

EVALUATION OF CHILDREN'S THEATRE TEXTS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SENSITIVITY EDUCATION

AValiação de Textos Teatrais Infantis na Perspectiva da Educação da Sensibilidade

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ABSTRACT

The hive of children's literature is the concepts of child and childhood. Several researchers have determined that children's literature contributes to the child's cognitive and affective development. Children's literature represents a transition period that contributes to the child's sensitive transition to adulthood and prepares him/her for adulthood. It also structurally includes these features. Therefore, children's theater texts occupy an important place in children's literature. The purpose of this study is to evaluate children's theater texts in terms of sensitivity education. The research was conducted with a descriptive survey model and was limited to Ayla Çınaroğlu's books titled "Empty Tortoise", "Helmet", "Paper Festival", "Welcome Muse" and "Tini the Lazy Mouse". Children's theater texts are generally works read by adults to be staged and most of them have not been published as books. From this perspective, it has been found out that Ayla Çınaroğlu's children's plays, which are offered to the reader in the form of books, send implicit messages to the intended age group with both theatrical plot and the sensitive topics they contain. In addition, the books examined are thought to have significant value in terms of setting an example for young writers.

Keywords: Children's literature, children's theatre, sensitivity education.

RESUMO

A colmeia da literatura infantil são os conceitos de criança e infância. Vários pesquisadores determinaram que a literatura infantil contribui para o desenvolvimento cognitivo e afetivo da criança. A literatura infantil representa um período de transição que contribui para a transição sensível da criança para a vida adulta e a prepara para a vida adulta. Ela também inclui estruturalmente essas características. Portanto, os textos de teatro infantil ocupam um lugar importante na literatura infantil. O objetivo deste estudo é avaliar os textos de teatro infantil em termos de educação de sensibilidade. A pesquisa foi conduzida com um modelo de pesquisa descritiva e foi limitada aos livros de Ayla Çınaroğlu intitulados "Empty Tortoise", "Helmet", "Paper Festival", "Welcome Muse" e "Tini the Lazy Mouse". Os textos de teatro infantil são geralmente obras lidas por adultos para serem encenadas e a maioria delas não foi publicada como livros. Dessa perspectiva, descobriu-se que as peças infantis de Ayla Çınaroğlu, que são oferecidas ao leitor na forma de livros, enviam mensagens implícitas à faixa etária pretendida com o enredo teatral e os tópicos sensíveis que contêm. Além disso, acredita-se que os livros examinados tenham valor significativo em termos de dar um exemplo para jovens escritores.

Palavras-chave: Literatura infantil, teatro infantil, educação de sensibilidade.

Introduction

When defining children's literature, it is important to look at the concept from many perspectives. This situation has led to the emergence of different definitions of children's literature (İpek, 2017). Yalçın and Aytaş (2002) defined children's literature as "all verbal and written outputs that appeal to children's growth and development, dreams, emotions, thoughts, abilities and tastes, and contribute to their entertainment while educating", emphasizing the educational and teaching function of children's literature. Kıbrıs (2000), on the other hand, based on the definition of literature as a collection of certain works, defined it as verbal and written literary products created for children. İpek (2017) states that children's literature consists of literary products that are produced by taking into account the child's developmental characteristics, expressed in a language and style suitable for the child, and appealing to children's tastes and imaginations.

Children's literature products are important in terms of concretizing the targeted gains for the child. Since abstract concepts such as cultural accumulation and values are presented to the child in the concrete operational period, these concepts need to be concretized. Children's literature products, which contain important acquisitions such as cultural and universal values, are unique as educational materials in this respect (Ayrancı, 2017)

Children's literature products are among the most important artistic stimuli that enable the child to gain sensitivity in the individualization process (Yumru, 2012). In this process, children's literature affects the child's perception of the individual, the environment and events and his/her attitude towards them with its characters and implicit messages. The child learns exemplary behaviors, different lifestyles and novel thought models from the character he/she will identify with and then adapts these acquisitions to his/her real life. In addition, he/she gains democratic culture awareness and learns to respect the differences and individual rights of individuals in society (Sever, 2007; Yumru, 2012).

The formal features of this type of books are given importance, but their subject-related features deserve no less attention. Especially in children's literature

products, it is expected that several elements are taken into consideration when choosing them; for example, topics that will leave negative marks on the child's spiritual world should not be addressed (Yalçın and Aytaş, 2002). In children's books, the main idea is also important in addition to the selection of the subject. Universal and national values should be taken into consideration, especially in works written for children. In addition to the subjects of these books being related to current life and reality, the characters chosen should not contradict the child's real life. The narrative of the work should be developed within the scope of a specific plan and care should be taken to ensure that the narrative has a clear language structure. Since storybooks written for children are educational materials that help children develop awareness of the world, care should be taken to ensure that children's storybooks have form and content characteristics appropriate to the child's developmental characteristics (Ayrancı, 2017). According to Bağcı (2013), children's literature prepares the child for the outside world by equipping him with national and universal values, also supporting his/her language development.

When we look at its historical development, it is seen that children's literature is a very new field in the world and in our country that is open to research and development. The relevance of literature to children, its evaluation in terms of educational messages and the features it should have in order to be qualified have been the subject of many studies in the literature. Sensitivity and sensitivity education are among the important concepts in raising sensitive individuals. Taking these concepts into consideration when creating new children's literature works or determining their dimensions and qualities in existing children's literature works are important issues for the field. The way to raise individuals who know themselves, their environment and the world, who can self-explore their feelings, and who can sense, analyze and understand emotions and situations they personally have not experienced is through sensitivity education (Kibris, 2019).

In order for the child to internalize, adopt and assimilate social and universal values, that is, to acquire sensitivity skills, he/she needs to develop the ability to perceive events with his/her senses (Karakuş Tayşi, 2019).

In terms of developing sensitivity to other people's feelings, thoughts, experiences and lifestyle, it is important for children, who have limited experience and life background, to internalize universal values and the values of their society they and to transform this into a behavioral pattern (Aslan, 2013).

The understanding of educating society in theater has been perceived as valid for child education over time. In its most general form, children's theater can be defined as dramatic texts written for children and shows staged by or for children. This definition requires children's theater to be evaluated from two perspectives: stage art and a literary genre. Its performability requires it to be evaluated as a performing art. On the other hand, it should be evaluated as a literary text since it is a text produced by an author. (Akyüz, 2019).

Method

This research was conducted using the qualitative research method and descriptive scanning model and was based on the document review method. "Document review consists of the analysis of written materials containing information about the phenomenon or phenomena targeted for research" (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2000). In the research, Ayla Çınaroğlu's children's plays were examined and evaluated in terms of children's literature and sensitivity education. Ayla Çınaroğlu, a children's literature writer and poet, has 21 works in the genres of tales, stories, poems, children's plays, novels and scenarios. The sample of this study consists of the author's children's plays titled "Empty Tortoise", "Helmet", "Paper festival", "Welcome Muse" and "Tini the Lazy Mouse" and published as books. Table 1 provides information about these works.

Table 1 - Children's Plays Included in the Study

Title of the Book	Publisher	Number of pages	Recommended age group	Publishing date
Empty Turtle	Uçanbalık Publishing	53	For preschool and primary school age	October 2003 (First Edition)
Helmet	Uçanbalık Publishing	61	For primary school age	May 1996 (First Edition)
Paper Festival	Uçanbalık Publishing	61	For primary school age	January 2005 (First Edition)
Welcome Muse	Uçanbalık Publishing	55	For early adolescents	June 2003 (First Edition)
Tini the Lazy Mouse	Uçanbalık Publishing	55	For preschool and primary school age	June 2003 (First Edition)

Results and discussion

The books were evaluated in two dimensions. The external structural features were examined in terms of size, paper, cover and binding, page layout, pictures, and letters, whereas the internal structure features were analyzed in terms of characters, subject and theme, topic, plot, message, character(s) that the reader will identify with, and subjects that the work will develop sensitivity in the reader.

Table 2 – External Structural Features

Title of the Book	Size / cm	Paper	Cover and binding	Page layout	Pictures	Letters / font size
Empty Turtle	13x19	White and matte paper	Cardboard cover	The text and spaces are arranged in a balanced manner.	NA	14 points
Helmet	13x19	White and matte paper	Cardboard cover	The text and spaces are arranged in a balanced manner.	NA	14 points
Paper Festival	13x19	Light colored detail paper	Cardboard cover	The text and spaces are arranged in a balanced manner.	NA	14 points
Welcome Muse	13x19	Yellow colored detail paper	Cardboard cover	The text and spaces are arranged in a balanced manner.	NA	12 points
Tini the Lazy Mouse	13x19	Light colored detail paper	Cardboard cover	The text and spaces are arranged in a balanced manner.	NA	14 points

The size of the books is 13x19 cm. Considering the age group they are recommended for, it has been evaluated as a positive feature that the books are in bookshelf size. The books titled Paper Festival, Welcome Muse and Tini the Lazy Mouse have light yellow straw paper. It is thought that the pages of these books can wear out easily and prevent fluent reading.

When the works were evaluated in terms of cover and binding, it was concluded that the use of cardboard covers, which are thought to be easily worn, and the gluing together of the pages and the cover, could prevent the longevity of the book.

The pictures used on the front covers of the books are designed to encourage the reader to focus on the book and use their imagination. The text and spaces in the books are arranged in a balanced manner. The books have no pictures, but since they

are written as theater texts, it is thought that they are far from being monotonous. In addition, there are photographs taken in staged plays at the end of the books.

In books prepared for primary school children and adolescents, the letters are expected to be at least 14 and 12 points, respectively. In the sample, the size of the letters used in the books recommended for primary school children is 14 points, while the size of the letters in the book recommended for adolescents is 12 points. Therefore, it can be stated that the letter size is appropriate for the recommended age groups.

Table 3 – Internal Structure Features

Title of the Book	Characters	Subject	Theme	Topic	Message	Self-identified character
Empty turtle	Turtle Mole, Rabbits, Fox, Squirrel, Birds, Butterflies, Deer, Lion	Differences in individual characteristics	Instead of being jealous of some features that others have but we don't, we should accept that they are a reality of life and not be disturbed by this and not force everyone to be like us.	Jealousy	If we accept everyone as they are, we can eliminate unnecessary ambitions and jealousies.	Turtle, lion
Helmet	Kat, Kut, Şan, Can, Mother, Castor, Hotel Keeper, Governor, Commander, Town Crier, Soldiers, People	Wars	Wars are unnecessary, living together with friendship is much nicer.	Peace	Behaving friendly can change the perspective of even the most ruthless enemy.	Kat, Kut
Paper Festival	Aydan, Anne, Ms. Süheyla, Uncle, Doctor, Paper Fairy, Mikrotoses, Word Doctor, Paper Witch, Paper Master, Gül-Güler-Gülçin-Gülten, Er-Ercan-Erkan	The Importance of Friendship	Our friends may not always be living people.	Friendship	Non-living objects can also be our friends if we share our time with them.	Aydan
Welcome Muse	Writer (Mr. Metin), Grocer's Apprentice, Mr. Semih, Muse, Funda, Figen	Being a writer is not an easy task.	Writers who truly respect their profession suffer from serious difficulties in earning money and finding	Writing for children	In explicit messages, it is stated that using tobacco is harmful. Being a writer is not an easy profession and sometimes writers do not receive fair financial	Author (Mr. Metin), Muse

			attractive topics.		compensation for their work.	
Tini the Lazy Mouse	Tini, Şini, Mother, Miti, Piti, Twins, Açgöz (<i>Greedy</i>) (Tokgöz- (<i>Contended</i>))	Laziness and the differences in individual characteristics	Because of laziness, sometimes unwanted things can happen to us.	Laziness	Everyone in our lives has different characteristics.	Tini

The topics that books will increase sensitivity in readers are as follows:

Empty Turtle:

We should not look down on anyone because of the characteristics we have that others do not. We should not envy the characteristics we do not have that others do.

“Is it possible to live underground? Dig, dig, dig in the ground and live there... What stupidity. But look at me. My house is always with me, on my back.” (page:12)

“I ask you, if they were not empty, would they carry those big, ugly ears on their heads?” (page:13)

“A squirrel. Here is another one with little intelligence. This one must have lost all its intellect to its tail. Look at that long, funny tail.” (page:16)

“But you don’t want birds to fly. Why do you want that? Have you ever thought about it? That’s because you can’t fly yourself. Because you can’t fly, you don’t want anyone else to be able to fly.” (page:28)

“And why do you want to cut off rabbits’ ears? Because you don’t have such beautiful, sensitive ears. And why do you want to cut off squirrels’ tails? Because you don’t have such a soft, furry, beautiful tail, of course.” (page:28)

“Since you don’t have one, you don’t want anyone else to have one. Since you can’t run yourself, you don’t want anyone else to be able to run. Since you don’t have a beautiful voice, you don’t want anyone else to sing. Unfortunately, you are jealous, turtle brother. You are jealous of the things that you don’t have.” (page:29)

No matter how much we believe in the truth of our own thoughts, we need to keep in mind the possibility that circumstances may be different. What is right for us may not be right for someone else.

“If all the animals would live the way I propose, that is, make some changes in their lives and accept my leadership, life in the forest would be much better.” (page:10)

“First of all, the animals must change their way of life and give up their old habits.” (page:10)

“If it were me, I would cut off those ears at the root. They are ridiculous.” (page:13)

“When I become president, all the rabbits’ ears will be cut off.” (page:14)

“You want things that do not comply with reason. You want things that do not comply with nature” (page:28)

Sharing, being open-minded, and friends helping each other are nice behaviors.

“I’m glad you didn’t want my hazelnuts. But still, if you’re feeling up to it, I can give you a few. Maybe you cannot crack their shells, but don’t worry, I’ll crack them for you.” (page:17)

It’s wise to accept everyone as they are.

“We are your friends, we love you. We love you even if you can’t fly. We love you even if you can’t run. We love you even if you don’t have a beautiful voice. We love you even if you don’t have long fur. We love you even if you don’t have strong feet. We love you even if you don’t have fancy wings. We love you even if you don’t have beautiful horns, a furry tail, or long ears.” (page:29)

“Of course. We love you very much, but remember, we love you with your beautiful shell.” (page:52)

Helmet:

Wars are unnecessary.

“Why did we attack Alkent now? We were living so well. The people of Alkent were not doing any harm to us.” (page:10)

“What are they going to do? We’re not doing anything to them.” (page:14)

Expecting others to do things that we can do on our own and not improving ourselves to do these things can sometimes cause us trouble.

"Whoops, so why should a man without a wife always be hungry and always have holes in his socks?" (page:11)

"I do every task myself. I never have any trouble anywhere, ever." (page:11)

The feeling of trust is essential for people. We should respond good behavior in the same way.

"We are going to eat the food of the people who treated us so well, who trusted us, steal their belongings and run away, huh? I am out." (page:34)

"To tell you the truth, I am even ashamed to look for our helmets." (page:50)

"I wish we hadn't come" (page:50)

"We should have gone and surrendered to the commander." (page:50)

"How can we draw our swords on these people now?" (page:50)

"How can we kill such good people?" (page:50)

"They also understood that we were from Verkent. But they never showed it, they didn't outcast us." (page:50)

Lyrics:

"Flowers instead of swords,

Helmets become torches.

Let the strong support the weak,

Let the universe be filled with love." (page:61)

Paper Festival:

Gossiping is not a good habit.

"Ah, you know, Huri's family are moving. And to the main street. They bought a floor there. I wonder how they bought it... Her husband, as far as I know, didn't even have a decent job." (page:11)

We need to be careful about our behavior and words around ill people.

"(She takes a cigarette out of her bag, lights it, unconsciously blows the smoke towards Aydan and talks without pausing. Aydan tries to disperse the smoke with her hand.)" (page:11)

"Oh dear, she is coughing so badly. You should have given her some cough syrup at least" (page:12)

"She blew her smoke in my face, then told me to drink some cough syrup." (page:13)

Tastes may vary from person to person, and this must be respected.

"She's so dressed up, isn't she, mother? It doesn't suit her at all." (page:13)

"Well, that's what she wanted, what do you do? It's none of our business." (page:13)

Reading books is one of the ways to make good use of our free time.

"But I'm not sleepy, mother." "Then read a book in bed." (page:15)

"What is the most beautiful, most magnificent form of paper?" "I think, I think the most beautiful form is books, books!.." (page:19)

"What could be the best gift for a little bookworm?" (page:19)

"Or rather, something that can take the place of their friends for a while. I mean, other than books."

It is actually in our hands to relieve our boredom. We can make temporary friends through our imagination.

"You can find temporary friends to overcome boredom." (page:20)

It is not appropriate to attribute colors to certain genders.

"Red color is used for girls and blue color is used for boys. Do you know why?" (page:21)

"To tell you the truth, I don't know either. Well, it doesn't matter anyway." (page:21)

People may have different thoughts and abilities, but these differences do not prevent a strong bond of love between them.

"As real people, each of you should have a different personality. You should have different thoughts, different ideas, different talents. But I hope your hearts will always be one. Even if you are in different places and have different thoughts, may your bond of friendship and heart never be broken." (page:60)

Welcome Muse:

We should avoid substances that harm our health. (Explicit message)

“Okay, brother, I’ll tell you. But wouldn’t it be better if tobacco wasn’t sent, and milk and newspapers was sent instead?..” (page:10)

“Tobacco, tea... Oh, what a shame, what a shame. So you live with these. Of course, that’s why your mind doesn’t work, you can’t think straight.” (page:23)

Low interest in books and high costs affect authors negatively.

“Ah, well, it’s going, it’s going, but you know the market. I wish it would sell out right away, then a second edition, then a third... We sure want it, too.” (page:12)

Writing for children is an important and difficult task. Children should not be underestimated.

“Thank you, Mr. Semih, but you know I don’t write for children. I mean, I’ve never written.” (page:13)

“No, don’t say I don’t know, my dear, this is child’s play for you (in a condescending manner)” (page:14)

“A writer like you can write a children’s story, can’t he?” (page:14)

“Besides, children, children are very important. You can’t write nonsense and sloppy things for children. First, it should be educational, thought-provoking... Well, it should also be a little entertaining. Children should love it, and they should read it with pleasure.” (page:15)

“I always say that being a writer is a difficult, difficult profession.” (page:17)

“You have to have as free and limitless an imagination as possible when writing for children.” (page:22)

“What do you think of when you hear the word umbrella? Of course, you only think of rain and mud. But children can fly into space with an umbrella...” (page:30)

“This is a very beautiful, but equally sad story. It is too emotional. And it does not end well. It is not for children.” (page:34)

“Never lie to a child. This is not didactic at all.” (page:41)

“Tell the truth to a child. Tell it. Don’t worry, he understands you better than anyone else.” (page:42)

Keeping up with the times makes our lives easier.

"But you are obviously completely out of your time. Look, why do you use a ticking typewriter when you have a fancy computer?" (page:21)

The things we experience in our childhood are important for how they guide us more than being good or bad.

"How is that possible? Everyone has something in their childhood that is worth remembering, either good or bad." (page:26)

"Now I see why you have such a hard time with this. You can't write without love..." (page:26)

"But this could also be a starting point for you." (page:26)

Tini the Lazy Mouse:

Children need outdoor playing areas rather than a built environment.

"My dear Tini, are there any swings left in Mouse Garden?" (page:14)

"They are all broken, you know" (page:14)

"They will soon remove them and build apartments instead" (page:14)

Art education is essential. Children should be taken to museums and theaters starting from an early age.

"We didn't tell him before going to the museum." (page:16)

"What about the theater?" (page:16)

"We have gone to the theater three times." (page:16)

Everyone in our lives has different characteristics. If we outcast people because of their characteristics, we cannot win them over.

"But I think maybe he will get better if he is with us." (page:15)

"I think we are making a mistake. He will definitely get better one day." (page:16)

"We should help him. We should set an example." (page:16)

"His deeds are not good at all. They are not right either. I wonder why he acts like that?" (page:36)

"But maybe there is a reason why he is bad." (page:37)

"Maybe he did not have a family or friends who treated him well." (page:37)

If we approach an event with prejudice and do not listen to the other person, we may be upset later.

“We have been very unfair to Tini.” (page:34)

“It turns out that it was Greedy who came and ate everything.” (page:34)

It is a virtue to apologize as soon as we realize we have done something wrong.

“We apologize to you, my dear Tini. We found out the truth, we apologize from the bottom of our hearts.” (page:35)

“You are not a liar, Tini.” (page:36)

“You are not glutton, either.” (page:36)

Being greedy is not bad in all circumstances; it can also have positive effects in certain cases.

“We all want to be greedy for learning, right, friends?” (page: 50)

At the end of the play, useful ideas about what can be done to build or repair a children's playground are offered under the title "A suggestion".

“A suggestion:

Specially prepared cakes, buns and pinwheels (or just pinwheels) can be sold at the end of the plays. The income from these sales can be saved in a piggy bank and used for the construction (or repair) of a children's playground in real life, and this park can be named after the theater.

Conclusion and recommendations

Children's theater texts are generally read by adults to be staged most of which are not published as books. When considered from this point of view, Ayla Çınaroğlu's children's plays, which are published as books, send implicit messages to the target age group with both theatrical plot and the sensitive subjects they contain.

The way theater scripts are written saves the reader from being exposed to a monotonous narrative. The names of the characters who start speaking in theater scripts are stated at the beginning of each sentence, thus making it easier for the

reader to understand the text in group conversations. The song lyrics written to strengthen the plot of the scenes also subject the reader to a poetic narrative.

In this context, it should be underlined that children's play texts are published as books and that the internal and external structural features of the books are appropriate for age groups.

Children's plays in book form can be used to reinforce learning by "doing and experiencing" with a process-oriented approach based on the creative drama method, and thus what is learned can be made permanent.

In addition, it is believed that children's play texts can play an active role in bibliotherapy processes in terms of identifying with their implicit messages and characters.

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