Reflection of Gender Norms in Kyrgyz and Turkish Tales on Social Life

Hatice Selcen Aslan[1*] 🆔
Ayşe Güler Küçükturan[1] 🆔

[1] Başkent University, Faculty of Education, Ankara, Türkiye, sbingol@baskent.edu.tr gulerk@baskent.edu.tr

*Corresponding author

Abstract: The messages on gender roles given through fairy tales, which contain elements related to the structure of society, cause children to internalize the knowledge and behavioral patterns they have acquired since their early ages, to be exhibited at later ages. This study was carried out to scrutinize the gender norms in Kyrgyz and Turkish fairy tales, revealing their similarities and differences, and examining the reflection of these norms on social life. A case study model, one of the qualitative research methods, was used and data was collected through document review and interview techniques. The documents (fables), used in the study, were determined using the stratified purposeful sampling method. Among the tales reached in the first stage, the ones in the realistic tale type and enriched with extraordinary elements were selected: a Kyrgyz and a Turkish tale with a family theme were selected from these tales. Tales were examined in terms of the gender norms they contain. The contents of the tales were analyzed in detail with the descriptive analysis technique. Individual interviews were conducted with 2 Kyrgyz students living in Türkiye and 2 Turkish students living in Kyrgyzstan, and the data were analyzed with the descriptive analysis technique. In the research, different gender norms in both tales were determined and it was concluded that these norms were reflected in social life. These norms have emerged in the form of supporting the patriarchal structure in the Turkish fairy tale while in the Kyrgyz fairy tale, the woman is considered to be precious.

Keywords: Metaverse in Education, Systematic Literature Review, Virtual Learning Environments (Vles), Educational Technology Integration, Pedagogical Innovation

1. Introduction

The way societies live and believe is shaped by the transfer of internalized stereotypes into life. Therefore, early childhood is very important in terms of acquired and internalized stereotypes. It is difficult to change the knowledge and behavioral patterns acquired during this period in the following years (Temellioğlu, 2021). Fairy tales embellish the moral norms and culture of the society they belong to with some motifs, conveyed to their readers and listeners through extraordinary heroes. Thus, they are of great importance for the development and education of children, who constitute their most important audience (Iğdır, 2014; Pawlowska, 2021; Yılmaz, 2012).

Fairy tales, which are the cultural heritage of the societies and derived from oral tradition, are generally loved by children. It is distinguished from other folklore and narrative stories, such as myths and legends, which involve worldviews, traditions, and belief in the truth of undesired events. However, it is extremely difficult to find a concrete definition or boundary that would fully encompass the fairy tale genre; in fairy tales, the themes and consequences of events are so broad that their elements often do not match each other (Lester, 2015). Nevertheless, the fable could be considered to belong to a type of storytelling that typically involves legendary fantasy characters and explicitly moral tales (Rahman, 2017). In other words, a fairy tale is a type of narrative that is not related to reality, is a product of imagination, and does not attempt to convince anyone. Fairy tales influence listeners and draw them into their own imagination due to the irrationality of their heroes, supernatural subjects, and imaginary events and situations (Bilkan, 2009).

The ubiquity of tales allows the genre to be inclusive and integrate a variety of different stories. Since human beings have encoded a lot of the information they have obtained about nature into myths, epics, stories and tales, they have tended to ensure their continuity on earth and to continue their lineage.

Moreover, man's struggle against nature has also been decisive in his sphere of power. Therefore, within cultural continuity, the possibility of heroes, carrying such a seed of knowledge in the form of displayed power should be considered (Ölçer Özünel, 2015). However, two elements that all stories in the genre share are the acceptance of the fantastic as plausible and the ability of societies to teach a moral lesson to their members. These two alleged components of the fairy tale genre are based on the fact why so many different tales share a mystical foundation (Lester, 2015).

Fairy tales exist in all cultures and, as is known, they are an important part of Turkish culture. Although the events fictionalized in the content of fairy tales are constructed as products of imagination, they are from our lives and have traces of real life. In order for the fairy tale text to have a social meaning, the teller of the tale must tell it in front of a certain group. The fact that he belongs to that group allows him to reflect the audience's ideas and feelings into the tale. Hence, the values and structure of the society to which that group belongs shape the content of the tale (Diaz-Faes et al., 2024). The events and heroes in the tales of the Turkish world are often structured in a way that includes contrasts. What is told in fairy tales is generally about the struggle of good with evil, beauty with ugliness, and poverty with wealth. At the beginning of most tales, the good ones are portrayed as failures, but in the end, they achieve success. While the good ones are rewarded, the bad ones are punished alike. In fairy tales, characters must suffer and be patient in order to achieve happiness, because it cannot be achieved without a struggle and effort (Bakırcı, 2015; Bozkırlı, 2018).

Kyrgyz people, one of the Turkish tribes, have a very rich oral culture which contains epics, legends, proverbs, folk songs, and tales. Information about their rich history, their ideas about future and their life experiences could be found in their oral heritage. Manas Epic is one of the great example for Kyrgyz oral culture (Abalova, 2019; Singh, 2022). Fairy tales, which contain a lot of information about the traditions, philosophy, and history of the Kyrgyz society, also contain traces of natural events. Thus, it is possible to see the people's wishes and ideals for the future from the extraordinary ideas and thoughts of fairy tales (Doğan, 2009). Kyrgyz people use the term "cöö comok" for the tale, which is expressed with different names among Turkish tribes. However, "comok" is mostly used for epics and narrators are called "comokists". The word "cöö comok" is separated from the tale or epic by adding the word cöö (pedestrian) to the beginning of the word comok, which refers to being told in prose form, apart from poetic elements. It is seen that epics are given priority in studies on Kyrgyz folklore. However, the tale did not receive the attention that the epics, particularly the Manas epic, received. For this reason, it is not often possible to find an independent study on Kyrgyz tales in general (Karadavut, 2015).

Since antiquity, the Kyrgyz have preserved their unique national heritage through oral traditions, similar to other cultures, passing it down from one generation to the next by word of mouth. The Kyrgyz people possess a wealth of fairy tales that emphasize virtues such as honesty, justice, good conduct, and moral education, conveying these key themes (Sotvoldiev, 2022). The structure of Kyrgyz tales is not very strong, with the beginning, transition, and ending sections sometimes comprising just a word or two. Almost all of the texts in printed sources appear as processed texts. The structuring of events and the inclusion of epic elements in the heroes are important features of Kyrgyz tales. The birth of a hero, the characteristics of the horse he owns, the companions he acts with, and his efforts to achieve success in the end contain epic features. Many of the Kyrgyz tales are in the form of long texts. There are tales which could reach 8 or 10 pages (Karadavut, 2015).

In Kyrgyz tales, in addition to characters such as giants, dragons, witches and copper-nosed creatures, there are also flying carpets, flying horses, unfolding tables, alpine blackbirds and some magical tools. The thoughts of the people reflected in Kyrgyz tales are generally about being fair, being cruel, friends, enemies, good will and bad will. In some tales, heroes fight against powerful elements such as the seven-headed dragon, while in others they fight against witches or giants. The places, where these extraordinary wars took place, are not ordinary places. Struggles take place in places that are not easily

accessible, such as the sky, underground, mountain peaks or the desert. In fairy tales, heroes fall into distinct categories. Firstly, there are the main heroes who drive the story forward. Secondly, their assistants support them in their quests. The third group comprises adversaries like dragons, witches, and giants who oppose the heroes. Additionally, heroes possess enchanted objects such as flying carpets, magic tables, daggers, and rings, which play crucial roles. Another category includes fantastical mounts like winged horses and alpine blackbirds, adding further enchantment to these tales. The real heroines of the tales are the smart lady and her smart daughters. The reason why they appear in fairy tales is their beauty and intelligence. They help, advise, and guide the heroes. These girls play a big role in helping the heroes to defeat the enemy and perform some difficult tasks (Kaçmaz, 2020; Özen, 2008) Like the characters in fairy tales, Kyrgyz female heroes are depicted as young, beautiful, and intelligent, often portrayed as superior to men. This portrayal serves as a balancing element against the relatively less pronounced sexual oppression in the nomadic Kyrgyz society compared to settled communities (Dor, 2022).

Fairy tales provide pleasure to individuals by portraying fascinating life events in a delightful, engaging, extraordinary, and flawless manner, often conveying exemplary ideas that blend elements of imagination and reality (Sobirjonovna, 2022). Fairy tales also attract the attention of young children because they contain extraordinary elements, heroic stories, and the victory of the good guys (Yılmaz, 2012). Thanks to this structure, fairy tales provide closeness to young children who have a wide imagination. In a way, fairy tales reflect the inner world of children. For this reason, it gives children great pleasure, who are fascinated with the mystical stories.

On the other hand, it is believed that fairy tales have an effective role in the education of children because they reveal a primitive way of thinking that is very close to the way children think (Hohr, 2000) because they have the ability to influence the virtues, expectations, entertainments and aspirations of the members of society (Lester, 2015). Therefore, while children enjoy listening to fairy tales, their development is also supported. Fairy tales are especially effective in cognitive, language and social development. It enables the development of mental activities by activating the imagination. Through fairy tales, children are provided with skills such as reaching a conclusion by analyzing events, distinguishing between good and bad by identifying with the personality traits of heroes, acquiring social skills such as making friends and helping each other, and improving their native language by acquiring new words and structures (Şahin, 2011). In this respect, fairy tales are used as a reliable stimulus to give advice to children, particularly in early childhood education. It is conveyed via the aim of giving a moral message or advice. Children are guided to delve into a tale and then indirectly invited to imitate the message, which would later become a foundational trait in their personality when they grow up (Sayer et al., 2018).

When parents want to share certain experiences with children, they could use fairy tales as a strategic tool to convey their true intentions in a way that pleases the children. Children with wide imaginations are very impressed by fairy tales due to their extraordinary elements, heroism, and the fact that the good people usually win. The important thing is to understand the "hint" of the tale, which in essence fully corresponds to the nature of a small child, close to their mindset, and to correctly convey its meaning to young children. Through fairy tales, children are conveyed with the distinction between good and bad, the moral principles and cultural values of the society (Sobirjonovich & Bahromjon, 2022). With all these features of fairy tales, it is aimed to develop moral qualities, kindness, generosity, diligence, and accuracy in children. However, Sezer (2013) stated that writers, interested in children's literature, often question the negative effects of classical fairy tales on children based on violence. He stated that the codes, ingrained in the sub ego during childhood, continue their functionality as an ideological tool, particularly by putting pressure on the female character, and naturally affect the male identity. In this respect, fairy tales are important tools through which cultural expectations, regarding

gender are conveyed to children. Fairy tales, which contain some culture-specific elements related to gender, cause the internalization of gender norms (İshakoğlu, 2020; Meland, 2020).

Children code and organize in their minds the gender schema they develop by observing the society they live in (Bem, 1983). In addition to children's observation of the adults around them, fairy tales that transmit the culture of the society are also effective in shaping social roles. Gender-related norms, shaped in line with culture, are reflected in the event pattern in fairy tales and the personality characteristics and roles of the heroes. By identifying with these heroes, children acquire the gender roles reflected in the tale. However, events and concepts, related to society's gender norms that are difficult for a preschool child to understand, cause them to internalize the knowledge and behavioral patterns acquired at a young age later to exhibit in following ages (Shaheen et al., 2019; Temellioğlu, 2021).

Even though it derives its source from individual desires, its survival depends on social acceptance since it is based mostly on folk narrative tradition. For this reason, comparing the popularization rates of fairy tales from different ideologies allows us to monitor what the average culture absorbs and where it resists. Tales, involving sexism and gender segregation, advocate the system/government rather than questioning it. Also, they reinforce the pattern of love and family relations despite its drawbacks, thus, they become widespread and preferred. This situation aims to enable children to adapt to society by causing gender roles to be transferred as a template and the formation of gender stereotypes of the society (Sezer, 2013).

For this reason, determining how gender-related norms are included in the fairy tales of two different Turkish societies and examining how these elements are transferred to social life is important in terms of the use of fairy tales in the educational processes of young children. Therefore, this study aims to compare the position of individuals in the family, their status, their responsibilities, their functions, and gender norms in Kyrgyz and Turkish cultures through fairy tales.

This study is important in terms of revealing how important fairy tales are, as a part of cultural heritage, in transferring social and gender norms in children's education. Additionally, the study of Kyrgyz and Turkish tales offers a valuable research area to understand the gender norms and social structures of both societies. Therefore, "How do stereotypes about gender roles in fairy tales take place in Kyrgyz and Turkish societies?" and "How do the stereotypes in fairy tales reflect on social life?" questions were answered.

2. Method

2.1. Research model

This study is a case study from qualitative research methods. A case study is an empirical research method that studies a current phenomenon within its real-life framework, is used when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clear-cut and there is more than one evidence or data source (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016; Yin, 2009).

2.2. Data collection

The data of the research was obtained through documents and interviews.

2.3. Documents

The documents of the research were determined through the stratified purposeful sampling method. The following steps were used during document selection. In the first stage, in order to reach Kyrgyz and Turkish tales, the resources in the National Thesis Center of the Publications and Documentation Department of the Council of Higher Education were reviewed. In the second stage, the obtained tales

were examined in terms of their types and those that were realistic tales enriched with extraordinary elements were determined. In the last stage, a Kyrgyz and a Turkish fairy tale that overlapped with the purpose of the research and contained the theme of family were selected. While selecting these tales, an expert in Turkish Language and Literature was consulted. "The Seven Sons of the Old Woman", selected from Kyrgyz tales, and "The Fairy Hand", selected from Turkish tales, were examined in terms of the gender norms they contain. That's why, in this study, a Turkish and a Kyrgyz tale were chosen as texts. This study is limited to two tales that are assumed to reflect Kyrgyz and Turkish tales.

Information about the documents is given in Table 1.

Table 1

Selected Fairy Tales as Document

Fairy Tale Name	Society to which it belongs	Writer
The Old Woman's Seven Sons	Kyrgyz	Anonymous
Haunted Hand	Turkish	Anonymous

2.4. Interviews

Interviews were conducted with 2 Kyrgyz students living in Türkiye and 2 Turkish students living in Kyrgyzstan, selected by easily accessible sampling method. It was taken to ensure that the participants were equal in number, male and female, that their education levels were equivalent, and that they had lived in that country for at least 1 year.

Information about the participants is given in Table 2.

Table 2

Information about Interviewed Participants

Participant Code	Gender	Place of birth	Country of residence/Life expectancy	Educational Status
K1	Female	Kyrgyzstan	Türkiye /5 years	Graduate
K2	Male	Kyrgyzstan	Türkiye /4 years	Undergraduate
T1	Female	Türkiye	Kyrgyzstan/7 years	Graduate
T2	Male	Türkiye	Kyrgyzstan/1 year	Undergraduate

2.5. Data analysis

Both documents and interviews' data were analyzed by descriptive analysis. After analysis data were presented with displays and tables. All findings were supported with "quotations".

2.6. Documents

The descriptive analysis process was carried out in 4 stages. First, a framework was created for data analysis in terms of the gender norms contained in the fairy tales. According to this framework, it was determined under which categories and themes the data would be collected and which themes would be arranged according to which categories. The data obtained was read and arranged in detail according to the thematic framework created. The edited data were described and supported with direct quotes where necessary. The identified findings were interpreted. (Creswell, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Seidman, 2006). Accordingly, fairy tale heroes were evaluated under 3 themes: mood and personality traits, physical characteristics of the heroes, and actions attributed to the heroes, within the framework of the concepts attributed to them as men and women.

2.7. Interview

5 open-ended questions were prepared for the interview part of the research. After receiving expert opinions, the interview was conducted with 4 open-ended questions, with 1 question removed. The interviews were conducted online with 2 Kyrgyz students living in Türkiye and 2 Turkish students living in Kyrgyzstan. In the interviews, "What are your views on gender equality and its applicability in Kyrgyzstan and Türkiye?", "Do you think that Kyrgyz and Turkish societies have gender stereotypes in general? Explain", "How would you evaluate the situation of gender equality/inequality in educational institutions (kindergarten, primary school, high school, university, etc.)?", "Do you think gender roles are reflected in fairy tales? How?" questions were asked.

The data obtained from the interview were analyzed with the descriptive analysis technique and norms regarding gender in fairy tales; gender norms reflected in society; Gender norms in educational institutions were examined under three main themes.

2.8. Trustworthiness

The items, under each heading obtained from the analysis, were coded independently by two researchers. In the analysis of the document and the interview, the percentage of agreement between independent raters was calculated separately using the formula (Number of Agreement / (Number of Agreement + Number of Disagreements) x100). Compliance percentages in document analysis were 0.91; in the interview analysis, it was found to be .86.

2.9. Ethical issues

Ethics committee permission for the study was received with the letter of Başkent University Academic Evaluation Coordinatorship dated 24.01.2023 and numbered E-62310886-605.99-200150.

3. Findings

The findings of the research were examined under two headings: The findings obtained from the analysis of the tales and the findings obtained from the analysis of the interviews.

3.1. Fairy tales' findings

The chosen fairy tales were read in detail by the researchers and the words and descriptions containing gender norms for men and women, were conceptualized by placing them under the headings of "mood and personality traits, physical characteristics of the heroes, actions attributed to the hero" and are presented below.

3.2. Kyrgyz fairy tale "The old woman and her seven sons"

In the Kyrgyz fairy tale "The old woman and her seven sons", male heroes are often characterized by their physical strength, courage, and dexterity, while female heroes are less involved in the main plot of the tale. While the seven sons, the main characters of the tale, form the plot, the old woman appears only as a figure listening to the story of her children.

While male heroes stand out with their physical strength and skills, female heroes play more supporting or secondary roles. In the tale, the old woman only listens to her children's story and plays a guiding role but does not take any action that affects the events of the story. It is, in the tale, also emphasized that men are active and strong, and the female heroes play a role that helps or supports them.

Figure 1

The Old Woman's Seven Sons (Kyrgyz tale)
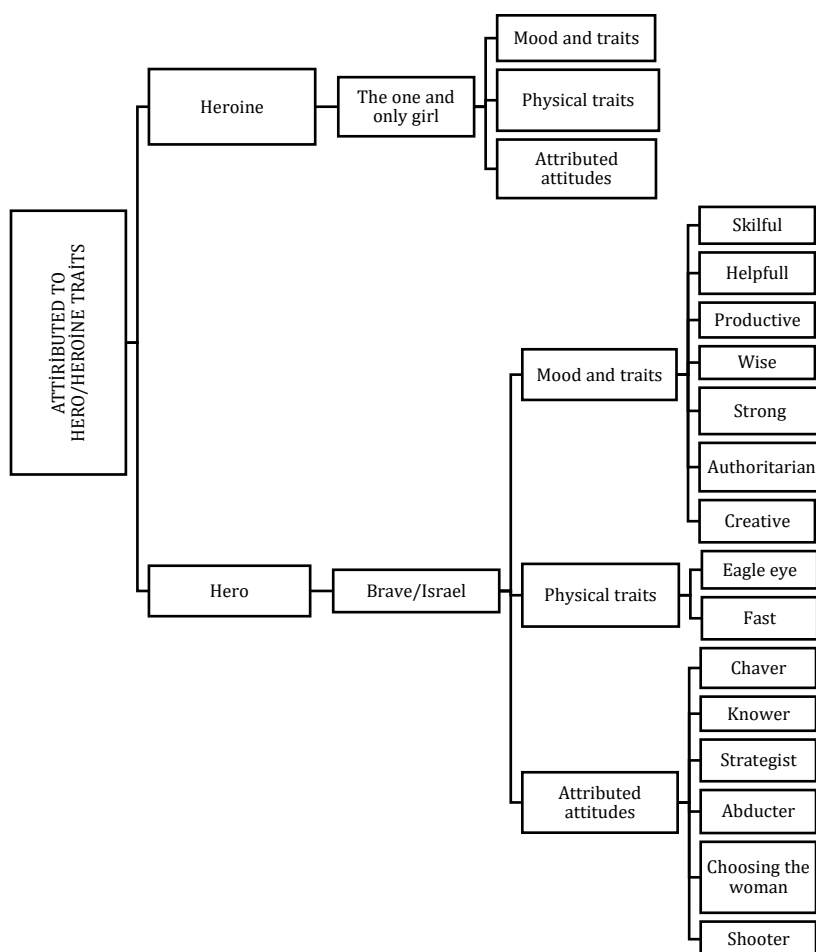
In Figure 1, the traits attributed to the heroes in the Kyrgyz fairy tale are categorized separately for men and women. Accordingly, with the description of 'Brave and Israel', it is seen that the mood and personality traits of being strong, helpful, skillful, authoritarian, creative, productive and wise are attributed to men. At the same time, men are given the physical characteristics of speed and eagle eyes and the actions of being aware, following, choosing the women, abductor, shooter and being a strategist. In the Kyrgyz fairy tale, it is emphasized that women are very valuable with the description of 'the one and only girl', but in the Kyrgyz fairy tale, there are no descriptions of mood, personality, physical traits, and attributed actions.

3.3. Turkish fairy tale "Perili El"

In the Turkish fairy tale "Perili El", the female protagonist is depicted in a role limited to being busy with household chores, while her husband, the male protagonist, is praised. A woman's value is measured by doing housework and making her husband happy, which shows that a woman's success and value are limited to housework. It appears as a gender role for the husband not to do any work and for the woman to be responsible for all household chores. However, in the tale, fairies, assisting the female character by doing their work, symbolize the woman's strengthening with external support, not her own power. Besides, the evaluation of women in terms of their housework and happiness throughout the tale reflects an approach that reinforces gender roles and limits women's freedom. Such stereotypes are evidence that women are prevented from discovering their full potential.

Figure 2

Haunted Hand (Turkish tale)
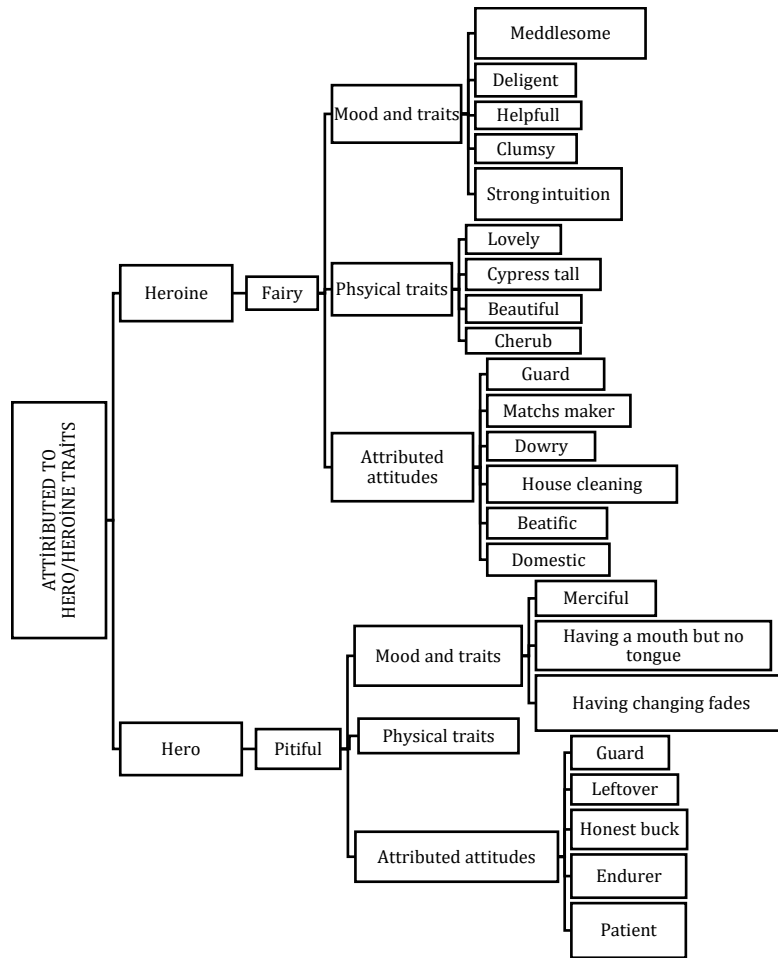
In Figure 2, evaluated within the scope of the research, it was observed that the traits of being merciful is attributed to the man by using the description of "pitiful" and comparing his mood and personality traits with changing fades and having a mouth but not a tongue. Along with these mood traits, men are also honest buck, protecting, endure, and being patient. In Turkish fairy tale, with the description of the woman as a "fairy", it was emphasized that she is lovely, cypress tall, has a cherub and is beautiful. With these traits, the woman is seen as intuitive, helpful, and ingenious on the other hand, and as meddlesome and clumsy. In addition to these traits attributed to the woman in the tale, she is given the duties of dowry and cleaning, marriage, and domesticity.

3.4. The interviews findings

Interviews with participants were recorded and transcribed by the researchers. Based on the codes and categories obtained as a result of the content analysis; "norms regarding gender in fairy tales, gender norms reflected in society, gender norms in educational institutions" themes were reached.

3.5. Norms regarding gender in fairy tales

In line with the participants' opinions, the gender norms in the fairy tales they listened to in childhood are under the theme of roles attributed to gender in fairy tales; that are grouped into 3 categories: 'women's role', 'man's role' and 'management/lifestyle'. These are given in Table 3.

Table 3

Norms Regarding Gender in Fairy Tales

Theme	Category	Codes
Norms Regarding Gender in Fairy Tales	Women's role	Fair Clever Executive
	Man's role	Strong They have strong intuition
	Management/Lifestyle	Equal participation of women and men in management Impact of nomadic lifestyle

Kyrgyz tale "The old woman and her seven sons", the emphasis that men are active and, strong and the female heroes take on a role that helps or supports them is also reflected in the participants' statements.

K2: In our tales, there are no situations where women are weak and waiting to be rescued and men are strong because, according to our traditions from the past, the understanding that men and women are on an equal level prevails.

K1: Tales are told in which justice is manifested, a girl or a shepherd from the people comes and replaces the Khan, justice comes first.

K1: There was no tradition of storytelling in my family. I stepped into the world of fairy tales in primary school. My favorite fairy tale is "Together We Are Stronger". A fairy tale in which the girl is very smart. The power of women is also reflected in the legends of Kyrgyz history. The protagonist of the Manas epic is a woman. The female mind and the existence of women are constantly shown.

T1: Now there is a proverb among Kyrgyz people. "Kızgın kır çaçı ulu". What does this mean? He actually talks about the value of the girl. They express that the girl's mind is also valuable, and she is also valuable. There are tales about this. She's a smart long-haired girl.

3.6. Gender norms reflected in society

In fairy tales, it was seen that marriage comes to the fore in social life. It was understood that the happiness and value of women are related to the fulfillment of the duties assigned to them at home. However, although the emphasis on equality between men and women in Kyrgyz society is seen in the statements of the participants, there are also statements in the press that violence against women has increased in recent years.

According to the opinions of the participants, it was seen that the roles of men and women in social and domestic life are emphasized under this theme, which consists of 4 categories: "family structure and marriage", "career choice", "faith and management", "violence and freedom of the press". The data, obtained from the interviews, are shown in Table 4 and the statements of the participants are included in quotations.

Table 4

Reflection of Gender Norms on Society in Kyrgyzstan and Türkiye

Theme	Category	Codes
Gender norms reflected in society	Family Structure and Marriage	Valuing women Equality in household chores Pressure to marry Restrictions on women after marriage Inequality in childcare
	Career choice	The effect of gender on career choice
	Faith/Management	Equality between men and women in management
	Violence/Freedom of the Press	The impact of belief in management

K2: Since we are an Eastern society or because some of our traditions have become corrupted, restrictions are placed on personal freedom compared to before marriage, such as women should stay at home after marriage.

T1: In a Kyrgyz house, there is a place where the eldest person sits. Little ones cannot sit. Age is important, not gender. Whoever is older sits down. If the woman is older, she sits. They are very protective of their traditions.

K2: I have never seen discrimination between men and women during a recruitment process. We see that women take part in all professions. We see that women work in the army, police forces and other state institutions where men work.

K1: While Kyrgyzstan was under the rule of the Soviet Union for 70 years, there was atheism. We can see more religious influence in Türkiye. There is no gender discrimination in professions in Kyrgyzstan. There is no such thing as a male profession. The situation is changing in Türkiye now, but in the past, some professions were generally preferred by men.

K1: Currently, violence against women is increasing in Kyrgyzstan. Since there is freedom of the press, these issues also reach outside Kyrgyzstan. Violence against women is widely reported in the press when there is a death.

T2: They care about their women. For example, if a man is sitting and a woman is standing on a bus, ones will definitely get up and give her a seat without asking anything. This could even be true even if the woman standing is a young girl her age or younger.

3.7. Gender norms in educational institutions

It was seen that there are differences between the two societies in the reflection of gender stereotypes in education. This difference is attributed by the participants to the fact that Kyrgyzstan remained under the Soviet regime for many years. In addition, the fact that women are at the forefront in Kyrgyz epics is also reflected in social life from a cultural perspective.

According to the opinions of the participants, a theme was determined over 3 categories are given in Table 5. In the manager selection category, it was stated that in Kyrgyzstan, managers are equally distributed between men and women, while in Türkiye, men are dominant. In the class arrangement category, it was stated that girls and boys sit side by side and the distribution of responsibilities in the classroom is equal. In the field of teachers in Kyrgyz, there is no difference in branches according to

gender, in Turks, women in social and human sciences; It was emphasized that men are dominant in the field of science.

Table 5

Gender Norms in Educational Institutions

Theme	Category	Codes
	Manager selection	Female-male ratio in management
	Class arrangement	Settlement of girls and boys
Gender Norms in		Distribution of in-class responsibilities
Educational Institutions	Branch of Teachers	Differentiation of branch according to gender

K1: I studied at the Turkish-Kyrgyz high school in Kyrgyzstan. We had both Kyrgyz and Turkish manager. The Kyrgyz manager changed twice, both women. The Turkish manager changed 4 times and all four were men. Our female teachers were teaching social-humanities courses. Men were always taking courses such as physics, chemistry, engineering and informatics.

K2: I can say that there is a social perception in society that girls are more organized and can take responsibility at an early age. That's why a girl and a boy were seated in the same row.

T1: In Kyrgyzstan, our department head is already a woman. Generally speaking, when we look at our other departments, there are men and women. Hence equalizing in number. I studied in primary and high schools in Türkiye. Of course, our administrators in those primary and high schools were men. However, what we observe now is that we can see that there are many female managers.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

Fairy tales are a part of cultural heritage and are an instructive or entertaining literary genre that usually contains fantastic or imaginary elements and enables the transfer of social structure between generations. Fairy tales are living structures because they are transferred from generation to generation, develop, continue to exist from past to present, and transmit their content in different time periods (Bür, 2019). Thus, the type of fairy tales that suit children's mindset and attract their attention are used for educational purposes to convey the expectations of society to younger generations.

This study was carried out to determine the gender norms contained in Turkish and Kyrgyz fairy tales and how they are transferred to social life. The Kyrgyz tale "The Seven Sons of the Old Woman" and the Turkish tale "The Haunted Hand" were examined by researchers and the gender norms they contained were determined. Individual interviews were held with 2 Kyrgyz and 2 Turkish participants to determine how these norms are reflected in social life. The gender norms, attributed to heroes and heroines in fairy tales, were evaluated under the headings of 'moods and personality traits', 'physical characteristics', 'attributed actions'.

In Turkish fairy tales, women are described as 'fairy', on the one hand, the characteristics of being lovely, meddlesorce, diligent and helpful are defined, on the other hand, they are stated as incompetence traits. It was observed that women were distinguished by their physical beauty, as well as being married and cleaning the house. Ölçer (2003) stated that especially the married woman must keep her husband in order to ensure family integrity and continuity, and explains that in this way, the continuity of the gender role is ensured by transferring it to the daughter. By using descriptions such as "a man with a mouth but no tongue, a man like a lamb", men are assigned the characteristics of being quiet, calm, and compassionate, the act of putting up with women and the duty of providing for the household. These

characteristics attributed to men might stem from the necessity of the household to institutionalize a family under the umbrella of "one man" and "marriage", legitimized by society. As a result, it was observed that the characteristics attributed to men and women in Turkish fairy tales include some gender norms. This result was also supported by the findings obtained from the interviews.

A Turkish participant (T2): "As in every society, there are stereotyped thoughts on this subject. For example, in the old times of our country Women should know how to do housework, clean, and cook in order to get married". This statement supports that the idea having a place in society is also present in the fairy tale. Arsoy (2011), in her study examining women's gender roles and male domination in Turkish tales, stated that women have lived under men's domination for a long time. Gender norms imposed on women in society, such as giving birth to a son, having certain physical characteristics and honor, are expressed in fairy tales as elements that strengthen male dominance. Dökmen (2010), defined the concept of gender as the meanings and expectations imposed by society and culture on men and women. When the Turkish fairy tale and the opinions of the participants were examined, it was seen that the gender norms in the fairy tale were also transferred to social life. The other Turkish participant (T1): "When we say gender equality, we generally perceive it as the roles of men and women. Of course, we see a father role and a mother role in Türkiye". The statement "We can see that this is reflected in fairy tales in the same way" supports this finding. The roles assigned to men and women by society have also been found in fairy tales, which are an element of culture and play an important role in the transmission of these roles. In fairy tales, the patriarchal structure of society is preserved by producing extraordinary content with unconscious narratives in order to control the behavior of individuals. In this way, the cultural structure of the society is transferred between generations (Bür, 2019).

It was determined that in the examined Turkish fairy tale, the norms attributed to men and women and the patriarchal structure were transferred to social life. Karaarslan (2019), in her research examining women in the context of gender in Turkish fairy tales, stated that women stand out with their beauty in fairy tales, that they are self-sacrificing and weak, that they dream of marrying a saviorman. The home is safer for women, that is, it was revealed that they meet the norms of the patriarchal social structure. She stated that men are depicted as strong and successful, thus reflecting society's gender norms.

The real heroes of Kyrgyz tales are people encountered in daily life such as smart people, old people, orphans, women, poor and orphaned children, and farmers. Rich people, khans, sultans, even half-witted people, and naive people are among the heroes of such tales. Fairy tales generally include the social relations of the poor and the rich. Some opposites such as good and evil and the struggles of the heroes are described. The evil done by the rich to the poor is condemned. In Kyrgyz tales, 'Han' is the most common fairy tale hero (Doğan, 2009). It is possible to see similar heroes and themes in the examples of Turkish tales in Bağcı's (2011) study. As a result, in the Kyrgyz tale, men are attributed the characteristics of being strong, skillful, productive, helpful and wise, with the descriptions of 'Bahadir' and 'Azrael'. By describing women as 'a unique daughter', it was emphasized that they have a valuable position in society.

Bayrak İşcanoğlu (2018) stated that women have always been valued in family and social life in Turkish culture. When we look at Turkish cultural history, she stated that women have a say in management and that women are cared for. She said that Kyrgyz women have various roles in Kyrgyz social and cultural life, and that Kyrgyz women have various duties towards their children as mothers, towards their life partners as wives, and towards other family members as family elders. Tekin (2010), pointing out that many archaeological excavations, indicate the existence of a pre-patriarchal matriarchal period, resonates with the statement by the Kyrgyz participant (K2): "In our tales, there are no situations where women are weak and waiting to be rescued and men are strong. Because, according to our traditions from the past, the understanding that men and women are on an equal level prevails." It was seen that this value given to women in Kyrgyz culture is also internalized by men in society. Similarly, the other

Kyrgyz participant (K1) emphasized the value of women with the statement: "Tales are told where a girl or a shepherd from among the people comes and replaces the Khan and justice comes first". On the other hand, Turkish participant (T1) in Kyrgyzstan stated that, age is important, not gender. In the living room of the house, the oldest person sits at the head. Older women also have the option to sit there. The statement 'No small child can come and sit' supports the existence of gender equality in social life.

After the October Revolution of 1917, the Soviet Union expanded its sphere of influence to the Central Asian region, including Kyrgyzstan, and showed its influence on Kyrgyz social life, especially in the field of education. This situation led to the change of Kyrgyzstan's linguistic and cultural identity under Soviet influence. The old education systems of the countries under the umbrella of the USSR began to be replaced by the communist education system, which does not contain theological elements and is organized according to socialist philosophy (Gül, 2021). Russian is accepted as the official language and is taught as the main language in schools. The use of the Kyrgyz language was restricted and accordingly, a Russian-speaking generation grew up in Kyrgyzstan. The migration of the Russian population after independence should not be interpreted as the decline or withdrawal of the Russian language. That's why Russian is the official language in this Republic, an important language of education and training, a second language and the common language of communication between peoples. While there are intellectuals, who think that the status of Russian in Kyrgyzstan, prevent the development of Kyrgyz Turkish, there are also intellectuals who are not disturbed by this (Aydın, 2019).

This situation is similar to the Kyrgyz participant (K2): "The positive side of the Soviet regime was the provision of equality in education between men and women. There were no obstacles. Girls and boys had to go to primary school, secondary school, and high school. Then, if they wanted to continue, they could prepare for an exam, get a place in a faculty with a certain score and continue their education. Afterwards, he could start his business life. In this case, we can state that there is no gender discrimination at all". Another Kyrgyz participant (K1): "After the independence process, in 2010, under the influence of political events in Kyrgyzstan, the country elected a woman as its president. We can say that this is a very difficult situation that we cannot imagine happening in regions like ours, which are considered patriarchal societies. This president was temporary. The people were quite satisfied. We also see male presidents sitting in their seats and not getting up for years. But our female president held the presidential elections that we can call the cleanest and most fair in the history of independence. The influence of the Soviet regime was also seen in the statement 'As Kyrgyz citizens, we are very grateful for the work they did at that time".

All these views may be an indication that it can be assumed that the value given to women in Kyrgyz tales, reflected in Kyrgyz social life as equality between men and women, is related to the country being under the influence of the Soviet regime for many years. Because the state's policy of raising a Russian-speaking "homo sovieticus" type of human being and the attempt to shape society and the individual around this goal (Roy, 2009) has become possible by using oral literary works, which are the most important sources that determine cultural identity, as tools (Temur, 2009). The Soviet Union focused on how to benefit from folklore rather than attaching importance to its scientific development, thus folklore was considered as a tool for the cultural structuring of the people, political education, and the realization of socialism (Oinas, 1975). Hence, works, belonging to the oral culture tradition, such as epics, fairy tales, folk songs, and proverbs, were recreated in the process of creating a socialist society that was at peace with socialist values and aimed by the system, and Soviet folklore, whose content was equipped with ideological messages, was created (Panchenko, 2007). All these works were integrated into the education system and influenced the students. The Turkish participant explained this situation (T1): "Before the Soviet Union, the oral folk literature of the Kyrgyz people, called utterance tales, could emerge. Before the Soviet period, Kyrgyz fairy tales existed orally but not in writing. Since Russian culture is dominant, children grow up with Russian classics and fairy tales. After the Soviet period, fairy

tales were gradually translated into Kyrgyz language. This is how it starts to develop. Because Russian culture is constantly taught in schools", he explained.

Kuehnast (1997), in her study of gender and generation dilemmas in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, emphasized the Sovietization effect on a group of women during the independence process of Kyrgyzstan. In the study, it was stated that although Sovietization was largely adopted by Kyrgyz women, they also continued Kyrgyz traditions simultaneously throughout this century. It was stated that women did not differentiate between Soviet or Kyrgyz ideologies, that a Soviet-Kyrgyz identity emerged by shaping each other, and that Sovietization gave Kyrgyz women a tool to oppose some oppressive familial expectations towards them. On the other hand, Deyoung (2007) stated that mass education was considered important during the Soviet period and that Soviet values and teachings conflicted with nomadic and/or Islamic values and traditions. In this context, he stated that schools are called upon to focus on children ideals such as gender equality, atheism, dedication, the necessity of scientific and professional specialization, and belief in a future world. Kyrgyz participant (K1) said, "When Kyrgyzstan was under the rule of the Soviet Union for 70 years, there was a kind of atheism. An issue of religion intervenes at this point. We can see more religious influence in Türkiye." The statement 'There is no distinction between professions in Kyrgyzstan, it is not generally seen that men go to engineering" supports this situation.

Accordingly, the fact that the Kyrgyz people were under Soviet rule for many years might be the reason why there is no gender discrimination in social life, especially in education and work. Turkish participant living in Kyrgyzstan (T1): "There are a lot of female students who go abroad, especially for Erasmus and Orhun exchange programs. You know, the family doesn't say, you're a girl, where are you going? Just sit down, finish school and get married. They go, especially girls, to Germany to study every summer. This is an indication of their self-confidence and lack of discrimination based on gender" It was stated in their statements that the education and working lives of female students were especially supported.

When gender norms in educational institutions in Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan are considered, it could be asserted that in the opinion of the participants, men are dominant in school administration in Türkiye. It was stated that men and women are equally distributed in school administration in Kyrgyzstan. In the branch distribution of teachers in Türkiye, women are in social and human sciences; while men stand out in science, it was stated that there was no difference according to gender in Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz participant (K1): "I studied high school in Kyrgyzstan at the Turkish-Kyrgyz high school. We had both Kyrgyz and Turkish administration. The Kyrgyz manager changed twice, both women. The Turkish manager changed 4 times and all four were men. Our female teachers were teaching social-humanities courses. This situation is clearly seen in the statement "Always men were taking courses such as physics, chemistry, engineering and informatics", Turkish participant (T1) said, "Our department head at the university is already a woman. Generally speaking, when we look at our other departments, there are men and women." In his statement, "We are equal in number", he emphasized the existence of female administrators at the university where he worked in Kyrgyzstan and their equal distribution with men. This situation is compatible with the personality traits and physical characteristics attributed to men and women in fairy tales. In Turkish tales, women are weak and the person waiting for the man in the home environment; attributing strong and savior leadership to men coincide with the dominance of men in management in social life.

Koyuncu Şahin and Çoban (2019), stated that the majority of administrators working in the central organization of the Ministry of National Education and/or as permanent staff and academicians in administrative positions at universities in Türkiye are men, and female administrators remain in the background. The fact that women have a more passive role according to the cultural gender norms,

conveyed through fairy tales might cause women to accept the dominance of men in managerial positions in social life.

As a result, it was supported by the interviews that the gender roles revealed in the analysis of the fairy tales also exist in social life and educational institutions. Although both societies derive from Turkish culture, it was observed that the management style and belief factors that differ from past to present affect gender roles both in fairy tales and in social life. According to this result, it should not be ignored that when using fairy tales as an educational tool, gender roles are transferred to children and therefore to society. Fairy tales are of great importance in transferring cultural elements from generation to generation, but the world is changing and developing rapidly. Therefore, while the transfer of cultural elements to children continues, arrangements should be made in accordance with the requirements of the age. The content of fairy tales should be adapted to contemporary life in a way to include cultural characteristics in order to support gender equality and convey them correctly to children.

References

Abalova, N. G. (2019). Epos "Manas" as the greatest monument of oral folk creativity and its role in the formation of the culture of the present and future of Kyrgyz people. *The Facets of History, 2* (10), 51-59. Retrieved from https://hrany-history.org.ua/index.php/journal/article/download/56/58

Arsoy, N. (2011). *Patriarchy, gender discrimination, and women in Turkish fairy tales* (Thesis number: 302982) [Master's thesis, Kafkas University]. Turkish Council of Higher Education Thesis Center.

Aydın, M. (2019). The consequences of the Soviet Union's language policies in the case of Kyrgyzstan. *Kyrgyzstan Studies*, 167-176. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/36967499/K%C4%B1rg%C4%B1zistan_%C3%96rne%C4%9Finde_Sovyetler_Birli%C4%9Finin_Dil_Politikalar%C4%B1n%C4%B1n_Sonu%C3%A7lar%C4%B1

Bağcı, E. (2011). Examination of the roles of heroes in Naki Tezel's Turkish fairy tales. *Celal Bayar University Journal of Social Sciences, 9*, 221-244. Retrieved from https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/45981

Bakırcı, N. (2015). On Turkish fairy tales. *Turkish World Studies, 111*(218), 143-154. Retrieved from https://www.tdadergi.com/arsiv/218_Arastirma.pdf

Bem, S. L. (1983). Gender schema theory and its implications for child development: Raising gender-aschematic children in a gender-schematic society. *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, *8*(4), 598-616. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/3173685

Bilkan, A. F. (2009). *Fairy tale aesthetics*. Istanbul: Timaş Publishing.

Bür, B. (2019). *Comparison of Turkish and world fairy tales on the list of 100 essential works in terms of gender* (Thesis number: 588254) [Master's thesis, Ondokuz Mayıs University]. Turkish Council of Higher Education Thesis Center.

Bayrak İşcanoğlu, İ. (2018). Women in Kyrgyz family and socio-cultural life. *International Journal of Turkish Dialect Studies (Türklad), 2*(1), 358-366. https://doi.org/10.30563/turklad.397559

Bozkırlı, K. Ç. (2018). An analysis on Turkish fairy tales in the context of their educational properties. *European Journal of Education Studies, 5*(3), 88-99. Retrieved from https://oapub.org/edu/index.php/ejes/article/viewFile/1979/4616

Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Prentice Hall.

Deyoung, A. J. (2007). The erosion of vospitaniye (social upbringing) in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan: Voices from the schools. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies, 40*, 239-256. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/48609604

Diaz-Faes, A. M., Murteira, C. S. R., & Ruskov, M. (2024). Explicit references to social values in fairy tales: A comparison between three european cultures. *Journal of Data Mining and Digital Humanities,* 1-20. https://doi.org/10.46298/jdmdh.13120

Doğan, S. (2009). *Kyrgyz fairy tales (Text-analysis)* (Thesis number: 257716) [Master's thesis, Gazi University]. Turkish Council of Higher Education Thesis Center.

Dor, R. (2022). Kyrgyz people [and their narrative cultures]. *Journal of Cultural Studies*, (15), 358-361. https://doi.org/10.46250/kulturder.1197291

Dökmen, Z. Y. (2010). *Gender*. Remzi Bookstore.

Gül, Y. E. (2021). The Soviet socio-political education system in Kyrgyzstan and the activities of the association against ignorance (1924-1927). *Bilig, 99*, 115-135. https://doi.org/10.12995/bilig.9905

Hohr, H. (2000). Dynamic aspects of fairy tales: Social and emotional competence through fairy tales. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 44*, 89-103. https://doi.org/10.1080/713696665

Iğdır, Z. Ö. (2014). Fairy tales and their contribution to the process of constructing gender roles. *Creative Drama Journal, 9*(18), 77-86. Retrieved from https://www.yader.org/index.php/yader/article/download/11/10

İshakoğlu, J. (2020). *Construction of gender roles towards women through fairy tales: A study on traces-mass* (Thesis number: 618595) [Master's thesis, Ege University]. Turkish Council of Higher Education Thesis Center.

Kaçmaz, C. (2020). *A comparative study of Anatolian and Kyrgyz folk tales* (Thesis number: 664121) [Master's thesis, İstanbul Kültür University]. Turkish Council of Higher Education Thesis Center.

Karaarslan, C. (2019). *Women in the context of gender in anonymous Turkish fairy tales* (Thesis number: 591401) [Master's thesis, Marmara University]. Turkish Council of Higher Education Thesis Center.

Karadavut, Z. (2015). On the parallels of the type and motif structures of Kyrgyz fairy tales with those of other Turkish tribes. *Turkish World Fairy Tale Studies*, 437-445. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/38108874/Tastarakaydan_Kelo%C4%9Flana_Masal_Ara%C5%9Ft%C4%B1rmalar%C4%B1_Sempozyum_Bildirileri

Koyuncu Şahin, M., & Çoban, A. (2019). An overview of studies on gender in the field of education in Türkiye. *International Journal of Social Research, 12*, 588-599. http://dx.doi.org/10.17719/jisr.2019.3381

Kuehnast, K. R. (1997). *Let the stone lie where it has fallen: Dilemmas of gender and generation in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan* (Thesis number: 9815046) [Doctoral Dissertation, University of Minnesota]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global Database.

Lester, A. J. (2015). *The impact of traditional and modern fairy tales on society and its individuals* [Unpublished bachelor's thesis, University of Arizona]. Retrieved from

https://repository.arizona.edu/bitstream/handle/10150/579255/azu_etd_mr_2015_0166_sip 1_m.pdf

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2014). *Designing qualitative research* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.

Meland, A. T. (2020). Challenging gender stereotypes through a transformation of a fairy tale. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, *28*(6), 911–922. https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2020.1836589

Miles, M., & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Oinas, F. J. (1975). The political uses and themes of folklore in the Soviet Union. *Journal of the Folklore Institute, 12*, 157-175. https://doi.org/10.2307/3813923

Ölçer, E. (2003). *The relationship between gender and space in Turkish fairy tales* (Thesis number: 137656) [Master's thesis, Bilkent University]. Turkish Council of Higher Education Thesis Center.

Ölçer Özünel, E. (2015). The hero who brings spring: Bamsı Beyrek. *National Folklore, 27*(107), 34-48. Retrieved from https://www.millifolklor.com/PdfViewer.aspx?Sayi=107&Sayfa=31

Özen, S. (2008). *Kyrgyz fairy tales in terms of subject and structure* (Thesis number: 228200) [Master's thesis, Ankara University]. Turkish Council of Higher Education Thesis Center.

Panchenko, A. (2007). Lenin cult and Soviet folklore. In S. Gürçayır (Trans.), *The Fake of Folklore: Fakelore*. Geleneksel Publishing.

Pawłowska, J. (2021). Gender stereotypes presented in popular children's fairy tales. *Society Register*, *5*(2), 155-170. https://orcid.org/0000000305810080

Rahman, F. (2017). The revival of local fairy tales for children's education. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 7*, 336-344. http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0705.02

Roy, O. (2009). *New Central Asia or the fabrication of nations* (M. Moralı, Trans.). Metis Publishing.

Sayer, I. M., Kristiawan, M., & Agustina, M. (2018). Fairy tale as a medium for children's character cooperation building. *Al-Talim Journal, 25*(2), 108-116. https://doi.org/10.15548/jt.v25i2.458

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.

Sezer, M. Ö. (2013). *Fairy tales and gender*. Evrensel Publishing.

Shaheen, U., Mumtaz, N., & Khalid, K. (2019). Exploring gender ideology in fairy tales: A critical discourse analysis. *European Journal of Research in Social Sciences, 7*(2), 28-42. Retrieved from https://www.idpublications.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Full-Paper-exploring-gender-ideology-in-fairy-tales-a-critical-discourse-analysis.pdf

Singh, N. (2022). MANAS: The socio-cultural heritage of the Kyrgyz people. In *Cultural Histories of Central Asia* (pp. 99-107). Routledge.

Sobirjonovich, S. I., & Bahromjon, H. H. (2022). Fairy tales and their role in education of preschool children. *Journal of Advanced Research and Stability, Special issue*, 150-155. Retrieved from http://sciencebox.uz/index.php/jars/article/view/3090

Sobirjonovna, S. O. G. (2022). Development of reading skills in children through fairy tales. *Galaxy International Interdisciplinary Research Journal, 10*(12), 1229-1231. Retrieved from https://www.giirj.com/index.php/giirj/article/view/4406/4311

Sotvoldiev, M. (2022). Researching and publishing Kyrgyz folk tales. *International Journal of Language, Education, and Translation, 3*(6), 105-114. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8209523

Şahin, M. (2011). Examination of the effects of fairy tales on child development from the perspective of teachers. *National Folklore, 23*, 208-219. Retrieved from https://www.millifolklor.com/PdfViewer.aspx?Sayi=89&Sayfa=205

Tekin, A. (2010). Goddesses and women's memory. *Women's Studies Journal, 9*, 111-138. Retrieved from https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/iukad/issue/728/7868#article_cite

Temellioğlu, Ş. H. (2021). Gender roles in Andersen's fairy tales. *Artvin Çoruh University International Journal of Social Sciences, 7*(1), 165-178. https://doi.org/10.22466/acusbd.945013

Temur, N. (2009). A Soviet product: The theoretical variant of Manas. *Türkbilig, 17*, 133-145. Retrieved from https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/turkbilig/issue/52802/697225

Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2016). *Qualitative research methods in the social sciences* (6th ed.). Seçkin Publishing.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (Vol. 5). Sage Publications.

Yılmaz, A. (2012). The place of fairy tales in child education (Example of One Thousand and One Nights Tales). *SDU Faculty of Arts and Sciences Journal of Social Sciences, 25*, 299-306. Retrieved from https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/sufesosbil/issue/11412/136301

Article Information Form