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Children's literature, children's journalism and magazine publishing in Turkish republic (the period between 1923-1940)

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Abstract

The purpose of present research is to demonstrate the historical development of children's literature in Turkish Republic between the period 1923-1940 and also to manifest children's newspapers and magazines published between these dates. To that end, children's newspapers and magazines published during the period 1923-1940 have been scanned; publication dates, places, publication intervals and publications' owners have been detected. It is suggested that substantial contribution shall be rendered to the studies of children's literature researchers by detecting children's newspapers and magazines of the period 1923-1940 when, regardless of the scarcity of children's publications, it was attempted to gain new knowledge to children and encourage them to reading, contemplating and creating.

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1. Introduction

The importance attached to children's education which became even widespread with the introduction of printing press into our daily lives has become even more visible through releasing the publications that would answer children's needs of reading. The foremost of these publications have been children magazines and newspapers. Children newspapers and magazines constitute the earliest samples of written sources of media communication tools totally exclusive to children. In addition to gaining a pleasure of reading, these newspapers and magazines have also opened the gates leading to new domains of learning. Furthermore the child would feel even more special and valuable through the help of these newspapers and magazines exclusive to children.

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2. Method

Current research which employs scanning method is a case detection study. In this research, the development of children's literature in Turkish Republic between the period 1923-1940 as well as published children newspapers and magazines have been examined. "Scanning method is a research approach aiming to describe a past or present situation in the way it exists" (Karasar, 1995: 77). In the research, two problems stated below have been discussed:

- a. How is the development of Turkish literature for children between the period 1923-1940?
- b. What are the children newspapers and magazines published within Turkish Republic between the period 1923-1940?

3. Findings

The research findings have been listed as below under relevant titles.

3.1. Findings relevant of the First Research Problem

On accounts of bearing huge responsibility in transmitting national and cultural values to the next generations, the children and children's education have been recognized as a national policy and accordingly it has been aimed to create a diversified set of children's literature works. With the declaration of Alphabet Reform on 1 November 1928, a new age started. With this reform Turkish nation paved great steps in the road to reading and writing. Compared to the past there has been incredible rise in the publication of books, newspapers and magazines. Priceless works of former periods have been republished in new alphabet amongst which there is Qur'an as well. The new alphabet reform also enabled Muslim citizens to learn their religion in the new letters.

Alpay describes this process such: "Alphabet reform, aiming to reach one hundred percent literacy amongst Turkish citizens, also opened the way to a vivid publication age as well. New writers were given priority on the one hand and on the other hand valuable works in the old alphabet were republished in the new alphabet. Alphabet and books as well as reading-facilitating texts constituted the great majority of the works released during the period between 1928-35 (Alpay, 1980:169)."

Since during the early years of the Republic, National Literature movement was adopted and supported by the political authorities, the children were encouraged to memorize the rhymed and metered poems exalting Anatolia and Anatolians in addition to "Anatolian Romanticism". Also, the kind of poems divinizing and prophetizing Mustafa Kemal Atatürk while degrading Ottoman State eradicated by the new regime and exalting racism and Pan-Turanism were also greatly favored. Nonetheless, the poems valuing the children's skills in thinking, listening, interpreting and creating were almost none. The magazines such as "Talebe Mecmuasi", "Çocuk Dünyası", "Çocuk Sesi", "Mektepli" and "Arkadaş" were also the periodicals of this age. They all aimed to satisfy reading needs of children while at the same time transferring the new values of the modern regime to the young generations (Kabacalı, Tarihsiz: 608, 609).

The Republican Period followed a different stage, compared to other periods, with respect to the development of children's literature. During this period in particular the child was given more attention, a good number of children activities were organized so to emphasize the exclusive and significant position children occupy in society (Yalçın and Aytaş, 2005: 25).

Similar to pre-Republican periods, the tradition of writing children's poetry continued during the Republican period as well. The kind of poems portraying Anatolia and Anatolians constituted a great place in these ages. Mehmet Faruk Gürtenca's "Çocukların Şiir Kitabı" (1928), Hasan Ali Yücel's "Sizin İçin" (1938), Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel's "Akıncı Türküleri" (1938), Yusuf Ziya Ortaç's "Kuş Cıvıltıları" (1938) were the poetry books published during these periods (Toz, 2007).

It is witnessed that after the 1930s, the writers became even more eager and prone to writing children novels. Some of the works of this age are Köprü Altı Çocukları (Huriye Öviz, 1936), Tahtları Deviren Çocuk (İskender Fahrettin Sertelli, 1936) and Türk İkizleri (Cahit Uçuk, 1937) . (Güleç ve Geçgel, 2005)

Language simplification in Republican period enabled the children to read and comprehend the works of artists, some of whom were teachers, who wrote in spoken Turkish. The foremost of these writers was Reşat Nuri. The number of artists writing children novels and stories also rose in post-Republican period. Amongst the leading novelists who wrote to spread a consciousness of history in particular and who aimed to address children readers was Abdullah Ziya Kozanoğlu (1906-1966). Kozanoğlu penned several books such as Kızıl Tuğ (1923), Atlı Han (1924), Türk Korsanları (1926), Seyit Ali Reis (1927), Gültekin (1928) etc. (Enginün, 1987: 44).

3.2. Findings relevant of the Second Research Problem

Prior to mentioning Turkish magazine publishing for children between the period 1923-1940 it would be beneficial to briefly explain the origins of magazine publishing and its meeting with our daily life. Amongst the reasons that can be given to explain the vital function of magazine publishing as a mass communication tool of which origins date as far as media history are such; it reaches to a great number of people, it enables an enrichment in intellectual domain, it gains social awareness to people and it can teach and delight simultaneously.

As an outcome of the entrance of printing press into daily life, the release of exalted and unspoiled self-awareness in writers also assisted in the rise of a similar attitude amongst the readers. By virtue of the spread of printing press, the number of issues to discuss has increased, they have taken places within books and finally presented in a written format (Postman, 1995).

Şimşek (2001) notes that Europe paved the way in media development just as the rise in the use of printing press and he links the emergence of magazine publishing with social sciences. As a result of the emergence of social sciences, the presentation of knowledge to society enabled a suitable ground for the emergence of tools that can enhance such knowledge. Since written materials-the most effective and durable sources- are the ones lasting longest and reaching wider populations, magazine publishing also surfaced as a natural consequence of such necessity.

As we analyze the historical process of reading education, it surfaces that children newspapers and magazines that were recognized as references in Turkish lessons received huge interest in post-Republican period as they were in pre-Republican period as well. Children newspapers and magazines that served to teach in mother-tongue not only gained a reading habit to children but also enriched their vocabulary, general cultural knowledge and awareness of global events. Any child having read the different literary works in a magazine started to gain appreciable attitudes and conducts by virtue of the messages conveyed through texts.

An analysis of the instructional function of children magazines demonstrates that above all else, they are instructional tools performing instructional functions, delighting and also assisting in solving daily-life problems. These magazines published for primary education students in learning process have set their targets as teaching and delighting their target mass; primary education students (Şimşek, 2001).

"Turkish Literature for Children" which started to blossom during the early years of Republic and periods of Reforms and Absolutism failed to catch up with the modern age, just as Turkish public in general. The transforming political order in Turkey introduced with itself a consciousness of "nation" as well. The first step taken accordingly was enactment of 3 March dated 1924 Tevhid-i Tedrisat (The Law of Unification of Education) under the influence of Board of Education and Discipline.

In 1924, a board under the administration of American specialist John Dewey was assigned to form a national educational policy of Turkey and spread education, accordingly the first action has been establishing a Board of Education and Discipline. It can reasonably be argued that the primary objective of this board has been to establish moral authority over national education. Since 1924 till present day, no course book has been taught in state schools without receiving the approval of Board of Education and Discipline (Türkmenoğlu, 2007: 165).

Another Republican reform reflecting the cultural and educational transformation has been 1 November 1928 dated Alphabet Reform. With the approval of New Turkish Alphabet in Turkey, Latin Alphabet replaced the Arabic

Alphabet. This transformation did not bring about any difficulty or delay in the publication of children magazines; on the contrary it enabled a continuous rise in the publications.

The number of primary education schools rose during the period between 1923 -1938 from 4.895 to 6.700- although far from meeting the needs of the nation- hence an increase of 73% could be reached. Parallel to the rise in the number of primary education students, an increase in the demand for children literature works was also witnessed. In this period when didactic trends were popular, the child figure presented through translation literature started to be seen as a Western symbol with the modernization. In the publication of translations and adaptations and certain copyrighted works, state bodies and publication houses rendered major contributions (Türkmenoğlu, 2007).

Alpay has listed 23 children magazines published between the period 1923 - 1940 as in Table 1 according to their dates of publication and noted that amongst these magazines there also existed a children newspaper advocating the rights of children (Alpay, 1980: 178, 179,180).

Table 1. Children's Newspapers and Magazines published between the Period 1923 - 1940

Magazine / Newspaper	Date of Publication	Place of Publication	Publication Interval	Owned by
Çocuk Postası	1923	İstanbul	-	-
Şübbân	1923	İstanbul	-	Recai
Talebe Mecmuası	1923	İstanbul	Fortnightly	Hikmet Arif
Genç Mektepliler	1924	İstanbul	Fortnightly	Muallim Ahmet Hilmi
Haftalık Gazetemiz <i>Pictorial</i>	1924	İstanbul	Weekly	Tahsin Demiray
Resimli Dünya	1924-1925	İstanbul	-	Orhan Seyfi
Resimli Eytâm Mecmuası	1925	İstanbul	-	Hamid Nuri
Resimli Mecmua	1925	İstanbul	-	Tahsin Demiray
Sevimli Mecmua	1925	İstanbul	-	M. Zekeriyya (Sertel)
Yeni Yol	1925-1926	İstanbul	Weekly	Muallim Nedim Tuğrul
Çiçek	1926	İstanbul	Fortnightly	Ruhi
Gürbüz Türk Çocuğu	1926-1928	İstanbul	Monthly	Dr. Fuat Mehmet
Çocuk Dünyası	1927	İstanbul	Weekly	-
Annelere ve Çocuklara Salname	1927	-	Yearly	Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti
Çocuk Yıldızı	1927	İzmir	Weekly	-
Çocuk Sesi	1928	-	-	-
Gençlik	1928	İstanbul	Monthly	Cemal
Altun Kalem	-	Bulgaria	Fortnightly	Ahali Yurdu
Hacıyatmaz	-	İstanbul	-	Diken Neşriyatı
Mektepli Gazetesi	1932-1935	İstanbul	Weekly	M. Sami Karayel
Şen Çocuk	1932-1933	İstanbul	Fortnightly	Mehmet Şükrü
Çocuk Sesi	1932-1937	İstanbul	Weekly	M. Faruk Gürtunca
Afacan	1934-1939	İstanbul	Weekly	M. Faruk Gürtunca
Çalışkan Çocuk	1934-1935	İstanbul	Weekly	Refik Emin
Oklahoma	1935-1955	İstanbul	Fortnightly	Alaadin Kırıl
Olgun Çocuk	1935	İstanbul	Weekly	Burhan Bilbaşar
Ateş	1936-1938	İstanbul	Weekly	Tahsin Demiray
Çocuk	1936-1948	Ankara	Weekly	Fuat Umay
Gelincik	1936	İstanbul	-	M. Faruk Gürtunca
Öğretmen İleri	1936-1937	İstanbul	Not regular	N.Bilbaşar-B. Atasayar
Yavrutürk	1936-1942	İstanbul	Weekly	Tahsin Demiray
Yeni Kültür	1936-1945	Ankara	Monthly	Kâzım Namî Duru
Cumhuriyet Çocuğu	1938-1939	İstanbul	Weekly	Zahide Tan
Çocuk Gazetesi	1938	İstanbul	-	M. Muzaffer
Asrın Çocuğu	1939-1940	İzmir	Weekly	Süha Tükel
Binbir Roman	1939-1952	İstanbul	Weekly	Tahsin Demiray

Based on the data exhibited in Table 1, the developments witnessed between years 1923-1940 can be listed such: The rise of the newly emerging newspapers and magazines following 1928 Alphabet Reform indicates that with the adoption of Latin Alphabet a greater number of readers has been reached. Another point to focus on the release of new newspapers and magazines between years 1923-1940 is that during years 1929, 1930, 1931, 1933 and 1937 there was none newly introduced magazine at all. Only the magazines which started to be printed in earlier dates

could proceed to be distributed. Amongst the newspapers and magazines printed between 1923-1940 particularly in İstanbul (29) then İzmir (2), Ankara (2) and Bulgaria (1), the publication place of one is unknown. Additionally the publication dates of two magazines from 1923 - 1940 period are not definite.

Another point that deserves remark in Table 1 is related to the effects of 24 November 1934 dated Surname Law. The passage of this law enforced each citizen to adopt a last name next to his/her first name. The owners of the newspapers and magazines that started to be published after 1934 or continued to be released in this date are indicated with their surnames.

As we analyze the names who published or prepared children newspapers and magazines between years 1923-1940 two names take the stage. The first name is Tahsin Demiray; the publisher of five children newspapers or magazines and the other one is the publisher of three newspapers or magazines; M. Faruk Gürünca.

Writer and publisher Tahsin Demiray who was an acknowledged National defender graduated from İstanbul Muallim Mektebi (Teacher's training school) while he was still an instructor in Emirgan Hidiv İsmail Paşa Nümune Mektebi (School). Publisher of newspapers and magazines Haftalık Resimli Gazetemiz (1924), Resimli Mecmua (1925) Tahsin Demiray founded Türkiye Printing House and published several magazines like Ateş (1936-1938), Yavrutürk (1936 -1942), Binbir Roman (1939 - 1952) in this printing house (Tekin, 1995: 164).

Graduated from Edirne Muallim Mektebi (Teacher's training school) in 1922 and following an engagement with teaching for a while, completed higher education in İstanbul University Faculty of Dentistry, Gürünca at last made an entrance to publication world. In addition to the newspapers and magazines in Table 1 Çocuk Sesi (1932), Afacan (1934) and Gelincik (1936) he also published Çocuk Gözü (1945), Okul ve Öğretmen, Her Ay, Her Hafta, Hergün (1953-1972) magazines and newspapers (Tekin, 1995: 270).

Table 2. Number of Children's Newspapers and Magazines Published between the Period 1923 - 1940

Publication Period	Number of Issues
1923 - 1928	15
1928 - 1940	21
Total	36

As we analyze Table 2, the periods between the Proclamation of Republic (1923) and Alphabet Reform (1928) witnessed the publication of 15 children newspapers and magazines; the period between Alphabet Reform (1928) and 1940 witnessed the publication of 21 children newspapers and magazines. As indicated hereby the alphabet reform introduced a rise in the number of primary education students and demand for relevant publications.

Table 3. Number of Children's Newspapers and Magazines with respect to Publication Intervals

Publication Interval	Number of Issues
Weekly	15
Fortnightly	6
Monthly	3
Yearly	1
Not regular	1
Unknown	10

In Table 3 the intervals of publication of children newspapers and magazines between 1923-1940 have been demonstrated. As clearly exhibited hereby, ten newspapers and magazines have no definite intervals amongst this list which includes magazines most of which are published weekly.

The explanations stated above make it clear that most of the names engaged in newspaper and magazine publishing between 1923-1940 were at the same time instructors. This coincidence is an evidence of the leadership teachers played in children's education and adoption of Republican values.

Subsequent to the 1940s, children magazines that became popular in quite a short time have been; Çocuk Haftası (1943) and Doğan Kardeş (1945). In the 1950s children magazines lost their teaching quality and the number of magazines that simply appealed to entertainment has risen. In the 1970s the intellectuals who caught a glimpse of this reality started to publish magazines embellished with modern educational targets (Alpay, 1980).

Conclusion

In the light of obtained findings it can reasonably be asserted that with the Proclamation of Republic that was a revolutionary turning point in Turkish politics and social order and subsequent Alphabet Reform, there have been positive developments in the rise of children newspapers and magazines. Above all else modern Turkish alphabet facilitated reading-writing and printing. Next, the regular increase in the number of primary education students has initiated a positive development in the number of literary works specific to children. It was again during this period that relevant state bodies and private publishing houses cooperated to publish exclusive copyrights and translation works for children. In order to meet the needs of written materials such as books, newspapers and magazines that contribute to social and cultural development of children and bear instructional and delighting features collectively, the intellectuals of this period gave priority to publishing works for children. Research findings also demonstrate that between years 1923 – 1940 total 36 children newspapers and magazines were published which is a clear manifestation that a rapid development was witnessed in the domain of ‘children’s literature’ during this process.

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