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## A Comparative Study on Polar Questions in Turkish and English: Realizing the Dichotomy While Teaching

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**Abstract:** One of the common instruments in daily communication, questions are categorized into three major groups in most of the languages: polar questions, *wh-* questions, and alternative questions. When it is considered that the main purpose of teaching and learning a language is to communicate, it is expected for language learners to acquire good skills in exchanging information by asking and answering questions. In this context, polar questions should be paid close attention, as several studies revealed that the most frequently used question type in English spoken language is polar questions. However, it is argued that different answering systems for polar questions across languages cause language learners to have difficulties in learning how to answer polar questions appropriately, specifically, negative polar questions. Turkish and English languages employ different answering systems. Accordingly, Turkish learners of English must be aware of the differences and raise awareness on the issue to become proficient in the target language. Therefore, this study aims to explore the nature of the national coursebooks of English used in Turkey in terms of the activities they include related to polar questions. Contents of the coursebooks designed for the grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 were descriptively analyzed. As a result, it was found that the coursebooks do not sufficiently practice negative polar questions for learners to raise awareness. Based on the results, certain suggestions were proposed to enhance the quality of the coursebooks on the current topic.

**Keywords:** *polar questions, negative polar questions, teaching polar questions*

### Türkçe ve İngilizce'deki Kutuplu Sorular Üzerine Karşılaştırmalı Bir Çalışma: Öğretim Sürecinde Farklılıkları Kavrama

**Öz:** Günlük iletişim sürecinin temel öğelerinden olan sorular çoğu dilde başlıca üç gruba ayrılmıştır: kutuplu sorular, soru kelimesi soruları, ve seçenekli sorular. Dil öğrenmenin ve öğretmenin ana amacının iletişim kurmak olduğu dikkate alındığında, dil öğrencilerinden soru sorarak ve cevaplayarak bilgi alışverişi yapma becerilerini iyi bir şekilde edinmeleri beklenmektedir. Bu çerçevede, çeşitli çalışmalar İngilizce konuşma dilinde en çok kullanılan soru türünün kutuplu sorular olduğunu ortaya çıkardığından, bu tür sorular üzerine yoğunlaşılması önem arz etmektedir. Alanyazındaki çalışmalar göstermektedir ki farklı diller kutuplu soruları cevaplamak için farklı sistemler kullanırlar ve bu farklılıklar dil öğrencilerinin zorluklar yaşamalarına sebep olmaktadır. Özellikle olumsuz kutuplu sorular zorluğun ana sebebi olarak görülmektedir. Türkçe ve İngilizce farklı yanıtlama sistemleri kullanmaktadır. Bu nedenle, İngilizce öğrenen Türk öğrenciler dilde yetkin olabilmek için bu farklılıkların bilincinde olmalı ve bu konudaki farkındalıklarını artırmalıdır. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışma İngilizce öğretmeyi amaçlayan Türk milli ders kitaplarını barındırdıkları kutuplu soru etkinlikleri açısından çözümlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. 5, 6, 7, ve 8'inci sınıf öğrencileri için tasarlanan ders kitapları betimsel içerik analizi yöntemi ile incelenmiştir. İnceleme sonucunda ders kitaplarının İngilizce ve Türkçe arasındaki kutuplu soru yanıtlama sistemleri açısından farklılıkları yeterince işlemediği, dolayısıyla öğrencilerin bu konu hakkında farkındalık oluşturmalarını sağlayamayacağı sonucuna varılmıştır. Bu sonuçtan hareketle, ders kitaplarının bu konudaki etkililiğini artırabilecek çeşitli önermeler sunulmuştur.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** *kutuplu sorular, olumsuz kutuplu sorular, kutuplu soruların öğretimi*

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## INTRODUCTION

Asking and answering questions are two of the basic practices of daily communication. Language learners, as well as learners of English, are expected to maintain these practices successfully for a healthy communication process in the target language. During conversations, people produce different types of questions and there has been wide interest in describing and categorizing these question types in the field. Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985) divided question types in English into three major classes as follows: polar questions, *wh*- questions, and alternative questions. These questions are used to clarify the truth value of a proposition (polar questions), to provide the asker with the missing information (*wh*- questions), and to choose among the introduced alternatives (alternative questions) (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999). There seems a consensus reached in terms of the classification of the question types in English, as most studies recognize the listed three major categories.

Classification of the question types in Turkish language has been paid less attention than English language. As Özgen (2010a) pointed out, Turkish question sentences have not been studied extensively and described thoroughly yet. One of the researchers in the field, Uzun (2006) classified Turkish question types into three major groups as polar questions, *wh*- questions, and intonation questions, and he listed many subtitles for each group. Kornfilt (1997) also stated three major groups, however, she listed them as polar questions, question word questions, and echo questions, with many subtitles for each. In a later study, Özgen (2010b) presented a list including polar questions, alternative questions, *wh*- questions, intonation questions, and echo questions. In the light of the given samples, it can be said that the classification of Turkish question types has not been as well-documented as English language and scholars are challenged to reach a consensus on the issue. However, it is evident that each list includes the form of polar questions, as a common question type in both Turkish and English.

Several studies have been conducted specifically related to the mentioned question types and significant results were documented in favor of the polar questions in English. For instance, Freed (1994) investigated the types of questions occurred in a number of conversations and classified each of them to quantify their frequency levels. According to the data, the most frequently occurring question type was polar questions, at the rate of 41% of the total questions. Similarly, Stivers (2010), who investigated the natural American English conversations, found out that the majority of all questions asked consisted of polar questions. In contrast with English, there are not any studies conducted in the field presenting the frequency levels of question types used in Turkish contexts. Nevertheless, it is of great importance for English language learners, as well as Turkish learners of English, to acquire good skills in terms of asking and answering questions, especially polar questions as the data revealed. At this point, it is reported in the literature that there are several typological differences in terms of answering polar questions in different languages. More specifically, negative forms of polar questions are likely to be the source of debate, as they pose cross-linguistic variations in the ways of expressing confirmation and disconfirmation as an answer (Holmberg, 2016).

Turkish and English are two languages differentiating from each other by the answering systems they employ. When this case is considered from the perspective of teaching English, there may occur some problematic situations for Turkish learners of English language. The different answering systems employed by Turkish and English are believed to cause Turkish learners of English to answer negative polar questions in an incorrect way, as a result of first language interference (Turgut, 2013). As Ellis (1994, p. 351) drew from Selinker (1972), “some, but not certainly all, items, rules, and subsystems of a learner’s interlanguage may be transferred from the first language”. In this context, it is of great importance to teach Turkish learners of English how to answer negative polar questions in English and make them realize the differences between the systems of Turkish and English to avoid negative transfer from Turkish to English. Therefore, this qualitative study aims to analyze the contents of the coursebooks of English published by Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in Turkey and explore the following questions:



1. What are the frequency levels of the activities involving polar and negative polar questions included in the Turkish national coursebooks of English?
2. Do the activities included provide sufficient practice of negative polar questions to raise learners' awareness on the answering system of English and attempt to prevent negative first language transfer?

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Insight into Polar Questions

Polar questions, also known as yes/no questions, are one of the major groups of question types. They typically require verification or disaffirmation as an answer, as in the English example '*Have you read Sons and Lovers?*' which expects an answer like '*Yes, I have*' or '*No, I haven't*', which confirms or disconfirms the proposed question. As an additional example in Turkish, the question '*Bu filmi izledin mi?*' [*Have you seen this movie?*] which expects an answer like '*Evet, izledim*' [*Yes, I have*] or '*Hayır, izlemedim*' [*No, I haven't*] can be presented.

The nature of polar questions has been paid considerable attention and studies revealed important findings in cross-linguistic sense. As the literature presents, it is argued that there are variables in answering polar questions in different languages. This variety led the emergence of two different typological answering systems in the literature. These two types of systems are *polarity-based* and *truth-based* systems (Kim, 2017). Actually, the system that a language employs manifests and distinguishes itself from the other system mostly in the sense of negative polar questions, as the studies in the literature highly focused on negative polar questions while discussing the mentioned answering systems.

In polarity-based systems, *yes-no* answer particles agree or disagree with the negative or positive polarity of the question (Gruet-Skrabalova, 2016). In polarity-based systems, the negative answer particle *no* is typically followed by a negative sentence, and the positive particle *yes* by a positive sentence in polarity-based systems (González-Fuente, Tubau, Espinal, & Prieto, 2015), e.g., '*yes, they do*' or '*no, they don't*'. Finnish, Swedish, French, and English are the typical examples of the languages employing the polarity-based system (Jones, 1999; cited in Holmberg, 2013). Jones (1999, p. 9) stated the following example to demonstrate the way that English employs the polarity-based system, and highlighted that the other combinations are not typically found in English:

(1) *Aren't you staying?*

- No [, I'm not]
- Yes [, I am]

On the other hand, languages employing the truth-based system respond to the negative polar questions with *yes* to confirm its truth value, or *no* to disconfirm it (i.e., the particle agrees or disagrees with the overall content of the proposed question) (González-Fuente et al., 2015). Based on the detailed study of the answering systems across languages by Pope (1972), Gruet-Skrabalova (2016, p. 127) stated that truth-based systems involve polar answers to approve or disapprove the truth value of the overall content of the question, and presented the following example from Japanese:

(2) *Kimi tsukareteinai?* [*Aren't you tired?*]

- Hai (tsukareteinai) [Yes] [(I am not)]
- Iie (tsukareteiru desu) [No] [(I am)]



For the clarification of the logic of this system, also noted in González-Fuente et al. (2015) with a different example, the example (2) can be interpreted as ‘yes, you are right, I am not tired’ or ‘no, you are not right, I am tired’. By this way, the speaker agrees or disagrees with the content of the proposed question, regardless of any need of sensitivity for the polarity of the question.

When these systems and examples are examined, it is noticeable that Turkish can utilize both of these systems. Many answering patterns are possible in Turkish. Consider the following example:

(3) *Oğullar ve Sevgililer’i okumadın mı? [Haven’t you read Sons and Lovers?]*

- Evet, okumadım. [Yes, I haven’t.]
- Hayır, okudum. [No, I have.]
- Hayır, okumadım. [No, I haven’t.]
- Evet, okudum. [Yes, I have.]

Any Turkish speaker would agree that the listed four options in the example (3) are acceptable in Turkish. While the first two answers represent a well-established truth-based system property, the last two represent a pure polarity-based system. This case has been reported in the literature. Holmberg (2014) suggests that there are languages utilizing both of these systems, carrying the characteristics of a mixed system. For instance, Kashmiri is a language which employs a mixed system, as the answer for a negative polar question can be constructed with *na* [no] or *a:* [yes] for the same meaning, carrying the characteristics of both the polarity-based and the truth-based system (Holmberg, 2014). The example presented by Wali and Koul (1997, p. 36) demonstrates the mixed system employed in Kashmiri:

(4) *(k’a:) ts parakh na: yi kita:b? [Won’t you read this book?]*

- a:, b par (yi kita:b). [Yes, I’ll read this book]
- na, b par n (yi kita:b). [No, I won’t read this book]
- a:, b par n. [Yes, I won’t read]
- na, b par. [No, I’ll read]

The similarity is noticeable between the Turkish example (3) and Kashmiri example (4), which was reported to use a mixed system. In the light of this argumentation, it can be argued that Turkish is one of the languages which employ a mixed system, involving both the polarity-based and the truth-based system features. However, it is clear that further studies are needed in the field in terms of the answering system of Turkish.

This brief literature review on polar questions attempted to create a background for the concerns of the current study. Although little or no research concerned to investigate the answering system of Turkish language, it is evident that there are differences between English and Turkish. As it constitutes the base of this study, disclosing the use of different systems by Turkish and English is an adequate step in the borders of the current study.

### Studies on Teaching Polar Questions

Studies on teaching polar questions cover a quite limited area in the literature. Although there are publications focusing on teaching questions, most of them take phonological characteristics of polar questions as a basis, rather than the typological differences across languages in terms of the answering systems. For instance, Thompson (1995) dwelt upon teaching questions in terms of the phonological characteristics of asking questions. She criticized the way of teaching intonation on questions based on rules, such as the rule of asking polar questions with a rising intonation, stating that these grammatical approaches to teaching intonation are obviously misleading. Ji, Wang, and Li (2009) analyzed the intonation patterns on polar questions uttered by a group of Chinese students of English to compare them with the native American speakers, and several differences were revealed.



Timpe-Laughlin, Lee, Evanini, Bruno, and Blood (2017) investigated a sample of German students of English as a foreign language (EFL) to observe the formation of the polar questions used by them. Their study focused on the production of polar questions by young learners through a game, rather than practicing answering. Similarly, Al-Hassaani (2016) conducted a study on a group of Saudi EFL learners to explore the problems in the formation of English questions, without any emphasis on the answering patterns. Williams (1990) also compared the polar question formations produced by the native English speakers and the speakers of Singapore English, findings suggested that the productions of the Singaporean speakers were in line with the native productions in terms of syntax and basic linguistic units.

Descriptive approaches were also taken towards the current topic. Ngadi (2018) attempted to discover the question and answer dialogues involved in an EFL classroom in Indonesia, and discussed the errors made by both teachers and students. The errors made were found to be omission, misinformation, and misordering. However, the study lacked practical suggestions for enhancing the situation and educational purposes, thus, featured only descriptive aspects. Likewise, in Indonesia, Dirgeyasa (2017) aimed to find out the answers given by the students to polar questions and classified them. The dominantly used answer type was found to include polar particles followed by additional information.

Literature presents several studies focusing on different points in the sense of teaching polar questions. However, as far as this paper is concerned, no steps have been taken to focus on the typological aspects of polar questions across languages in relation to teaching contexts. Therefore, this study is anticipated to smooth the path to more studies on cross-linguistic aspects of polar questions and teaching contexts.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

Based on a qualitative data gathering approach, descriptive content analysis method has been employed for the study. Descriptive content analysis method is utilized to analyze and present the frequency levels of certain language elements in coursebooks (Seliger & Shohamy, 1990). Studies utilizing descriptive content analysis method attempt to present a general perspective of a particular topic by frequency or percentage values without the inference of details (Dinçer, 2018).

### Data Collection

Four English coursebooks published by MoNE for the state schools in Turkey were selected to be analyzed for the research questions of the study. The selected coursebooks are designed for secondary school education in Turkey, namely, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. The reason for the selection of the mentioned sample group is in line with the objectives of English instruction stated in the curricula published by MoNE. Specifically, the objective of English instruction in the secondary school is to make learners reach the proficiency level of A1 at the end of the 6th grade, and A2 at the end of the 8th grade (MEB, 2018). This level of proficiency is referred to as *basic user*, and it includes the skills of asking and answering questions about certain topics, as well as exchanging information (Council of Europe, 2001). In the light of the relation between the focus of this study and mentioned areas, the following coursebooks were selected to be the sample group of the current study: (1) *İngilizce 5* by Mehmet Yalçın, Günhan Genç, Nihat Özgür Orhon, Hayriye Şahin. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2019; (2) *İngilizce 6* by Fatma Demircan, Gonca Akıskalı, Aysel Berket, Ferdi Günay. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2019; (3) *İngilizce 7* by Aydan Aykanat Erdem, Turgut Balcı, Kader Duran Özdi. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2019; (4) *Mastermind İngilizce 8* by Binnur İlter, İlknur İzgi, Esra Çavuşer Özdemir, Ayşegül Türkeri Yeter, Zeliha Tuğba Çavuşer Yünlü. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2019.



## Procedure

The study aimed to investigate the nature of the contents of the selected coursebooks to reveal whether or not they attempt to teach learners the answering system of English language and raise awareness to prevent first language interference on the current issue. To this end, the activities in each coursebook were examined meticulously one by one. Firstly, each activity in the coursebooks was investigated to determine if it involved any types of practices or presentations of asking and answering questions in a general sense, including *wh*- questions, polar questions, and alternative questions, and the ones which did were marked and counted in number. This provided data about the rate of polar questions compared to the other type of questions included in the book, in line with the first question of the study. Secondly, the activities involving polar questions were distinguished from the others and quantified. Finally, the distinguished activities were analyzed in further detail to specify the negative forms included. It was aimed to realize the quality of the negative polar questions included, the actual concern of the study. All the quantitative data dealing with the numbers of the counted activities are presented in a table for a better perspective. By the help of the obtained data and further examinations of the selected activities, certain comments are put forward and the questions of the study are answered.

## FINDINGS

The first question of the study investigated the rates of the activities involving polar and negative polar questions included in the coursebooks. To this end, all the activities in each coursebook involving any type of questions were determined and the frequency levels of each type of questions were disclosed. Table 1 presents the frequency levels and percentage values of all the activities involving questions, activities involving polar questions, and activities involving negative polar questions.

**Table 1. Frequencies and approximate percentage values of the activities**

	Activities involving questions		polar questions		(-) polar questions	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
<b>İngilizce 5</b>	83	100%	53	63%	0	0%
<b>İngilizce 6</b>	60	100%	23	38%	0	0%
<b>İngilizce 7</b>	115	100%	32	27%	1	0,8%
<b>İngilizce 8</b>	98	100%	42	42%	1	0,9%

According to the table, coursebooks represent variations in the frequencies of the activities involving both questions and polar questions. Coursebook *İngilizce 5* presents a total of 83 activities involving any type of questions. Polar questions cover an area in these activities at the rate of 63%, with the frequency level of 53. This data aver that more than half of the activities embrace polar questions either by practicing or presenting the forms of this type of questions. Inclusion of negative forms of polar questions has been neglected, as the table suggests a rate of 0% for the negative polar questions. One way in which the coursebook *İngilizce 6* is similar to the coursebook *İngilizce 5* is the rate of the inclusion of negative polar questions. *İngilizce 6* subsumes a total of 60 activities involving questions. These activities contain 23 activities dealing with polar questions, which is equal to the percentage value of 38%. This score indicates an area less than half of the question activities in total, and is lower than the score represented by *İngilizce 5*. However, none of them deals with negative polar questions out of these 23 activities. On the other hand, *İngilizce 7* attempts to promote polar questions at the rate of 27%, a score lower than both *İngilizce 5* and *İngilizce 6*. *İngilizce 7* contains one activity including the negative form of a polar question, at the rate of 0,8%. Lastly, *Mastermind İngilizce 8* embodies polar questions within its content at the rate of 42% of all the activities, nearly half of the activities dealing with questions. Out of the 42 activities dealing with polar questions, one of them included a negative form of a polar question, which is equal to 0,9%.



The second question of the study investigated the efficacy of the activities involving polar questions in terms of teaching how to answer negative polar questions in English. As the data revealed, coursebooks contain activities focusing on polar questions at certain levels. However, the distribution of negative polar questions is extremely limited. Only two coursebooks, *İngilizce 7* and *Mastermind İngilizce 8*, include two activities presenting the negative forms of polar questions. Surprisingly enough to observe this poor level of focus on negative polar questions, the efficacy of the activities in *İngilizce 7* and *Mastermind İngilizce 8* is fairly open to discussion. The activity presenting the negative form of a polar question in *Mastermind İngilizce 8* is presented in Figure 1.

**Activity 1**

Study the sentences in the boxes. Work in pairs. Add one more example in each box.

<p><b>Expressing Responsibilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I'm responsible for cooking dinner.</li> <li>● S/he is in charge of taking out the garbage.</li> <li>● Don't you think it is necessary to tidy up your room?</li> <li>● It's time to do the laundry.</li> <li>● .....</li> </ul>	<p><b>Expressing Obligation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do you have to help your parents in housework? - Well, I must help my parents to set the table. - I must help my brother to do his homework.</li> <li>● We must respect the elder people/ each other.</li> <li>● My brother has to respect my rights.</li> <li>● .....</li> </ul>
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Figure 1. A sample from *Mastermind İngilizce 8*, p. 98

As it can be seen in Figure 1, this activity can hardly be considered to highlight the nature of negative polar questions in English because it excludes the aspect of answering patterns. The form is only given in a tip box and it remained as it is without any practice or further presentation of the possible answers. The case is the same for the other activity in *İngilizce 7* which is presented in Figure 2.

1

Look at the picture below. This is a tiny part of our universe. It's our galaxy, "Milky Way". Where is our Solar System?

Can't you find? Now put your pen's tip on the picture. Yes, our Solar System is smaller than that. Let's look closer to our Solar System.

Figure 2. A sample from *İngilizce 7*, p. 120

Interestingly, there are not any other activities in any of the coursebooks presenting or practicing the negative forms of polar questions. Based on these results, it can be said that the activities involved in the coursebooks are not adequate to provide learners with the knowledge about the answering system of English language. Accordingly, it is difficult for learners to raise awareness on the issue based on the limited resources in the examined coursebooks, thus, first language interference seems in its high possibility to occur in learners' interlanguages.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The objective of the current study was to draw attention to a point which has been relatively neglected in the literature. Documentation of the different answering systems in terms of answering polar





questions, truth-based and polarity-based systems, in the literature formed the basis of the present study. Studies presented that the polarity-based system is common in Western languages, while the truth-based system seems to invade the languages spoken in the Eastern areas of the world. This case was taken into account from the perspective of language teaching. In link with the different answering features of languages and the concept of first language interference, learners were hypothesized to face problems while answering polar questions and transfer the characteristics of their first languages to the target language negatively. After all, this difference across languages is a well-known problem for oriental learners of European languages (Holmberg, 2016). For the context of the present study, Turkish learners of English were kept on the horizon. After describing the characteristics of the answering system of Turkish language and the distinction between Turkish and English, the importance of teaching how to answer negative polar questions was emphasized. Next, several coursebooks published by MoNE in Turkey were descriptively analyzed to investigate the activities displaying polar questions. Quantities of the frequency levels were presented and expressed as percentages. As a result, it was found that the coursebooks include activities with polar questions at certain levels. However, little or arguably no emphasis was put on negative polar questions. Only the coursebooks *İngilizce 7* and *Mastermind İngilizce 8* embrace two activities presenting the negative forms of polar questions, however, it is disputable to what extent they can be regarded as proper samples.

The present study suggests that considerable attention should be paid on the discussed issue. Polar questions account for a major part of daily spoken English and it is of great importance for learners of English to master in answering this type of questions. Because, the distinction between languages generally leads speakers from different linguistic backgrounds to misunderstandings and embarrassments during conversations (Holmberg, 2016). However, as the data revealed, national English coursebooks in Turkey overlooked this issue. More practices of negative polar questions with answers should be included in the coursebooks. As a matter of fact, it is noticeable in the coursebooks that some activities could easily be adapted to display the aspects of the answering system of English. For instance, consider the activity presented in Figure 3.



Figure 3. A sample from *İngilizce 6*, p. 106

This example activity from *İngilizce 6* in Figure 3 can go under a little change and get adapted to reflect an answer to a negative question. For example, the questions that the speaker asks in the activity could be converted to 'Can't you build a house?' and 'Aren't you a tailor?', or similar questions with negation could be added such as 'Can't you cook?' with the corresponding answer 'No, I can't'. In an adapted version, the activity would look like as presented in Figure 4.





Figure 4. An adapted suggestion of the activity in İngilizce 6, p. 106

By this way, learners can realize the identical answers with the same meaning to differently structured polar questions, as it is argued that English neutral and negative polar questions are answered in an identical way. Another example is presented in Figure 5.

**Talking about Experiences**

- Have you ever been to ...?
  - Yes, I have.
  - No, I have not.
  - I have been to Side before.
  - I have never been to Mardin.
- .....

Figure 5. A sample from Mastermind İngilizce 8, p. 86

The example from *Mastermind İngilizce 8* in Figure 5 can be adapted as well. This presentation in this example perfectly indicates that the positive answer particle is typically followed by a positive sentence and negative answer particle by a negative one in English. In addition to the given expressions, the negative form of the proposed question in the activity can be placed next to it with the same answer particles to take the attention of the learners as presented in Figure 6.

**Talking about Experiences**

● Have you ever been to ...?	Haven't you ever been to ...?
- Yes, I have.	- Yes, I have.
- No, I have not.	- No, I have not.
- I have been to Side before.	
- I have never been to Mardin.	
● .....	● .....

Figure 6. An adapted suggestion of the activity in Mastermind İngilizce 8, p. 86

These examples can be extended by many samples. These two adapted suggestions are adequate to demonstrate the way that activities could perfectly involve negative polar questions.

It is inevitable for learners of English to involve in conversations in which they would ask and answer negative polar questions. In this context, they should be aware of the differences from their native language Turkish to prevent misunderstandings in English conversations. Otherwise, for instance, the



question 'Haven't you ever been to England?' in a regular English conversation might be answered as 'Yes, I haven't' by a Turkish learner of English, which would generate an embarrassing situation for the speaker. Although special focus has been neglected in the national English coursebooks used in Turkey, some open-ended activities could be directed by the teachers to serve this purpose. For instance, the following activity in Figure 7 expects learners to create interrogative expressions according to the given expressions. While practicing this activity, teachers could encourage learners to create negative polar questions and explain the way that negative polar questions are answered in English.

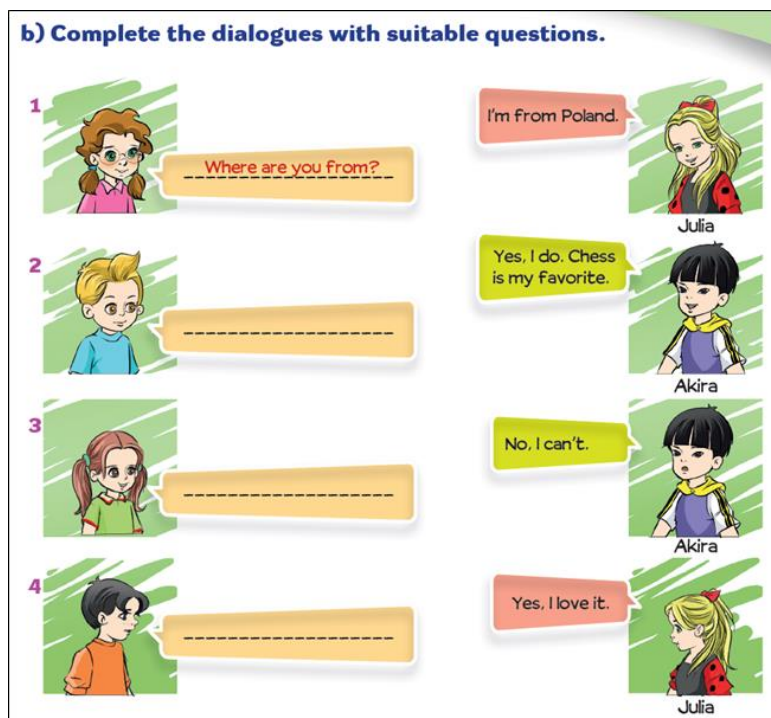


Figure 7. A sample from İngilizce 5, p. 52

As an example, the second gap in the activity in Figure 7 would be typically filled in as 'Do you love chess?' by the learners. However, teachers could promote the negative forms of the expressions and help learners to fill in the gap with 'Don't you love chess?', indicating that the answer expression would remain the same. The same procedure could be applied to the other gaps and other activities as well. There are many activities in the coursebooks that can be adapted or directed for the current purpose. In this frame, teachers are important figures to take responsibility until the English coursebooks are designed more sensitively on this issue.

As a concluding remark, it should be noted that coursebooks seem to put great emphasis on the practices of *wh*- questions rather than polar questions. The importance of *wh*- questions in languages is indisputable. However, studies show that polar questions are frequently used in English, thus, they deserve as much attention as *wh*- questions in English teaching materials. It is beneficial for learners if teachers keep these mentioned areas in mind while teaching English or designing English teaching materials.

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