



BUGU

Dil ve Eğitim Dergisi

BUGU
Journal of Language and Education

7/2, 173-189

TÜRKİYE

www.bugudergisi.com

E-ISSN: 2717-8137

Research Article

Received: 08.05.2026

Accepted: 12.06.2026

Köç, S. & Arıcı, B. (2026). A multidimensional analysis of the suitability of German-Turkish bilingual storybooks for their target audiences. *BUGU Journal of Language and Education*, 7(2), 173-189. <http://dx.doi.org/10.46321/bugu.1232>

A MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE SUITABILITY OF GERMAN-TURKISH BILINGUAL STORYBOOKS FOR THEIR TARGET AUDIENCES

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to evaluate the cultural elements, language levels, visual features, and activities found in German-Turkish bilingual storybooks in terms of their suitability for the target audience. The study also determined the extent to which these books, prepared on the basis of bilingualism, are sufficient in terms of content and design features, and recommendations were presented for publishers and material developers. The research was conducted using the case study method, one of the qualitative research methods. The books examined were the German-Turkish titles “The Pig Herder,” “The Teapot,” “The Caravan,” “The Lighter,” “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” and “Sketches: The Cat’s Escape and 20 Short Stories.” In this study, data were collected using a document review model and analyzed using a descriptive analysis method.

Keywords: Bilingualism, bilingual books, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, cultural elements.

Ø. Introduction

According to official records, the number of Turkish citizens living abroad has exceeded six million; however, unofficial data suggests this number may be even higher. Research indicates that Turkish children abroad struggle to learn both Turkish and the language of their host country and are unable to speak either language sufficiently well (Migrants, 2023). It is of great importance for bilingual individuals to use not only the language of their host country but also Turkish correctly and effectively. Individuals who have mastered their native language can acquire a second language more easily. Those who have not achieved proficiency in their native language, however, face difficulties in communication. The most striking examples of this can be observed in the speech of some of our citizens from Germany; these individuals struggle both in comprehension and in self-expression (Ayrancı et al., 2017). The growing interest in Turkish in recent years has made it necessary to reassess the quality and quantity of teaching materials used in Turkish language instruction (Akat, 2022). Although significant developments have been made in the field of Turkish language education in Turkey, serious deficiencies in teaching materials are evident. For example, the lack of materials for pronunciation instruction,



structured level-based storybook sets, vocabulary teaching series, audiovisual tools, and packaged programs that teach the language at specific intervals (Kara, 2011) are among the most frequently cited issues in the field. The CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) is regarded as an internationally recognized set of criteria for language teaching and emphasizes that content intended to benefit language learners should be prepared within the framework of this text (Ayverdi and Güleç, 2018). In this context, it is expected that teaching materials used in foreign language instruction will also be prepared in alignment with this framework (Kayhan, Kalyon, and Eyüp, 2022). However, there are very few studies on reading books designed for the teaching of Turkish as a foreign language. When aiming to prepare reading books suitable for student levels, a comprehensive resource offering a method to follow has not yet been identified. The primary references currently available for preparing reading books are the European Language Portfolio criteria and teachers' professional experiences (Tatar Kırılmış, 2010). In this context, studies on German-Turkish bilingual storybooks highlight not only the lack of such storybooks in this field but also the absence of content that would support individuals in learning Turkish correctly and effectively while also helping them understand their own culture. As noted in the Ministry of National Education's (MEB) 2010 report on educational materials for Turkish children living abroad, individuals who cannot establish a sufficient connection with Turkish culture face difficulties in linguistic and educational processes. This situation once again underscores that cultural transmission is just as important as language instruction.

This study aims to fill a significant gap in the field by examining the suitability of German-Turkish bilingual storybooks for the target audience in terms of language level, cultural content, visual features, and activities. The use of expert-supported evaluations in the study allows for the scientific analysis of the materials; it is anticipated that the findings will guide the development of bilingual materials. In this context, the research question is formulated as follows: "To what extent are the cultural elements, language levels, formal features, and activities in German-Turkish bilingual storybooks appropriate for the target audience?" The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent are cultural elements incorporated in German-Turkish bilingual storybooks prepared in accordance with the CEFR?
2. What is the status of the language levels used in German-Turkish bilingual storybooks prepared in accordance with the CEFR?
3. To what extent do the German-Turkish bilingual storybooks align with the "Analysis of Formal Features" scale in terms of formal features?
4. What is the status of the type, number, and distribution of activities included in the German-Turkish bilingual storybooks according to the "Activity Analysis Scale"?

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the cultural elements, language levels, formal features, and activities found in German-Turkish bilingual storybooks in terms of their suitability for the target audience, to determine the extent to which these books—prepared on the basis of bilingualism—are adequate in terms of both technical quality and content, and to offer development recommendations to publishers and, in this context, to material developers.

Today, globalization and increasing migration trends have led to bilingualism gaining greater importance at both the individual and societal levels. In this context, it is evident that bilingual materials, particularly those aimed at individuals, play a significant role in language acquisition and cultural transmission processes (Bağcı Ayrancı, Mete, & Keskin, 2017). Bilingual storybooks not only contribute to the development of language skills but also support individuals in gaining cultural sensitivity and awareness by serving as a bridge between different cultures (Ernst-Slavit & Mulhern, 2003; Zhang, 2017). Bilingual storybooks are regarded as an effective teaching tool (Rahim & Rahiem, 2012). The appropriateness of the



language levels in the books for the target audience is evaluated based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), thereby enabling a scientifically grounded analysis in language instruction. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) includes internationally recognized language proficiency standards and provides a table of indicators offering criteria for foreign language teaching and learning processes (Tatar Kırılmış, 2010). These criteria, established by the Council of Europe (2001), provide an internationally recognized framework for language proficiency levels, thereby enhancing the academic validity of this study. By examining the cultural elements present in bilingual storybooks, the books' sociocultural transmission function was evaluated. Bilingual books are important learning materials that can facilitate individuals' understanding of their own cultures as well as the development of awareness regarding other cultures (Botelho & Rudman, 2009; Semingson, Pole & Tommerdahl, 2015). Therefore, it is anticipated that the findings of this study will serve as a guide for publishers developing bilingual materials and educators utilizing these materials in language instruction.

This research aims to contribute to the development of high-quality publications tailored to individuals by shedding light on linguistic, cultural, and visual alignment issues encountered in bilingual books, as well as the distribution of activities; it is anticipated that the study will fill a current gap in the literature.

1. Method

This study was conducted using the case study method, one of the qualitative research methods. The case study is referred to by various names in the literature (case analysis, case study, case example study, case example analysis method, and case study). In the English-language literature, this research method is referred to as "case study" (Aytaçlı, 2012). A case study is a research method that aims to provide a detailed description and in-depth analysis of a system with specific boundaries (Merriam, 2023).

1.1. Object of Study

Within the scope of this study, the researcher examined six German-Turkish storybooks, translated by İnci Aras and published by Dorlion Yayınları, which were prepared in a bilingual format.

Table 1: Books Reviewed

The Book's Title in German	Kitabın Türkçe Adı
Der Schweinehirt	Domuz Çobanı
Die Teekanne	Çaydanlık
Skizzen: Die Flucht Der Katze Und 20 Andere Kurzgeschichten	Eskizler: Kedinin Firarı ve 20 Kısa Öykü
Des Kaisers Neue Kleider	İmparator'un Yeni Giysileri
Die Karawane	Kervan
Das Feuerzeug	Çakmak

The works examined in this study were selected from among the best-selling and most readily available German-Turkish bilingual storybooks on a book sales platform. In selecting the German-Turkish storybooks, convenience sampling was chosen as the sampling method. These books were identified as the objects of analysis in this study. Convenience sampling is a method in which the researcher selects participants and situations that are the easiest and most accessible for the study (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2015; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Ocak, 2019).

1.2. Data Collection Tools

Within the scope of the study, a data collection tool was developed by soliciting expert opinions (from four experts holding the title of Assistant Professor in the field of Turkish



Education). In line with the “Sociocultural Knowledge” section derived from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, expert opinions were sought to identify cultural elements in German-Turkish bilingual storybooks. To identify cultural elements, each book was examined, and 25 sentences were selected; a total of 150 sentences were added to the expert opinion form for the six books. For each story, a total of 25 example sentences were selected from the beginning, middle, and end of the book. Additionally, the form included open-ended fields where experts could write their reasoned opinions and recommendations regarding each item (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2013, p. 103).

Table 2: Books Reviewed

Sociocultural Information	
Daily Life	“Food and drink, mealtimes, table manners, public holidays, festivals, working hours, leisure activities, etc.”
Living Conditions	“Living conditions, standard of living, social security, etc.”
Interpersonal Relationships	“Gender relations, family structure and relationships, workplace relationships, etc.”
Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes	“Regional cultures, traditions and social change, history—particularly iconic historical figures and events; foreign countries and peoples; politics, art, religion, humor, professional groups; institutions, security, etc.”
Body Language	“Body language communication traditionally used in different cultures and its adaptation to other cultures, etc.”
Social Traditions	“Regarding hospitality: punctuality, gifts, duration of visits, farewells, behavioral and conversational etiquette, etc.”
Rituals/Traditional Behaviors	“Birth, marriage, death, celebrations, festivals, dances, religious traditions, audience behavior at public gatherings, etc.”

To determine the language levels, 25 sentences were selected from each book, resulting in a total of 150 sentences added to the expert opinion form for the six books. For each story, a total of 25 sample sentences were selected from the beginning, middle, and end of the book. Since this selection process was carried out according to specific criteria, a purposive sampling method was chosen for the study. In the study, the “Scale for Examining Structural Features,” developed by the researchers based on expert opinions to determine the appropriateness of structural features, was used as the data collection tool. The scale consists of a total of 18 criteria. In the development of the scale, the “Activity Distribution Checklist,” developed by the researchers based on the General Evaluation Scale prepared by Zahmacioğlu, Güleç, and İnce (2014, p. 108), was used as a data collection tool.

1.3. Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, data were collected using the document review model and analyzed using descriptive analysis. Document review is the process of systematically examining and evaluating written or digital sources (Wach & Ward, 2013). The cultural elements and language levels included in the data collection tool were examined within the framework of criteria based on the “Sociocultural Knowledge” and “Common Reference Levels” descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

1.4. Validity and Reliability

In the analysis of the data in this study, findings were presented by calculating the inter-coder agreement percentage in accordance with expert opinions regarding the identification of cultural elements and language levels in the books. Expert opinions were consulted during the analysis of the books examined in this study. In qualitative research, it is recommended that data be examined by different researchers and that consistency among codings be tested to increase reliability (Tutar, 2022). In this process, the comparison of data and codes that have been coded



independently to seek agreement is referred to as “inter-coder reliability” (Yaşar, 2018). Accordingly, the findings obtained during the research process were also evaluated by a second coder (additional coder), and inter-coder reliability was calculated. The books were read and analyzed by multiple researchers during the evaluation process; thus, expert opinion and coder reliability were considered together. To ensure the validity and reliability of this study, the works under examination were first read by the researcher. They were then coded according to cultural and linguistic levels. During the research process, input was sought from an expert in Turkish language instruction for non-native speakers, and the data were recoded by the researcher. To determine inter-rater agreement, the reliability formula proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used ($\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Agreement}}{\text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement}}$). According to this formula, there must be at least an 80% similarity between coders. The analysis revealed that the reliability value was 85%. The high percentage of agreement between the experts and the researcher indicates that the study is reliable.

2. Findings

This section presents the findings and interpretations derived from the research questions. Findings regarding the extent to which cultural elements are included in German-Turkish bilingual storybooks. The study on the identification of cultural elements in German-Turkish bilingual storybooks generally yielded the following findings:

Table 3: Total Cultural Elements in German-Turkish Bilingual Storybooks

Cultural Elements	The Swine herd	The Teapot	The Cat's Escape and 20 Short Stories	The Emperor's New Clothes	The Caravan	The Lighter	Total
Daily Life	25	29	35	23	36	20	168
Living Conditions	26	25	18	14	35	21	139
Interpersonal Relationships	51	14	25	11	43	18	162
Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes	13	22	62	34	36	24	191
Body Language	16	14	15	3	26	8	82
Social Traditions	9	16	19	11	31	9	95
Rituals/Traditional Behaviors	10	21	7	9	31	13	91
Total	150	141	181	105	238	113	928

Table 3 presents the distribution of cultural elements across six German–Turkish bilingual storybooks and provides a quantitative overview of how cultural representation is embedded in the corpus. A total of 928 cultural elements were identified across all texts. The findings indicate that the category Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes constitutes the most frequently represented cultural domain, with 191 occurrences. This suggests that the storybooks place substantial emphasis on the transmission of ideological, moral, and socio-cultural value systems. The prominence of this category may reflect the pedagogical and intercultural objectives of bilingual children’s literature, particularly in fostering cultural awareness and identity formation. The second most prevalent category is Daily Life (168 occurrences), followed closely by Interpersonal Relationships (162 occurrences) and Living Conditions (139 occurrences). The high frequency of these categories demonstrates that the narratives predominantly foreground everyday social practices, domestic environments, and patterns of human interaction. From a sociocultural perspective, this distribution indicates that the texts construct cultural meaning primarily through ordinary lived experiences and relational dynamics



rather than through explicitly ceremonial or symbolic practices. In contrast, Body Language (82 occurrences), Rituals/Traditional Behaviors (91 occurrences), and Social Traditions (95 occurrences) appear less frequently. This comparatively lower representation may suggest that implicit and behavioral aspects of culture are less central in the selected storybooks than cognitive and value-oriented dimensions of culture. Nevertheless, the presence of these categories still demonstrates a multidimensional portrayal of cultural identity. At the level of individual texts, *The Caravan* contains the highest number of cultural elements overall (238), indicating a particularly dense and diversified cultural content. The text exhibits consistently high frequencies across nearly all categories, especially in Daily Life, Living Conditions, Interpersonal Relationships, and culturally embedded traditions. This suggests that the narrative functions as a culturally saturated text with strong intercultural representational capacity. Conversely, *The Emperor's New Clothes* demonstrates the lowest total frequency (105), implying a comparatively limited incorporation of explicit cultural references. Its cultural representation appears more selective and less diversified than the other works in the corpus. Among the remaining texts, *The Cat's Escape and 20 Short Stories* stands out for its exceptionally high frequency in Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes (62 occurrences), which may indicate a stronger didactic or moral orientation. Similarly, *The Swineherd* shows a notably high frequency in Interpersonal Relationships (51 occurrences), emphasizing social interaction and relational structures as central narrative components. Overall, the table demonstrates that German-Turkish bilingual storybooks incorporate cultural content in diverse and uneven ways. The predominance of value-oriented and everyday-life categories suggests that these texts primarily convey culture through social norms, interpersonal communication, and daily practices. Consequently, the corpus may be interpreted as contributing to intercultural competence development by presenting culture as an experiential and socially embedded phenomenon rather than solely as a system of formal traditions or rituals.

2.1. Findings Regarding Language Levels in German-Turkish Bilingual Storybooks

In the study conducted to determine the language levels of German-Turkish bilingual storybooks, expert opinions were consulted. In this study, the books were analyzed according to the "Common Reference Levels" (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2013: 178), and the findings are presented below. Upon examining the language levels in the book "The Pig Herder," it was determined that the most frequent language level was B1, with 13 sentence examples. No examples were identified at the C2 level. There is one example each at the A1 and C1 levels. While there are 8 examples at the B2 level, there are 2 examples at the A2 level. The book shows a concentration of B1 and B2 levels. In the book "Sketches: The Cat's Escape and 20 Short Stories," the most common language level is B1, with 11 examples. There is no example at the C2 level. There is one example each at the A1 and A2 levels. There are 5 examples at the B2 level and 7 examples at the C1 level. In the book "The Emperor's New Clothes," it is determined that the most common language level is B2 with 13 examples, while the least common is C1 with 2 examples. No examples are found at the A1 and C2 language levels. The second-highest language level is B1 with 7 examples, while there are 3 examples at the A2 level. In the book "The Caravan," the highest language level is B2 with 12 examples, while the lowest is A2 with 4 examples. There are no examples at the A1, C1, or C2 language levels. An analysis of the data from the "Çakmak" book reveals that the most common language level is B2, with 10 examples. It was found that the lowest language level is A1 with 1 example, while there are no examples at the C1 and C2 levels. There are 8 examples at the B1 level and 6 examples at the A2 level. It is evident that the B1 and B2 levels are predominant in the book.



2.2. Findings on The Suitability of Visual Features in German-Turkish Bilingual Storybooks

In the study conducted to determine the appropriateness of the formal characteristics of German-Turkish bilingual storybooks, the books were examined in accordance with the evaluation scale prepared by the researcher. The scale prepared by the researcher was developed based on the “General Evaluation Scale” created by Zahmacioğlu, Güleç, and İnce (2014). The scale is presented in Appendix 2. The research findings were presented based on the data obtained from the scale. The following general findings were reached as a result of the analysis:

The analysis revealed that none of the books contained a table of contents or a preface. The books met the criteria for cover design. The book covers featured an image related to the stories. The background of the book covers is red. The book’s title, written in black on a yellow background, appears in both German and Turkish. Only the publisher is listed on the front cover. There is no information regarding the author, translator, or the appropriate reading level. On the back cover, there is a summary of the text in both German and Turkish on a red background. Additional information such as a barcode, ISBN number, and QR codes is included on the book. Upon examination, the inside covers of the books were found to meet the criteria. The inside cover features the German-Turkish title of the book, the translator’s name, and the publisher’s logo. While the books meet the basic criteria, information regarding the author and level is not specified. Upon examination, the spines of the books meet the criteria. The German title of the book and the text “German-Turkish Parallel Stories” are clearly and legibly printed on the spines. Only in the book *Sketches: The Cat’s Escape and 20 Short Stories* does the spine feature only the German title. The text is vertically centered and neatly aligned, appearing alongside the publisher’s logo. The color and typography on the spines of the books are consistent across all titles. While the books “The Pig Herder,” “The Teapot,” “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” and “The Lighter” include a German-Turkish glossary at the end of each story, the books “The Caravan” and “Sketches: The Cat’s Escape and 20 Short Stories” do not contain a glossary. The page layout and specifications are appropriate for each book’s level. The pages in the books are formatted in two columns. The German text appears on one side of the page, while the Turkish text is presented on the other. By providing both languages, the books facilitate comparative reading for the reader. This layout is highly suitable for language learning. The font is generally legible, and the line spacing is adequate. The margins are wide enough to take notes and follow the text. Page numbers are located at the bottom of the page and are clearly visible. Based on this information, the other pages generally meet the standards as well. The pages contain no visual elements related to the text. The page lengths of the books generally range from 63 to 103. This length is ideal for both language learners and children and is appropriate for their levels. High-quality paper stock has been used in the books examined. There are no visual elements inside the books, and they are black-and-white. When evaluating the colors on the cover page, cartoon-style figures of animals, objects, and people are used in bright and vivid colors. These visuals appear to be designed to capture children’s interest. Since the book’s content is aimed more at young and adult readers, the colors on the cover do not seem appropriate. In the books “The Pig Herder,” “The Teapot,” “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” “The Lighter,” and “The Caravan,” additional activities related to the text are provided at the end of each story. In the book “Sketches: The Cat’s Escape and 20 Short Stories,” however, there are no additional activities. The activities and their answers are provided in German. A total of 61 language and printing errors were identified in the book *The Pig Herder*. The errors were classified into three separate categories: spelling, punctuation, and printing errors. While spelling and printing errors were the most common, punctuation errors were less frequent. A total of 94 language and printing errors were found in the book *The Teapot*. The book primarily contains spelling and typesetting errors. It was generally observed that sentences within quotation marks began with lowercase letters. In the book “Sketches: The Cat’s Escape and 20 Short Stories,” spelling and typesetting errors were predominantly identified. A total of 2 punctuation errors were identified. In this book, it was observed that



there were a significant number of printing errors and that spaces were not left between words. In the book “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” printing and spelling errors are predominant. Three punctuation errors were identified. Common punctuation errors include starting sentences within quotation marks with lowercase letters, starting sentences after a colon with lowercase letters, and spelling errors such as using lowercase letters for proper nouns within sentences, omitting accents, and using hyphenated words incorrectly. Printing errors generally involve missing or incorrect letters. The book “Kervan” generally contains printing and spelling errors. Ten punctuation errors were identified, including missing periods, starting a sentence with a lowercase letter after quotation marks, and incorrect placement of periods. Spelling errors generally include omitting accents, writing separate verbs as compound words, incorrect capitalization, and using compound words where they should be written separately. Printing errors generally include using extra letters, missing letters, and using the wrong letters. 66 language and printing errors were identified in the book “Çakmak.” Spelling and typesetting errors were generally observed. Three punctuation errors were identified. Common spelling errors include the omission of accents, failure to distinguish between compound and separate words, and misspelling of words. Common typesetting errors include missing letters, repetition of the same word, and extra letters.

2.3. Findings on The Distribution of Activities in German-Turkish Bilingual Storybooks

In the study conducted to determine the distribution of activities in German-Turkish bilingual storybooks, the activities were examined in accordance with a checklist prepared by the researcher. The analysis revealed the following general findings:

Generally, in storybooks, activities related to the text are included under the heading “ÜBUNGEN” at the end of each text. Answers to the activities are provided in German under the heading “DIE ANTWORTEN.” All of the provided activities are in German. While activities are present in all of the examined books, the book “Eskizler: Kedinin Firarı ve 20 Kısa Öykü” does not contain any activities. While the activities in the books are listed in Appendix 6, the answer keys for the activities are presented in Appendix 7. The distribution of the presented tables was examined by providing the German names of the activities, their types in Turkish, and the page numbers where they appear. There are a total of 12 activities in the book *The Pig Herder*. There is 1 activity related to predicting sentences. Throughout the book, there are 3 true-false activities, 3 activities involving arranging sentences according to grammar, 2 question-answering activities, and 3 activities titled “Compliance with Grammar Rules.” It was observed that the activities are concentrated on pages 66 and 67. There are 7 activities in the *Teapot* book. There are 2 true-false activities and 1 sentence prediction activity. It also includes 2 answer-the-questions activities and 2 sentence-ordering-by-grammar activities. There are 14 activities in the *The Emperor’s New Clothes* book. There are 2 sentence prediction activities, 4 true-false activities, 4 answer-the-questions activities, and 4 sentence-ordering-by-grammar activities. Generally, the aim was to assess comprehension and analysis of the text, as well as prediction skills. While there are 10 text comprehension activities, 4 activities focus on grammar knowledge. The Kervan book contains 6 activities. There are 2 true-false activities, 2 answer-the-questions activities, and 2 sentence-ordering-by-grammar activities. While the true-false and answer-the-questions activities generally assess text comprehension and production skills, the sentence-ordering-by-grammar activity is designed to assess grammar knowledge and sentence construction. The Çakmak textbook contains 12 activities. It includes 2 true-false activities, 2 question-answering activities, 2 sentence-ordering-by-grammar activities, and 6 activities on adherence to grammar rules. Sentence-ordering-by-grammar and adherence-to-grammar-rules activities are given primary emphasis in the book. Dative case, modals, possessive forms, and general verb conjugations were covered in the grammar activities. Upon examining the data in Table 3.4.9, it is evident that the activities are not distributed evenly across any of the books. The book The Emperor’s New Clothes (14) contains the highest



number of activities. It was determined that the book *The Cat's Escape and 20 Short Stories* has the fewest activities (0). While there are 12 activities in *The Lighter and the Pig Herder*, there are 6 in *The Caravan* and 7 in *The Teapot*. While the density of activities increases in some books, the absence of any activities in one book is particularly striking. This situation indicates that a principle of balance was not observed in the distribution of activities.

Table 4: Formatting Errors in German-Turkish Bilingual Storybooks

Language and Printing Errors	The Swineherd	The Teapot	The Cat's Escape and 20 Short Stories	The Emperor's New Clothes	The Caravan	The Lighter	Total
Spelling Error	48	59	80	54	50	38	329
Punctuation Error	4	8	2	3	10	3	30
Printing Error	9	27	60	19	20	25	160
Total	61	94	142	76	80	66	519

Table 4 presents the distribution of formatting-related deficiencies identified in six German–Turkish bilingual storybooks. The analysis categorizes the errors into three major groups: spelling errors, punctuation errors, and printing errors. In total, 519 language and printing errors were detected across the corpus, indicating that orthographic and technical inconsistencies constitute a significant issue in the examined bilingual publications. The findings reveal that spelling errors are by far the most prevalent category, with 329 occurrences. This category accounts for the majority of all identified errors, suggesting that orthographic accuracy represents the principal area of weakness in the analyzed texts. From a linguistic and educational perspective, the high frequency of spelling inaccuracies may negatively affect readability, language acquisition, and literacy development, particularly for bilingual child readers who rely on consistent written input for vocabulary and grammar internalization. Printing errors constitute the second most common category, with 160 occurrences. The relatively high number of technical and typographical inconsistencies points to deficiencies in editorial quality control and publishing standards. Such errors may reduce textual coherence and visual clarity, thereby limiting the pedagogical effectiveness and professional reliability of the storybooks. In contrast, punctuation errors appear considerably less frequent, with only 30 instances identified across all works. Although quantitatively limited, punctuation inaccuracies remain important because they may influence sentence interpretation, syntactic comprehension, and reading fluency. At the level of individual texts, *The Cat's Escape and 20 Short Stories* demonstrates the highest total number of errors (142). The text contains especially high frequencies of both spelling errors (80) and printing errors (60), suggesting substantial editorial and linguistic shortcomings. This finding may indicate insufficient proofreading procedures or translation/adaptation difficulties within the bilingual publication process. Similarly, *The Teapot* exhibits a relatively high number of total errors (94), particularly in spelling (59) and printing (27). In comparison, *The Swineherd* and *The Lighter* contain lower overall error frequencies, with totals of 61 and 66 respectively, indicating comparatively stronger editorial consistency. A noteworthy observation concerns *The Caravan*, which records the highest number of punctuation errors (10), despite having moderate frequencies in other categories. This may suggest inconsistencies in sentence structuring or translation-based punctuation transfer between German and Turkish linguistic conventions. Overall, the table demonstrates that orthographic and technical inaccuracies are widespread in the analyzed German–Turkish bilingual storybooks. The predominance of spelling and printing errors suggests systemic deficiencies in proofreading, editing, and publication processes. From an educational standpoint, these findings are significant because linguistic accuracy and typographical quality are essential components



of effective bilingual children’s literature. Persistent formatting and language errors may hinder comprehension, reduce textual credibility, and negatively influence bilingual literacy development.

Table 5: Distribution of Activities in German-Turkish Bilingual Storybooks

Activity Categories	The Swine herd	The Teapot	The Cat's Escape and 20 Short Stories	The Emperor's New Clothes	The Caravan	The Lighter	Total
True or False	3	2	-	4	2	2	13
Guess the Sentences	1	1	-	2	-	-	4
Answer the Questions	2	2	-	4	2	2	12
Arrange the Sentences by Grammar	3	2	-	4	2	2	13
Grammar Accuracy	3	-	-	-	-	6	9
Total	12	7	-	14	6	12	51

Table 5 presents the distribution of pedagogical activities incorporated into six German–Turkish bilingual storybooks. The findings provide insight into the extent to which the texts integrate instructional and learner-centered components designed to support language acquisition and reading comprehension. A total of 51 activities were identified across the corpus. The analysis demonstrates that True or False activities and Arrange the Sentences by Grammar activities are the most frequently occurring categories, each with 13 instances. These activity types primarily target comprehension monitoring and grammatical awareness, suggesting that the storybooks emphasize structural language learning alongside content understanding. Their prevalence indicates a pedagogical orientation toward reinforcing syntactic competence and reading accuracy in bilingual learners. Similarly, Answer the Questions activities appear relatively frequently, with 12 occurrences. This category reflects the use of comprehension-based instructional strategies aimed at developing interpretive reading skills, information retrieval, and text-based reasoning. Such activities are commonly associated with reader-response pedagogy and interactive literacy practices. In contrast, Guess the Sentences activities are minimally represented, with only four instances identified across the corpus. This limited frequency suggests that predictive and inferential learning strategies receive comparatively little emphasis in the analyzed texts. Likewise, Grammar Accuracy activities appear only nine times and are concentrated primarily in The Lighter and The Swineherd, indicating an uneven distribution of explicit grammar-focused exercises among the books. At the individual text level, The Emperor’s New Clothes contains the highest number of activities overall (14), followed by The Swineherd and The Lighter, each with 12 activities. These findings suggest that these texts are more pedagogically enriched and may provide greater opportunities for active learner engagement and post-reading reinforcement. By contrast, The Cat’s Escape and 20 Short Stories contains no activities in any category. This absence indicates that the text functions primarily as a narrative resource rather than as an explicitly instructional or classroom-oriented material. The lack of supplementary exercises may reduce its applicability for structured bilingual language instruction, despite its literary value. Another notable finding is the uneven distribution of activities across the corpus. While some books incorporate multiple exercise types, others contain only limited or highly selective pedagogical tasks. This inconsistency suggests the absence of a standardized instructional framework in the design of the bilingual storybooks. Overall, the table indicates that the analyzed German–



Turkish bilingual storybooks exhibit varying degrees of pedagogical integration. The predominance of comprehension- and grammar-oriented activities reflects an educational focus on linguistic accuracy and textual understanding. However, the limited diversity and inconsistent distribution of activities across the books suggest that the pedagogical potential of bilingual storybooks is not uniformly utilized. From an educational perspective, incorporating a broader range of interactive and cognitively engaging activities could enhance learner participation, intercultural literacy, and bilingual language development.

Conclusion, Discussion, And Recommendations

Within the scope of this study, German-Turkish bilingual storybooks were examined from various perspectives to assess their suitability for the target audience. Regarding the first research question—the extent to which cultural elements are included in German-Turkish bilingual storybooks and their appropriateness—the following conclusions were reached. It was determined that the total number of cultural elements in the bilingual storybooks was 928. Among the 7 categories used to identify cultural elements, the most frequently used category was “Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes” with 191 cultural elements, while the least frequently used category was “Body Language” with 82 examples. In the other categories, “Daily Life” had 168 examples, “Interpersonal Relationships” had 162 examples, “Living Conditions” had 139 examples, “Social Traditions” had 95 examples, and “Rituals and Traditional Behaviors” had 91 examples. It was found that the cultural element most frequently used in the books was “Caravan” with 238 examples, while the least frequently used was “The Emperor’s New Clothes” with 105 examples. In the other books, 181 examples were found in “The Cat’s Escape and 20 Short Stories,” 150 examples in “The Pig Herder,” 141 examples in “The Teapot,” and 113 examples in “The Lighter.” In conclusion, it was observed that cultural elements were represented with a large number of examples in each category in the German-Turkish bilingual storybooks. Miçoğulları (2020) found that the most frequently used heading in identifying cultural elements in the books examined in their study was “Traditions and Folklore,” with 42 elements, while the least frequently used heading was “Social Life,” with only 1 element. Çetinkaya and Durmaz (2020) noted that the books examined in their study contained numerous cultural elements belonging to different cultures. They found that cultural elements such as “Names of Nations and States, Currency Units” were not included in the books. Özdemir and Baş (2022) noted in their study that they could not identify findings related to the “Art and Literature” category in three of the books under examination. They found that, despite their limited quantity, Turkish writers and poets stood out within the categories. It was observed that the results of the aforementioned studies did not align with the findings of this research. In their study, Karakoç, Öztürk, and Destegüloğlu (2022) found that books generally included cultural elements from every category, ranging from daily life to geography and spatial cultural elements. The results of this study align with those of the aforementioned work. Cultural transmission in Turkish language instruction for foreigners has been addressed from various perspectives. In their study on the cultural transmission aspect of a Turkish language teaching set for foreigners, Erdem, Gün, and Karateke (2024) observed that cultural elements are comprehensively reflected and that cultural content is consciously utilized in text selections. Careful selection of high-quality texts that reflect culture and supporting audiovisual elements in Turkish language teaching materials for non-native speakers will significantly contribute to the effective promotion of Turkish culture. Similarly, İşcan and Yassıtaş (2018) report that the Yedi İklim textbooks for B1–B2 levels effectively facilitate cultural transmission by introducing Turkish culture from various perspectives. However, when evaluated from the perspective of intercultural communication, it is understood that these textbooks contain certain shortcomings regarding the development of cultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence in students. In his evaluation based on translated works, Turan (2016) states that the translator conveys cultural elements by preserving them through a “foreignization” approach, thereby offering the target reader an opportunity to recognize cultural elements. All these findings indicate that culture must be treated as a central element in both teaching materials and



translation products in the teaching of Turkish as a foreign language. Regarding the second research question—to what extent the language levels used in German-Turkish bilingual storybooks are appropriate for the target readership—the following findings were obtained. In the study conducted to determine the language levels of German-Turkish bilingual storybooks, expert opinions were sought, and the language levels were specified accordingly. The data were analyzed using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages “Common Reference Levels.” No previous research has been found in the existing literature that examines the extent to which the language levels used in German–Turkish bilingual storybooks are appropriate for the target readership. For this reason, the findings of this study cannot be directly compared with the results of other studies conducted in the same context. However, the data obtained regarding the books were evaluated in the discussion section, and meaningful conclusions were drawn from these comparisons. The analysis revealed that intermediate-level language use predominates in most of the evaluated books. In the books “The Teapot,” “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” “The Caravan,” and “The Lighter,” abstract and concrete expressions, complex sentences, descriptive narration, and point of view are particularly prominent. In this regard, it is observed that the texts generally require an intermediate (B2) level of language proficiency. While the book “The Pig Herder” contains a wider range of language levels, it was determined that the dominant level is intermediate (B1). In the work titled “Sketches: The Cat’s Escape and 20 Short Stories,” while sentences with advanced-level (C1) characteristics are present, the expressions predominantly align with the intermediate level (B1). Overall, it can be stated that the language levels of the examined books mostly correspond to the B1-B2 range.

Tatar Kırılmış (2010) notes that the reading book titled “Turkish Sampler,” prepared by Müge Galin in the United States, contains inconsistencies between the stated language levels and the difficulty levels of the texts it contains, and that slang expressions are used excessively. These criticisms indicate that reading materials appropriate for the level of Turkish learners have not yet been sufficiently developed. Indeed, it is emphasized that a comprehensive study serving as a guide for creating a reading book systematically prepared according to language levels has not yet been conducted.

Regarding the third research question—the appropriateness of formal features in German-Turkish bilingual storybooks—the following conclusions were reached. When the formal features were evaluated using the scale developed by the researcher, it was found that none of the examined books contained a table of contents or a preface. In the books “The Pig Herder,” “The Teapot,” “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” “The Lighter,” and “The Caravan,” there are additional text-based activities at the end of each story. The book “Sketches: The Cat’s Escape and 20 Short Stories” does not contain any activities. The activities and their answers are provided in German. No information was provided regarding the language level of the books. While most books include a German-Turkish glossary, it was found that the books “Caravan” and “Sketches: The Cat’s Escape and 20 Short Stories” do not contain a glossary. Overall, the books generally meet the criteria for both front and back covers. While the physical and formal characteristics of the examined bilingual storybooks generally align with the criteria, some inconsistencies are noticeable in terms of their appeal to the target audience. In terms of page count, the works have an appropriate length for both child readers and language learners, and they appear technically sufficient in terms of cover, spine, and inner cover design, as well as paper quality. However, the absence of illustrations on the inner pages and the fact that the pages are black-and-white reveal that the visual support needed by child readers, in particular, is not provided. While the vibrant colors and cartoon-style figures used on the cover create an impression aimed at children, the fact that the content level appeals more to young and adult readers creates a mismatch between design and content. This situation indicates that the most fundamental area open to improvement is the harmony between content and design. Therefore, while the works are generally technically adequate, they need to be redesigned to meet the expectations of the target audience. Zahmacıoğlu, Güleç, and İnce (2014) found in their study



that while the books they examined included a table of contents and a preface, they lacked a glossary and appendices. They noted that the book lacked visual richness. They concluded that the book was riddled with formal errors and omissions. From this perspective, the findings align with those of the study.

The total number of typographical errors in the books was analyzed under three headings: spelling, punctuation, and printing errors. It was determined that these errors included repeated words, missing accents on words, misspellings, spelling inconsistencies, missing punctuation, incorrect punctuation, and printing errors. It was observed that the book “The Cat’s Escape and 20 Short Stories” contained the most errors, while “The Pig Herder” contained the fewest. It was determined that “The Cat’s Escape and 20 Short Stories” had the most spelling errors, while “The Lighter” had the fewest. The book with the most punctuation errors is “The Pig Herder,” while the book with the fewest is “The Emperor’s New Clothes.” Printing errors were most prevalent in “The Cat’s Escape and 20 Short Stories,” and the fewest were found in “The Pig Herder.” A total of 519 errors were identified across all the books examined. Demir (2012) notes that the books he examined contained various errors and deficiencies related to typesetting, design, and visual elements. Additionally, unnecessary repetitions in the content are another notable issue. The frequent repetition of similar phrases throughout the text, the repetition of the same idea in different sections, or the use of expressions that do not contribute to the narrative significantly weaken the educational quality of the books. Ayrancı, Mete, and Keskin (2017) noted in their study that changes in punctuation, spelling, and headings within the texts would lead to negative outcomes. The fact that there are so many errors in these books is significant in that it indicates they are not suitable for teaching the target language. The findings of this study align with the results of the aforementioned research.

Regarding the fourth research question—the types of activities included in German-Turkish bilingual storybooks and the appropriateness of their distribution—the following conclusions were reached. There are a total of 51 activities in the bilingual storybooks; the activities in the examined books are predominantly grouped into the categories of true-false, arranging sentences according to grammar, and answering questions, indicating that the activities are largely structure-focused. It is observed that activities requiring comprehension, inferring context, and higher-order thinking skills are quite limited. This suggests that these activities are aimed at verifying the accuracy of the structure and correcting grammatical rules rather than encouraging the learner to use their creativity. Upon examining the activities, it was determined that there is partial alignment with the CEFR approach, but higher-order activities are absent. When evaluated on a book-by-book basis, it is observed that the activities are not distributed in a balanced manner, and in some books, no activities are included at all. The book “The Cat’s Escape and 20 Short Stories” contains no activities. Activities are primarily found in the books “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” “The Swineherd,” and “The Lighter.” It is evident that bilingual books include activities aimed solely at German, with no activities related to the Turkish language. This indicates that bilingual books are not designed as truly bilingual teaching materials but rather focus primarily on teaching German. It appears that they were prepared within a structure that uses Turkish solely as a supplementary language. This indicates that bilingual books offer bilingualism only at the structural level but fall short of functional bilingualism. No research has been found in the literature examining the types of activities in German–Turkish bilingual storybooks and the appropriateness of their distribution. Therefore, it was not possible to directly compare the findings of this study with other studies conducted in the same context. However, data from studies on Turkish teaching sets were taken into account in the discussion section. Evaluations were made by establishing connections with the limited number of relevant studies in the field, and efforts were made to reach meaningful conclusions from these comparisons. In conclusion, the studies examined regarding basic-level Turkish teaching materials present a comprehensive evaluation. The findings of Gün, Yalçın, and Pişkin (2019) indicate that grammar topics do not follow a consistent standard in the textbooks; they are sometimes presented as an independent section and at other times embedded within basic



skills such as reading and writing. While it was determined that the grammar topics required for elementary-level instruction are generally included in textbooks, it is understood that decisions regarding which grammar content to cover largely depend on the preferences of textbook authors. The findings of Ayrancı, Mete, and Keskin (2017), however, highlight significant shortcomings in both content and design. In particular, it reveals that materials targeting Turkish children living abroad fall short in supporting cultural transmission through activities and that the visual layout disrupts the pedagogical flow. In contrast, Sönmez (2019) found that textbooks for teaching Turkish as a foreign language generally include set phrases and activities that support functional language use. When all studies are evaluated, it is emphasized that Turkish language teaching materials need to be improved in various aspects, ranging from grammar to design quality, cultural content, and skill-based activities. At the same time, it reveals that existing books contain frameworks and functional structures in some areas. It is observed that the findings regarding grammar, as well as the identified deficiencies in content and design, align with the results of this study.

The research findings indicate that the bilingual storybooks examined exhibit certain deficiencies in terms of form and language. In this regard, the following recommendations are offered to practitioners and researchers to enhance the quality of materials to be developed in the future:

- The scope of analysis for bilingual books can be expanded. Research can involve a comparative analysis of bilingual books from different publishers and text types. This would enable more comprehensive findings regarding publishing policies and editorial quality.

- Editorial and technical review should be made mandatory. Numerous spelling, punctuation, and printing errors were found in the books. This situation not only presents incorrect models for language-learning students but also undermines the reliability of materials prepared for bilingual education. Professional editing and proofreading prior to publication must be mandatory.

- Visual support must be provided. It was observed that the books under review contained no visuals at all. Including visuals that are relevant to the text and support its meaning will strengthen communicative learning.

- Activities should be diversified and higher-level skills supported. Most of the current activities are form-focused (true/false, sequencing, grammar) and do not encourage students to produce their own work. It is recommended that future editions include activities such as prediction, inference, creative rewriting, comparison, and cross-cultural interpretation.

- Language level classification should be made transparent. None of the examined books clearly indicate the language level (A1, A2, B1, etc.). This information must be included on the book cover or in the colophon to facilitate the selection of materials appropriate for the student's developmental level.

- The books under review should include advanced-level activities for both languages; Turkish should be removed from its role as a support language and actively integrated into the learning process.

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