EDUCATION AND INNOVATION A COMPARISON OF CYPRiot AND KYRGYZ TURKISH FOLK TALES IN TERMS OF VIOLENCE ELEMENTS

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Abstract

Since the emergence of mankind, violence is among the social problems that are waiting to be solved. Unfortunately violence – albeit at different ratios – is one of the most fundamental problems of both developed and developing countries. Due to the indifference of people, the phenomenon of violence is claiming more space in our lives every day, and is evaluated under different titles such as physical, psychological, economic, social and political by researchers. Elements of violence claim wide space in different genres of literature such as novel and drama but especially tales. This is due to the fact that while tales, which are one of the basic elements of oral literature, are being created, children were not considered as target audience. Later, authors who decided that tales are important for children tried to adopt these texts for children in order to fill the gap in children’s literature. An evaluation of tales as one of the most important products of childhood periods in terms of violence elements will contribute to the better understanding of reasons which create violence and bringing a social solution to this problem. The objective of this study is to identify and compare the violence elements in Cypriot and Kyrgyz Turkish folk tales. For this purpose, the problem of the study is represented by the question “what kind of violence elements are found in Cypriot and Kyrgyz Turkish folk tales?” The study will employ qualitative research method and document examination technique. Within the scope of the study, 30 tales selected among Cypriot and Kyrgyz Turkish folk tales will be examined by subjecting to content analysis.

Keywords: Cyprus, Kyrgyz, Tale, Violence, Children.

INTRODUCTION

Tales occupy and essential place in both folk literature and the lives of children. As one of the oldest products of oral literature tradition, a tale “is a verbal expression type with some characters such as animals and supernatural beings, of which events take place in a country of tales and is a product of imagination; yet, they can make their audience believe they are real” (Sakaoğlu 1999: 2).
The most important feature of tales which express the experience, desire and longings of humanity in ancient times is that the people and events have supernatural characteristics. People ascribed their imaginations to realist and extraordinary types and kneaded them in time to create tales. A tale “can be anything contemplated or not contemplated. You can ride on a cube and take a distance of one year in one blink. You can meet the sultan of ants at seven stories below the ground and talk to the sultan of lions by rising to the twelve stories of sky on the back of a dragon” (Tezel 1997: XV).

Tales are indispensable elements of childhood representing a genre which ornament and enrich the imagination of children. Having said that, the most striking functional feature of tales is education. When carefully selected and used considering the didactic dimension, tales make positive contribution to the education of children “and enrich the thinking and imagination of children as well as equipping them with virtues such as goodness, honesty, diligence and benevolence in events which they have to acquire” (Karatay 2007: 471).

Similar to the case in all world tales, in Cypriot and Kyrgyz Turkish tales there are elements which can harm the development and education of children. The most striking element is that violence and ferocity, killing, harming people are given considerable place in the mentioned tales. In the examined tales, such violent acts as butchering people, cooking children, killing animals (wolf, fox, sheep, rat...), beheading and skinning people, torturing etc. which children (especially pre-school and elementary level children) should never read and hear about are frequently portrayed. As is known, children see role models in the characters they see on television and texts they read. Violent acts displayed by these characters will cause the children to be raised as aggressive people, too. "If children watch cartoons with violent elements in their early childhood period which is one of the periods when children are most prone to see role models, their personalities and ethical development can be negatively affected" (Yıldız 2016: 713). Therefore, when choosing tales and other literary texts for use especially in education, teachers have to be extremely cautious and choose texts which are most suitable to the development of children. At this point, researchers have essential and remarkable findings as regards the cognitive and psycho-social development of children. According to the information given by Murat Aşçı, “first of all, language development of a child is the mirror of the economic, social and cultural status of the family. If newspapers and books are read in the family, if there is a library in the house, and more importantly, if parents and other family members give importance to reading and writing, and share with each other what they read, the child who is raised in such a family will be more inclined towards reading and writing. The literacy or language skills of children of parents who do not pay any attention to the foregoing or who do not have these opportunities cannot develop” (Aşçı 2005: 24).

According to Haluk Yavuzer, “while acquiring reading and writing habit to the child, in the beginning the child loves small books including short stories and interesting pictures which he/she can easily hold. These books mostly consist of fantastic events. Children of 3-4 years of age want that illustrated story books are read to them. Most children take huge delight in hearing stories consisting of some imaginary adventures and they identify themselves with the characters in these stories” (Yavuzer 2005a: 157). Likewise, according to Yavuzer, “health, intelligence, socio-economic conditions, gender, family relations and encouragement for speaking are among the factors which affect language development. The children of families with good socio-economic status speak earlier and more decently. In addition to the environmental factors which play important role in the language development of the child, the number of books read by the child, the involvement of parents with their child and the games that the child plays are also essential” (Yavuzer 2005b: 93). It is a reality that carefully selected works with artistic value which reflect the beauties of Turkish language are extremely important especially in terms of the language development of children. Thus, teachers will choose in Turkish courses texts with high quality free from violent elements which will equip students with the habit and joy of reading, contribute their ethical development and ensure that they reach the level that they will be able to evaluate what they read.
Objective of the research
The objective of the study is to identify and compare the violent elements in 30 tales belonging to Cypriot and Kyrgyz Turks. For this purpose, the problem of the research consists of the question “which violent elements can be seen in Cypriot and Kyrgyz Turkish folk tales?”

1. METHOD
1.1. Model of the research
In the study, qualitative research has been applied as method and document analysis was employed for data collection.

1.2. Sample of the study
The sample of the study consists of 30 tales in total selected from Cypriot and Kyrgyz Turks. This study is based on convenience sampling which is a type of purposive sampling as a result of which 30 tales which were examined by the researchers previously, about which the researchers were knowledgeable and which included important clues about violent elements were preferred. The examined Cypriot Turkish tales were taken from the books titled “Compilations from Cypriot Turkish folklore-Tales I (1998) and Compilations from Cypriot Turkish folklore-Tales II (2006)” written by Oğuz Yorgancıoğlu. Kyrgyz Turkish tales were borrowed from “Kyrgyz Tales and Legends” (2017) written by D. Brudny-K. Eşmambetov.

1.3. Data collection and analysis method
The data of the study were compiled from 30 tales in total chosen from Cypriot and Kyrgyz Turks. The tales were analysed by means of “descriptive analysis” in the study.

2. EXAMINATION
The word “violence” is defined by sociologists as toughness and use of brute force. Violent behaviours are usually displayed to terrorise and intimidate people. Violent behaviours generally appear as disobeying laws, harming, insulting, degrading people, ending one’s peace, overriding one’s rights, battering or hurting someone and using force (Erten and Ardali 1996: 143, cited in Kocacık 2001: 2).

Researchers studying on this topic for a long time classified the phenomenon of violence under different titles such as physical, sexual, economic, psychological, verbal and social. When the 30 tales examined in the article are evaluated in terms of the mentioned titles, the following conclusions are reached:

Table 1. Classification of Violent Elements Identified in Cypriot and Kyrgyz Turkish Folk Tales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violence types identified in Cypriot Turkish folk tales</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Violence types identified in Kyrgyz Turkish folk tales</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>Physical violence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual violence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.66</td>
<td>Sexual violence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic violence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>Economic violence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological violence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Psychological violence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>93.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal violence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.66</td>
<td>Verbal violence</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social violence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Social violence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be understood from the table, there are several violence elements in both Cypriot Turkish folk tales and Kyrgyz Turkish folk tales. When Cypriot and Kyrgyz Turkish folk tales are evaluated in terms of the types of violence in the texts, it can be said that physical violence is common in the tales of both countries with higher frequency compared to other types of violence. Nevertheless, it is seen that Kyrgyz Turkish folk tales include 226% physical violent elements whereas Cypriot
Turkish folk tales include 160% physical violence. This difference can be explained by the fact that the harsh structure of nomad culture is still existent today. The second type of violence in both Cypriot and Kyrgyz Turk folk tales following physical violence is psychological violence. The ratio of psychological violence in Cypriot Turk folk tales is 40% whereas this ratio is 93.33% in Kyrgyz Turk folk tales. This high ratio in Kyrgyz Turk people can also be explained with their historical experiences and especially the oppression of Russians and pro-Russian wealthy class. “The new administrative system implemented by the Russians in the region brought about several complexities as it was contrary to the traditional Kyrgyz system. The artificial class distinctions were created artificially so as to ensure that internal conflict in the volost and warfare would never end. As the case in all Turkistan Turks, divide and rule tactic was implemented on Kyrgyz Turks.” (Kara 2007: 331).

Another type of violence which is frequently witnessed in the tales of both countries is verbal violence. In Cypriot Turk folk tales verbal violence ratio is 26.66% whereas the ratio in Kyrgyz Turk folk tales is 60 percent. Social violence is non-existent in Cypriot Turk folk tales whereas the ratio in Kyrgyz Turk folk tales is 33.33 percent. This high level of social violence in Kyrgyz Turk folk tales can be attributed to the fact that the Central Asia geography has a harsh structure. In addition, sexual violence identified in Cypriot Turk folk tales was at 6.66% level whereas no sexual violence element was witnessed in Kyrgyz Turk folk tales. In terms of economic violence, the ratio in Cypriot Turk folk tales is 13.33% compared to 26.66% in Cypriot Turk folk tales. This result concerning economic violence elements can be attributed to the structure of society. Comparisons indicate the reality that Kyrgyz Turks have more economic difficulties compared to Cypriot Turks.

An examination of the types of violence in tales and the elements belonging to these types show that the types of violence and the experiences of both societies throughout history are interrelated. Table 2. Types of violence determined in Cypriot and Kyrgyz Turk folk tales and the elements within the scope of mentioned violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violent types</th>
<th>Violence types identified in Cypriot Turk folk tales</th>
<th>Violence types identified in Kyrgyz Turk folk tales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Physical Violence | Sacrificing ram – cutting spouse into pieces – committing suicide – women beating her husband – removing teeth – man strangling woman – stabbing a baby – eating children – cutting off the hand of sibling – throwing children into the stream – Sultan punishing his mother and midwife (by killing) – rich woman going green with envy and dying – hunting – wanting to cut and eat children – fish swallowing the girl – prince punishing the odalisk (by killing) – two girls cooperating to kill the sibling – the old man beating the sultan and his men – inclining towards suicide – the man killing the wolf – the man killing the fox – the snake being killed – the giant being killed – the man being wounded by sword | The witch wanting to make the girl snake food – the man pulling his gun to kill the sheep – Bekcal beheading the dragon – Karakuş wanting to swallow the man-Bekcal cutting the sheep and goats into pieces and storing food – Bekcal cutting meat from his own hip and feeding the blackbird – sultan turning people into animals – the Khan's sons wanting to kill Bekcal out of jealousy – Hunting – Bereke killing snakes, lions and tigers with his sword – the witch butchering a human every day– Cail gunning down the witch – Cail blinding the witch by searing – the prisoners butchering and skinning the white goat – the giant trying to kill Makmut – Makmut skinning the fox – siblings butchering and eating the sheep – one of the siblings killing the giant bird – the farmer beheading the Khan – Two masters beating the servant – mambet stabbing the sheep – siblings making plans to kill each other – the servant leaving the masters under a rock – butchering and eating the horse – Namer putting Mert’s
| Sexual Violence | Cooking the tit of the woman | eyes out – the animals eating the man – Mert butchering the dog – butchering the bullock and burying its brain – beating of poor people – beating of the poor – death of the Master – animals tearing down the clothes of the man – Çakabay being strangled – girls beating the servant. |
| Economic Violence | Poor sister being despised – extraordinary forces taking two children back to their poor lives | Poor people being despised – The shepherd being insulted due to being poor – rich girls despising poor people – Khan making the girl his servant |
| Psychological Violence | Exposure to starvation – sultan repelling his daughter – sultan threatening his wife with death – sultan threatening the man – sultan threatening his son – siblings thrown into a well | Temirhan putting his son and daughter in the dungeon – two siblings cooperating to throw their little sibling into a well – the witch imprisoning people – Bolbos khan threatening people with death – the Khan threatening the orphan child with death – the Khan threatening the farmer with death – the Khan terrorising his men – the Khan imprisoning seven rich people in the dungeon – Omurbek khan threatening people with death – the master oppressing people and threatening them with death – Master threatening the young apprentice – the man throwing his wife out – the khan threatening the boy with death – the man throwing his wife out. |
| Verbal Violence | Anathemazing – sultan threatening the man – sultan threatening his son – sultan threatening his wife with death | Bolbos khan threatening people with death – the Khan threatening the orphan child with death – the Khan threatening the farmer with death – Omurbek khan threatening people with death – the master oppressing people and threatening them with death – Master threatening the young apprentice – The shepherd being insulted due to being poor – the khan threatening the boy with death – the khan terrorising the boy |
| Social Violence | - | - |

One of the most remarkable points in Kyrgyz Turkish folk tales which include far more violence elements than Cypriot Turkish folk tales is that sheep, goats, bullocks and horses which have an essential place in the diet of Kyrgyz Turks are frequently butchered in tales. Although sheep and goats have an essential place in the diet of Cypriot Turks, too, it is seen in the examined tales that the only example of butchering was when a ram was butchered.

Another striking point in the examined tales is that hunting is witnessed in the tales of both countries. As is known, hunting has an important place in Turkish culture. Therefore hunting is
frequent in verbal literacy works such as tales and legends. However, in any event, killing an animal is a show of violence.

As is known, both richness and poorness are two phenomena which exist from the very existence of the world organized for human beings into the eternity. It can be said that the poor people are despised in the tale texts of both countries but in Kyrgyz Turkish folk tales it is more distinctive. An examination of the tales of both countries in terms of psychological and verbal violence elements, it can be seen that the people called Khan applied verbal and psychological violence in Kyrgyz Turks compared to the sultans in Cypriot Turks. Based on tale texts, it can be claimed that the oppression applied by Khans in Kyrgyz Turks is more severe compared to the oppression of sultans in Cypriot Turks. The sultan exerts individual oppression in Cypriot Turkish folk tales whereas Khans in Kyrgyz tales mostly apply social oppression and threaten the society as a whole.

3. CONCLUSION

Tales are literary texts that include the cultural elements of societies and reach the present day by being transferred from generation to generation. Tales convey the cultural values of a society by decorating them with imaginary figures to readers or listeners. Therefore it is emphasised that tales, which serve an extremely important function especially in the transfer of culture, are critical for the development of children. In the examined Cypriot and Kyrgyz Turkish folk tales, it is seen that cultural elements of both societies are found to some extent. It can be said that some of the mentioned cultural values (horse, sheep, goat butchering, hunting etc.) are portrayed in a very harsh manner in tale texts as elements of violence.

As tales give the lecture from event the harshest event by entertaining, they play an essential role in the early education of children. Especially the tales with a happy ending have an essential role in the development of children, introducing them with life, and teaching them good values. The values such as honesty, love, respect and justice, which are the pillars of life, are learned through tales in the best manner.

Serving an extremely important function in terms of the education of children, tales also include several violence elements as will be seen. Unfortunately violence – albeit in different ratios – is one of the most fundamental problems of both developed and developing countries. For this reason, tales which will be used in the education of children have to be chosen very carefully by pedagogues and presented to the children. If a child born and/or living in Cyprus or Kyrgyzstan is raised uninformed about Cypriot or Kyrgyz Turkish history, literature and culture will bring about the collapse and loss of identity of the country in time. For this reason, all literary texts, including tales, should be actively integrated in the education system of both countries with all elements belonging to Cypriot and Kyrgyz Turkish cultures.

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