Strampel & Oliever, 2007; Saritepeci, 2017). In modern education systems where it is aimed to train individuals equipped with high-level thinking skills, it is aimed to provide students with reflective thinking skills in order to contribute to permanent learning. From this aspect, reflective thinking is taken as a subject for researches in many developed countries. In our country, the studies in the context of reflective thinking are mostly focused on teacher education (Kaf-Hasırcı & Sadık, 2011; Üstün, 2011; Güvenç, 2012) or teacher candidates' (Köksal & Demirel, 2008; Tok, 2008; Duban & Yanpar-Yelken, 2010) Şahin, 2011; Gedik, Akhan & Kılıçoğlu, 2014) usage of reflective thinking skills towards teaching processes are researched. However, reflective thinking is an important thinking skill that should be acquired by every individual in today's world. Teaching this skill that could be started from primary school level or even kindergarten level should be started in secondary school level systematically and reflective thinking skills should be acquired to students with various approaches and practices.

Turkish language lessons are one of the most suitable courses for reflective thinking skills since they are a course that teaches how to think as well as language teaching. According to Durdukoca and Demir (2012), Turkish language lessons should not be seen as a course in which students acquire just basic learning skills. Turkish language lessons are among the main courses that serve to acquire and develop high-level thinking skills for students such as analysis, questioning and evaluation. Acquiring reflective thinking as one of the high-level thinking skills is also an area of interest in Turkish language lessons. The objectives of 2018 TLC include acquisitions aimed at gaining reflective thinking skills (Söylemez, 2018). In this sense, Turkish teachers have important duties in systematically providing reflective thinking skills to students. Turkish language teachers could provide and develop this skill primarily as a role model then with the classroom activities that they will apply and develop the level of this acquired skill. Thus, they pave the way for the students to transfer the acquired knowledge to daily life.

Reflective thinking gives students competence in many areas. Reflection of experiences on newly learned knowledge, objective view, evaluation, decision-making, taking responsibility for learning, identifying missing and incorrect learning, self-evaluation, compensating for missing and incorrect learning, being entrepreneur, active participation in classroom activities, respect of others' thoughts, problem solving, reflective writing, defining own goals, determining the ways to follow to achieve their goals are some of these competencies (Ünver, 2003; Altın & Saracoğlu, 2018). These competencies are very important in terms of solving the problems encountered in life. In this context, students gain a lot of experience with reflective thinking and use these experiences in solving the problems they face in daily life (Ünver & Demirel, 2011). In this way, it will contribute to raise a new generation that do not give up, use alternative methods to solve problems by gaining reflective thinking in Turkish language lessons. From this aspect, the practices performed in order to gain the basic competencies targeted in 2018 TLC (MoNE, 2018) also contribute to Turkish language lessons' vision of preparing students to life.

In Turkish language lessons, different practices can be realized for gaining reflective thinking. In this sense, the case study method is considered as an important way to reflect on real life situations. Again, with the metaphor technique, students' reflections could be revealed in the face of certain facts and situations. Metaphors are also an important reflection technique in terms of determining students' ways of thinking. Students' reflective writing exercises can be compiled and their reflective thinking process can be followed with portfolios and journals. Reflective portfolios and journals are very important in terms of both the student's following his or her own development and following up the development and change of the student by the teacher.

In today's age of information technologies, use of IT applications in educational environments becomes a necessity. In this respect, virtual workshops and the use of digital stories are seen as important online places that can be used in Turkish lessons in terms of gaining reflective thinking. Through virtual workshops that can be created through EBA, Turkish teachers can provide their students both effective use of communication tools and reflective thinking skills.

Again, teachers can enable students to concretize their own learning processes with digital stories that require an in-depth thinking process (Ohler, 2006).

Problem solving technique is a practice that can be used by teachers in gaining and developing reflective thinking. Students will make reflections in problem solving stages and develop their reflective thinking skills by using their previous experiences in the process. On the other hand, self-evaluation is an application that serves to gain and develop direct reflective thinking in terms of evaluating the student's own learning process and taking responsibility for learning.

In the context of reflective thinking practices summarized above, the following research topics may be proposed:

1. In secondary school Turkish language lessons, activity research can be carried out to gain and develop reflective thinking.
2. Studies investigating the effects of practices such as reflective journaling, reflective portfolio, virtual workshops, using digital stories on students' reflective thinking skills can be conducted.
3. Researches about the use of reflective thinking in daily life can be made by students.
4. 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades Turkish language lessons' course books can be evaluated in the context of reflective thinking.
5. Researches can be made about the classroom practices of Turkish language teachers towards reflective thinking.
6. Teachers' opinions and suggestions can be searched for effective reflective thinking in Turkish language lessons.

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