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An analysis of literary works that can be used in history of Turkish revolution and Kemalism courses

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Abstract

In order to facilitate instruction of Kemalism and History of Turkish revolution course and to encourage students to read history literary products containing historical content are used. The purpose of this study is to analyze literary products with historical content which may support teaching of Kemalism and History of Turkish revolution. Document analysis method which is one of the qualitative research methodologies has been employed. As a result of a search conducted via internet a total of 55 children books suitable for the eighth grades has been determined and 10 of them has been analyzed by the researchers. All of the books have been evaluated as satisfactory with levels above 50% satisfaction level and it has been concluded that they will support students' historical knowledge and thinking in addition to being effective at acquiring values if they are used at instruction of Kemalism and History of Turkish Revolution course. In the study a control list developed by the researchers has been used. A control list consisting of 20 criteria has been created following review of the related literature. For the analysis of the data descriptive analysis methods has been employed.

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1. Introduction

Using children's literary works for social sciences and history education provides students with the opportunity to

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think critically and creatively and to socialize, in addition to the course books that are basic materials for teachers and students. Children's literary works differ from course books in terms of presenting more detailed expressions on more specific subjects. Additionally, literary works have an important function in social sciences and history courses within the frame of linguistic skills and thinking development. According to the findings of researches conducted in Turkey, literary works that are used as materials for social sciences education provide the permanency of the academic achievements of students and learning, and reinforce the students' attention towards courses and reading habits, as well as influencing the students to realize their affective objectives (Tekgöz, 2006; Öztürk and Otluoğlu, 2011).

It is established that particularly the biography genre is considered important among children's literary works in social sciences education programs and course books that were renewed in accordance with the constructivist concept in 2004 (Kaymakçı and Er, 2013). However, it is recommended to print a larger number of historical novels written in parallel with the subjects of history that the children are taught during courses (Ata, 2000; Erol, 2012). Literary works such as poems, plays, biographies, autographies, monographies, portrayals and particularly historical novels and stories are irreplaceable materials for enhancing interest towards history (Erol, 20012). If characteristics of time and place of the incident, and the social and cultural values and beliefs of the era are narrated correctly in historical novels instead of heroes' names and chronology of events, it becomes possible that the children understand how they feel in face of the events, have an opinion about lifestyles and form the perception of historical background. Thus, the necessary elements for historical thinking become enabled.

The essentialness of identifying the child-oriented historical novels in literature (Ata, 2000) and analyzing the contexts of children's literary works with regard to different disciplines are emphasized (Dedeoğlu, Ulusoy and Alici, 2013). The importance of this works originates from the fact that its subject is the aforementioned insufficiency in literature. The purpose of this work is to analyze the children's books that support the education of the historical subjects of Turkish Revolution History and Kemalism course for 8th grades within the framework of the criteria specified by researches in terms of historical context. The problem sentence established in this context is as follows: Are the historical children's books, which can be referred while teaching the subjects of Turkish Revolution History and Kemalism course for 8th grades, appropriate in terms of their contexts?

2. Method

In this study, document reviewing method (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2003) is used for collecting children's literary works with historical contexts. A search is conducted for Turkish-language and translated books that may reinforce the subjects of the Turkish Revolution History and Kemalism course for 8th grades via internet and the bookstores located in Muğla. 10 books that are identified by random sampling technique out of the obtained 55 books with historical contexts constitute the sample of this research. The books analyzed during the research are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The books constituting the sample group

Name of the book	Type of Literary	Author	Publisher	Number of Pages
Bedenleri BüyükYürekleri Küçüktü (B1)	Heroism of Story	Osman Alagöz	Kaynak Publications	101
Kurtuluş Savaşımız(B2)	Novel	Deniz Karal	Kültür Kitap Sarayı Publications	96
Milli Mücadele'de Kınalı Eller(B3)	Heroism of Story	Osman Alagöz	Kaynak Publications	144
Bir Hilal Uğruna "Çanakkale Destanı"(B4)	Novel	Yaşar Çalışkan	Uysal Publications	152
Tekler Mangası Gelibolu(B5)	Novel	Erkan İsfendiyaroğlu	Ertem Press Publications	203
Milli Mücadelenin Çocuk Kahramanları Ayağın Nerede Oğul(B6)	Heroism of Story	Fazıl Yazıcı	Yitik Hazine Publications	192
Şehit Şerife Bacı(B7)	Heroism of Story	Mehmet Sayan	Muştu Publications	65
Antep Semalarında Bir Şahin(B8)	Heroism of Story	Ersin Teres	Muştu Publications	88
Gönderden İnmeyen Bayrak(B9)	Heroism of Story	Ersin Teres	Muştu Publications	82
Seyit Onbaşı(B10)	Heroism of Story	Erdoğan Tucan	Muştu Publications	80

Document analysis method was used in this work. “Rubric for Evaluating Children’s Books with Historical Contexts” that was identified by the researchers was used for analyzing the books. The development of “the Rubric for Evaluating Children’s Books with Historical Contexts” was predicated upon works conducted within the literature (Atkinson, Matusevich, Huber, 2009; Frye, 2009; Halsey & Elliott, 2007). There are “adequate (3)”, “partially adequate (2)” and “inadequate (1)” columns in the rubric. Each book was codified according to these properties by the 3 researchers with regard to each article. In order to ensure reliability among coders, each of the books were first codified, and then discussed by the researches all together, and finally a common opinion was reached. In consequence of the calculation done by the Agreement / (Agreement + Divergence) X 100 formula suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994), the reliability among coders was identified to be 90. The constraint of the research emanates from the fact that it does not cover comic books, pictured books and poems out of the other genres of children’s literature.

3. Findings

The books constituting the sample group were analyzed according to the criteria prepared by the researchers and shown in Table 2. Accordingly, all of the analyzed books scored higher than 50%. When Table 2 was analyzed, it was seen that B1 got adequate points for 13 criteria, partially adequate points for 5 criteria, and inadequate points for 2 criteria out of 20 separate criteria. The most important insufficiency of the author regarding this book is that he did not feature any images within the book and it was noted that the events were not arranged chronologically. As for B2, it got adequate points for 15 criteria and partially adequate for 5 criteria out of the 20 criteria in total. The images used in this book are completely suitable for its context and are first-hand sources. The usage of first-hand sources improves the reliability and validity of the context. Moreover, B2 will contribute to the education of the subjects of “National Revival: Reactions against the Invasion of Our Country” unit of the Turkish Revolution History and Kemalism course. Considering B3, it got adequate points for 13 criteria and partially adequate points for 7 criteria out of the 20 criteria. It is considered that B3 is a good book for teaching historical information to students. It is concluded that the book includes not only the stories of the War of Independence but also the stories of the 1877 Ottoman-Russian War and Dardanelles War, not only the role of men but also the important role of women on and behind the front line during the struggles, and the fact that many women were martyred during the struggles. As for B4, it got adequate points for 15 criteria, intermediary points for 4 criteria and inadequate points for 1 criterion out of 20 separate criteria. In B4, the author enhanced the reliability of the context by adding footnotes of the historical information presented in certain pages. But, the coherency between the text and the images is insufficient in the book. When Table 2 was analyzed, B5 got adequate points for 17 criteria, intermediary points for 2 criteria and inadequate points for 1 criterion out of 20 criteria in total. There is incoherency between the text and the images of this book. It is significant that the meanings of the unknown words are given in the footnote of the 103rd page of the book.

As for B6, it got adequate points for 18 criteria and intermediary points for 2 criteria out of the 20 criteria in total. B6 will contribute to the education of the subjects of “National Revival: Reactions against the Invasion of Our Country” and “Either Freedom or Death” units, encourage students to read literary works and enable them to obtain new information about subjects that are not available except in course books owing to its context. Considering B7, it got adequate points for 13 criteria, intermediary points for 5 criteria and inadequate points for 2 criteria out of the 20 criteria in total. In this book, there are no signs for providing the reliability of the author, and the events are not clear in terms of place and time. B8 got adequate points for 17 criteria and intermediary points for 3 criteria out of the 20 criteria in total. B9 got adequate points for 15 criteria, intermediary points for 4 criteria and inadequate points for 1 criterion out of the 20 criteria in total. When examined, it was seen that the book dealt with three separate subjects, these being Western Front, Southern Front and Eastern Front during the National Struggle. B10 got adequate points for 13 criteria, intermediary points for 6 criteria and inadequate points for 1 criterion out of the 20 separate criteria. Although there are eight different stories in the book, “Corporal Seyit”, which is the title of only one story within the context, was chosen as the title of the book.

Table 2. Analysis Results Tables

Q.N.	Criteria	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10
		Adequate Intermediary Inadequate	Adequate Intermediary Inadequate	Adequate Intermediary Inadequate	Adequate Intermediary Inadequate	Adequate Intermediary Inadequate	Adequate Intermediary Inadequate	Adequate Intermediary Inadequate	Adequate Intermediary Inadequate	Adequate Intermediary Inadequate	Adequate Intermediary Inadequate
1	The book includes historical information.		2	3		2	3	3	3	3	2
2	The book provides evidence for the author's reliability (Is the author a historian?, Are bibliographical information and references available?)		2	2		2	2	3	1	2	1
3	The place is defined in detail.		2	3		2	3	3	3	3	2
4	Opinions and facts are clearly separated.		3	3		3	3	3	3	3	3
5	The facts are not oversimplified. There is not incomplete or incorrect information.		3	3		3	3	3	3	3	3
6	Generalizations are supported with facts, important events are not omitted.		3	3		3	3	3	3	3	3
7	Gender, ethnic and socio-economical prejudices are not present in the books.		3	3		3	3	3	3	3	3
8	The logical presentation and ideas are clearly sequential.		3	2		2	3	2	2	2	2
9	The level of context is suitable for the target audience.		3	2		2	2	2	2	2	3
10	Coherent text and images			1	3	2	1	1	3	3	3
11	Wholeness of images in terms of proportion, colour and width		3	3		3	3	2	3	3	3
12	It encourages a positive effect for reading history.		3	3		3	3	3	3	3	3
13	This book is a good book in the sense of historical context.		2	3		2	3	3	2	3	2
14	This book is a good book in the literary sense.		3	2		3	3	2	2	3	3
15	Values were emphasized.		3	3		3	3	3	3	3	3
16	It contributes to the skill of place perception.		2	3		2	2	3	2	3	2
17	It contributes to the skill of time and chronology perception.			1	2	2	3	3	1	2	2
18	There are no anachronisms in the book.		3	3		3	2	3	3	3	3
19	Historical concepts are used correctly in the book.		3	3		3	3	3	3	3	3
20	The levels of preliminary information and readiness are significant.		3	3		3	3	3	3	3	3

4. Discussion and Conclusion

When the books analyzed within the scope of this work were examined, it was prominently seen that the books got inadequate points in terms of the criterion that “the book provides evidence for the author’s reliability (Is the author a field specialist?, Are bibliographical information and references available?)” and the text and image coherency criteria. However, nearly all books were found to be adequate for “It encourages a positive effect for reading history” criterion. Furthermore, the books were found to be beneficial for the education of values. With this work, the criteria for selecting children’s literary works that can be referred during social sciences and history classes were tried to be identified, thus benefiting teachers. The booklist that shapes social sciences education in America and is published under the title of “Notable Trade Books” by the National Council of Social Sciences (NCSS) provides convenience especially for social sciences teachers to select the books that they may use during their courses. But, the Ministry of National Education does not publish such a list in Turkey, and there are no criteria available for teachers to take into consideration while suggesting books to students. Accordingly, the following suggestions can be offered: The Ministry of National Education may regularly publish an updated children’s books list for teachers to use during their courses each year. Moreover, more clear criteria can be declared for the teachers to select the recommended books for their courses.

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