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The use of drama in educational process through the legends in Cyprus

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Abstract

Legends are tools which should be used in order to develop knowledge in the process of the development of education and training, the creation of new ideas, cause and effect relationships in the establishment of widespread use of the enrichment of imagination. In order to attract attention to the living bird species in Cyprus, the dramas event Zümrüd-ü Anka Legend is used as a tool to prepare the application as an example for the activity to create awareness, the main aim of this study. In this study, the activity examples involved have been applied to 17 teachers, who have had drama education. The process and activity evaluation have been developed and written according to the outcome. Besides the thematical study, birds in Cyprus have also been used and created from newspapers. Different drama techniques used in activities have attracted our attention to birds that are tending to become extinct. The importance of these example activities is that it is applied to everybody. It is understood that through drama method, the result of the activity process is that participants fill in the expressions of activity evaluation forms and gain knowledge of the Legend of Zümrüd-ü Anka and the birds in Cyprus.

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1. Introduction

The most indispensable and valuable balancing elements of wildlife in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus are birds. If our aim is to protect the environment and contribute to tourism, measures must be taken to protect these important species. Thus, the first step towards this is to get to know them. Cyprus hosts two species of endemic birds: The Oenanthe cyprica (known as the Cyprus 'Kuyrukkakani'), and the Cyprus Warbler Sylvia melanthorax (known as the Cyprus Ötlek). In addition we know of four endemic sub species: The Otus Scops Cyprus (Cyprus Scops Owl) the İshak Bird, the Parus Ater Cypriotes (Coal Tit), the Pine 'Bashankarasi' Certhia Brachydactyla Dorotheae (Short-toed Treecreeper), the Garden 'Tırmaşıkkuşu' and the Garrulus Glandarius Glaszneri (Jay) Alakarga (Türkseven, 2012).

Occasional bird watching events organised by various organisations such as the Turkish Cypriot Biologists Association and the Bird Protection Society demonstrate that hunting is not the only activity related to birds that takes place in our country and that there has been some initiative to protect and raise awareness on birds.

1.1 The status of the problem

Cyprus, which currently hosts 373 species of bird is an indispensable location for migrating birds (Yaşlı, 2009). The Five Finger Mountain in the northern part of Cyprus along with other locations such as the Korucam point, the lakes of Gonyeli, Kanlıkoy, Koprulu, Famagusta Gulseren and Ayluka, Silver Beach, the Salamis Forests, the Karpaz peninsula and the Kalkanli lake are the important bird areas of the TRNC. Birds obtain their status in the natural cycle as predators that feed on rodents and insects; thus they are valuable to mankind due to their role in the biological struggle and their contribution to maintaining the natural balance. Sadly, concerns such as unplanned development, excessive water withdrawal from lakes and rivers, pesticides, the destruction of wetlands, hunting, bird catching with nets, forest fires and the inapplicability of relevant laws all maintain that the birds in our country are under threat (Yaşlı, 2009).

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In order to prevent the extinction of birds of Cyprus and in order to maintain their wellbeing, there is a need to raise awareness on this issue amongst the members of the community. One the most sustainable forms of education involves maintaining the participation of the individual into that area. An effective method to achieve this is drama: Through drama the cultural interaction of teachers will increase, they will be able to reflect this in education with the protection of their values and maintain the strengthening of the creative and aesthetic aspects of their students (Topdal, E. 2012).

Legends, like other word orientated cultural values have been prominent among our people for centuries. (Gökçeoğlu, M. 2004). During the bird education drama period the legend of the Zümrüd-ü Anka (Topak Stone) bird was utilized as a supportive mechanism.

1.2 Problem sentence

The problem of the study involves how to use drama as a method of raising awareness on the birds of Cyprus that are under the threat of extinction.

1.3 The aim of the project

The aim of this project is to use drama as a method and the legend of the Zümrüd-ü Anka bird as a vehicle to promote understanding and awareness on the various species of birds living in Cyprus.

1.4 The importance of the project

With this project, it is considered valuable for literary texts such as mythology, legend and fairytales to be employed through various forms of art and drama to raise awareness on the various species of birds in our country.

The project aims to encourage individual expression, the understanding of methods used in drama through experience, to develop creative thinking and encourage the development of innovative products as well as the transformation of waste material into design material for drama. It is hoped that this will ultimately help and support organisations, associations and educators who work to protect animals.

1.5 Limits

In terms of project content, the project is limited to birds of Cyprus and the legend of the Zümrüd-ü Anka (Topak Stone) bird, in terms of implementation the project is limited to a 3 hour implementation period. In terms of participants the project is limited to only 17 teachers from various educational branches and tourist guides.

2. Method

2.1 Data collection

The data for this project has been collected from various written material and recourses on birds of Cyprus and books written on legends. A model bird was produced using used newspaper sheets and a drama activity was prepared using various elements of drama.

In order to integrate the birds of Cyprus into the drama activities, newspaper sheets and tape were used to attach the bird models to sticks. Linear sculptures supported by paper sticks are appropriate for all age groups (Yılmaz, M.2005). Other than these paper puppets, legends were also deemed as a suitable tool to draw attention to birds. The legend of the Zümrüd-ü Anka bird, which is a Cypriot legend was used as an inspiration for various drama activities. Feedback surrounding the activities was retrieved by distributing evaluation forms to participants

2.2 The project implementation group

The project implementation group is composed of 17 teachers from various branches who have all obtained drama training in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

2.3 Data analysis

An analysis has been produced using the information provided by the 17 teachers in their evaluation forms regarding a part of the project.

2.3.1. The Name of the Event: Birds in Cyprus

2.3.2 Icebreakers – preparation:

- The group forms a circle. Participants are asked to imagine themselves as a bird and follow the leader in one direction and

wither walk or fly in either a swamp, on ice, on a branch, in a dump or in the sky in accompany with music with the emotion of joy or fear.

- Paired improvisations: Pairs are formed with mother birds and fledglings. Mother birds stand opposite their fledglings and use actions and sounds to pretend they are migrating from one country to another. The fledgling is asked to copy the mother's actions and sounds.

- The big group is asked to identify the names of the birds.

2.3.3 Preparation

2.3.3.1 Bird Puppet Activity:

All participants are provided with newspapers, magazines and colourful tape. The participants are then asked to transform this material into sticks of various sizes and bird puppets, each participant is then asked to name their puppet

2.3.3.2. Figurative language, idioms and proverbs surrounding birds activity:

Groups are formed giving each group the name of a bird. Groups are given various proverbs that include birds such as 'the early bird catches the worm, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, wise as an owl, eagle eye, like a duck to water and so forth' and each group is asked to act out a chosen proverb.

2.3.3.3 Birds of the forest activity:

A circle is formed. Each person in the circle is given one of the following three bird names: Cikla, the Cyprus Ötlek, and Pulya (well known birds of Cyprus. One person is called into the centre of the circle. When the bird Cikla is called out all of the Cikla's of the group swap places. When the Cyprus Ötlek is called all of the Cyprus Ötlek's and when Pulya is called the Pulya's run across the circle trying to swap places. Meanwhile the person in the middle who has called out the name tries to catch the birds of the forest as they swap places. If the person in the centre is able to catch a bird that bird also becomes one of the people in the centre who try to catch the other birds. The game continues until the number of birds decreases substantially.

2.3.4 Gaming – Playing games:

A pre prepared puppet bird named Gukgak is introduced to the participants. A short discussion is held addressing questions such as who prepared the bird, what the name of the bird can be, why the bird is with us and other questions relating to the design process. The following statement is made: "the Gukgak puppet has arrived to tell us of the legend of the Zümrüd-ü Anka bird (Topak Stone). However no body knows of how the legend ends. With our help the Gukgak bird will also find out how the legend ends."

"The Zümrüd-ü Anka legend:

The inhabitants of the city of Kyrenia refer to a point in a mountain called Ciklos as the egg rock because the rock looks like an egg split into two. According to the legend this point of Ciklos was the home of the Zümrüd-ü Anka bird and when her partner died she began to protect her last egg with all her might. She sat on the egg for days without once leaving it. But one day, the bird could no longer stand the hunger and left the egg for a few minutes to hunt for food. However, just at that point the egg was about to hatch, as the fledgling began to break free of its shell the egg lost its balance and fell off the cliff. The eagles that were waiting below caught the fledgling and ate it. Thus the famous Zümrüd-ü Anka bird renowned for not having another baby eventually became extinct. The eagles, who could never forget what an amazing feast they enjoyed on that day continue to fly beneath that same cliff (Karlitaş and Bağışkan, 2011).

2.3.4.1 "Zümrüd-ü Anka searches for her fledgling" activity:

The whole of the legend was not told as Gukgak will hear of the end from the participants. Gukgak only tells us of the point until the Zümrüd-ü Anka bird comes back from hunting and does not find her egg. The bird groups decide on the fate of the egg themselves and improvise the rest of the story themselves.

"Designing new nests to protect the Zümrüd-ü Anka birds egg" activity:

The groups are given pieces of paper, tape and tree branches to design their own nest for the Zümrüd-ü Anka bird who is good friends with Gukgak. The groups then present their nest to Gukgak and persuade Gukgak as to why their nest is the safest

The Gukgak puppet walks around the activity room visiting each group and nest. Gukgak observes that all of the bird groups are in competition with each other and this upsets Gukgak. Gukgak is not persuaded and says he will leave but will return again soon.

The participants are told that peace and happiness will only occur when birds of different planets and the birds of different nests learn to live together. Each group is asked to form a piece of music that they will dance to as they go to visit Gukgak and demonstrate the variety of ideas each group has to offer to the design that will protect the egg of Zümrüd-ü Anka bird.

The Gukgak decides that neither nest is good enough for his dear friend Zümrüd-ü Anka and makes another suggestion to the groups. Gukgak suggests that the groups work together, bringing together all ideas to produce an ultimate safe nest for the egg and to explain to Gukgak the kind of life they anticipate will be lived in that nest.

The social awareness aspect of the project:

"Gukgak is a special bird that has travelled through time to find a solution to his friend Zümrüd-ü Anka's problem. He travels

all the way to our time in order to find out what happens at the end of the Zümrüd-ü Anka legend. His friends' egg is in danger and he discusses different methods of design to create a safe nest with the participants. An improvised discussion takes place”.

2.3.5 Relaxing – sharing – discussion – observance and evaluation:

Gukgak has not forgotten his ultimate aim which is to help. Zümrüd-ü Anka never leaves her egg, it's up to Gukgak to find her new nests. However, it is the right of the birds to enquire as to who will live in the nest that they so carefully designed. Thus participants are asked to go outside and imagine and design birds using materials they find in the outdoors.

3.Results and Comments

The results of the project were obtained from the evaluation forms completed by the 17 participants.

3.1 Results and comments identified in the evaluation forms:

Among the positive aspects of the event reported by the participants was that the creative aspect regarding the puppet making and the use of mysterious and creative legends was highly educational and innovative.

When referring to what was learnt the participants mainly highlighted that participants learnt of the various species of birds in Cyprus as well as the Zümrüd-ü Anka legend and how to employ the drama method in educational settings.

When asked how far the activity can be adapted to other lessons the participants stated that such activities could easily be adapted to and utilised in all kinds of lessons including social education, nature and environment, science, maths, art and craft, social sciences, design, Turkish, music, physical education, dance and social

4. Conclusion and suggestions

On the completion of the project awareness was raised on our winged friends of Cyprus and Cypriot legends, and the employment of the drama method in educational settings.

As supported and emphasized by scientific study, drama and legends can develop a multiple number of skills and creativity in educational settings. As a result this study should be reproduced and disseminated to schools. Those that work in the areas of education, family and tourism should work together to design and produce various creative activities and scientific research to promote awareness and social responsibility. Similar events and activities should be held for the participation of those that work in the areas of education, family and tourism.

The activity examples presented in this study can be altered and adapted to all educational environments and all age groups according to the stage of development of the participants.

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