

# Evaluation of tales in Turkish course books with reference to Max Lüthi principles

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## ABSTRACT

Max Lüthi deployed five basic principles that reflect the characteristic features of tales to analyze European tales with a text-centered approach. These basic principles have been accepted as a universal form for tales that can exist, change and transfer from narrator to narrator and from nation to nation. In this context, this research aimed to investigate the tales in the Turkish course books in line with the tale principles demonstrated by Max Lüthi. In the research, document review, one of the qualitative research methods, was used, and the data obtained from the research was analyzed with descriptive analysis method. The research found no tale in the Turkish Course book followed Max Luthi's five basic principles. However, it was concluded that some basic principles might have been neglected due to the fact that these texts were concerned about acquiring value and giving advice to students. Based on the results obtained the research suggests that tales must be selected in accordance with Max Lüthi principles in order that the tales chosen for Turkish course books reflect universal principles of human conditions and human existence in terms of either adapting tales to other tales or possessing universal principles while choosing tales for Turkish course books.

**Keywords:** Turkish course book, Max Lüthi, Tale principles.

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## INTRODUCTION

Tales are immersive and impressive narratives that attract children's attention, keep their curiosity alive and enrich their imagination. Tales that have significant contributions to the child's cognitive, social and language development have been included in many programs of the Turkish curriculum applied from the 1926 Primary School Turkish Curriculum to the 2019 Turkish Curriculum, which is currently used (Temizyürek and Balci, 2015). Tales reflect the real world of the child and have an important effect on his/her learning and development process of the first language (Kantarcioğlu, 1991: 41). Thanks to the tales through which children have opportunities sensing and exploring the features of their first language, enriching their vocabulary, getting to know the cultural elements of the society they live in, and expanding their imagination in a lively and fluent fiction.

Tales that are told through master narrators and leave lasting traces in the child's soul, are described as a type

of verbal expression that can convince the audience even though they are fictitious and the events take place in the fairy tale land where the heroes are often animals and supernatural beings (Sakaoğlu, 2010: 2; Sakaoğlu: 2018: 45). Tales that do not have the concern for persuasion and have nothing to do with reality are narratives that are completely fictitious as well as including the social and cultural codes of the society to which they belong (Helimoğlu Yavuz, 2009: 35; Boratav, 2016: 85). From this aspect, addressing all humanity, not to a certain period or society, tales are called places of cultural memory. Through these memory places, the past is carried to the future as if making it present and implicit socio-cultural values are passed down from generation to generation (Ege, 2013).

Tales born from the first human communities have a long history. Any tale specific to a nation can be seen in different parts of the country, and even the same tale can

come to life in different nations (Rayman, 2010: 41). In this context, it is possible to state that tales spread over large areas and emerging from nationalities they gain universal quality.

Tales are subjected to some changes in oral tradition as they are transferred from narrator to narrator. But in this process, there is a basic form that continues invisibly, although not all of the tales are perfectly conveyed. In "Das Europäische Volksmärchen, Form und Wesen", Max Luthi revealed that there is a nature, form and structure of the tale itself and the assets/objects in it. Lüthi was concerned with the nature and style of the tale, not with issues such as when and how the tale occurred. Lüthi worked on European tales to determine the basic features of tales. As a result of Lüthi's studies, five basic principles that should be found in tales were identified (Gümüş, 2017a: 13-14).

**1. One-dimensionality:** Extraordinary events in tales do not require more explanation than daily events. Although the tale takes place in the real and imaginary world, there is only one world for tale characters. In this one-dimensional world, where there is no distinction between dream and reality, everything is natural and considered ordinary (Lüthi, 1996a; Çiçek, 2018: 120).

**2. Depthlessness:** Tales do not have a depth dimension that distinguishes the extraordinary world from daily world. Tale characters are personalities that have no relation to the past and the future, and they have no inner world and environment (Lüthi, 1996b: 81).

**3. Abstract style:** Symbolic expression is dominant in tales that are far from depth and detail. Just as the abstraction of objects is in the foreground, the characters are on an abstract fantasy. In tales with an abstract background, characters are often described with descriptive phrases such as "the daughter of the underground sultan" (Önal and Dursun, 2009: 229; Çiçek, 2018: 121).

**4. Isolation and universal interconnection:** Although the characters in tales belong to daily life, they are differentiated on an abstract background in terms of some features. In narratives, where characters are not connected to their families, society, spouses or any person, isolated characters and objects are brought to the forefront. In the plot, which is normalized on a real basis, characters exist in their own world, but they are not independent from the world. The tale hero is independent from all people and events and also connected to everything and every event (Önal and Dursun, 2009: 229; Gümüş, 2017a: 100; Çiçek, 2018: 121).

**5. Sublimation and all-inclusiveness:** In tales, removing from the real world the characters are sublimed and purified. This sublimation process, which is made by unburdening and transforming figures and objects, allows

the tale hero to involve the world. Although the characters are sublimed and differentiated, the patterns represent the truth and reflect the different features of the real existence (Oruç, 2000, cited in Önal and Dursun, 2009: 230; Gümüş, 2017a: 123).

The basic principles determined by Max Lüthi are important in terms of identifying the basic features of tales because tales are narratives that change and transfer from narrator to narrator, region to region, and nation to nation. In related literature, to determine whether the tales have universal qualities, a few studies (Gümüş, 2017a; Gümüş, 2017b; Çiçek, 2018), in which analyses were made in line with the basic principles of Max Lüthi (Gümüş, 2017a; Gümüş, 2017b; Çiçek, 2018) were conducted and it was determined that there was no related study regarding tales that take place in Turkish course books. Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the tales in Turkish course books in line with Max Lüthi's principles.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in this study, which aims to examine the tales in Turkish course books according to the tale principles determined by Max Lüthi. Document review involves the analysis of written materials that contain information about the phenomenon or facts intended to be investigated. The analyzed documents are non-reactive and appropriate in the context of the subject studied. This type of research helps the researcher to obtain the data required without the need for observation or interview for the emergence of meaning and elimination of uncertainties (Merriam, 2015: 155; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013).

### Research materials

In qualitative research, it is important to select the documents to be used in the research for the purpose (Creswell, 2017: 189). In this context, the research materials are determined as 2 (two) tales from 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Turkish course book used in secondary schools by Ministry of National Education (MNE) in 2019-2020 academic year, 1 (one) tale from 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Turkish course book, 1 (one) tale from 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Turkish course book and 1 (one) tale from the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Turkish course book. *The Wolf and The Dog* tale was not evaluated since another variable of it was found in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade course book.

### Data collection and analysis

The Turkish course books introduced by the Ministry of

National Education in the 2019-2020 academic year were selected at each grade level. The texts in the selected course books were examined in terms of their types and tales. Since the tale, *The Cat and The Mouse*, in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade course book is a listening text, the relevant text from the Education Informatics Network (EBA) was listened to, and transcribed.

A descriptive analysis method was used to obtain data for this study by examining the tales in the Turkish course book for their adherence to the tale principles of Max Lüthi. In descriptive analysis, a conceptual framework is created for data analysis and in line with this thematic framework, the data is defined, explained, organized and interpreted (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013: 256). In this study, the selected tales were read one by one, evaluated and analyzed according to Max Lüthi's tale principles.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, tales in the Turkish course books are examined in line with the principles of Max Lüthi. The elements determined in the tales presented in Table 1.

According to Table 1, there is no tale in the Turkish course books that conforms to all tale principles of Max Lüthi. In the tale, *Freedom*, one-dimensionality, abstract style, sublimation and all-inclusiveness principles were found; in *Who Knows the Value of Goodness?*, the principles of one-dimensionality, depthlessness, abstract style, isolation and universal interconnection were found; in *Giving is Gaining*, only one-dimensionality principle; in *The Turtle and the Two Ducks*, one-dimensionality, sublimation and all-inclusiveness principles; and in *The Cat and The Mouse*, one-dimensionality, abstract style, sublimation and all-inclusiveness principles were found.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Turkish course book, two tales were found, *Freedom*, *Who Knows the Values of Goodness*. When the tale *Freedom* was examined according to Max Lüthi's tale principles, it was seen that the principle of depthlessness was not included in the tale: "*Looking for a prey because of hunger, the wolf sees a village in the distance. The wolf is miserable. Hunters and shepherd dogs in the village are very dangerous for wolves.*" "*The villagers are always ready because the wolves attack villages, sheep and barn*" (Çapraz Baran, and Diren, 2019: 149). In this statement, it can be stated that the principle of depthlessness was ignored, as the explanatory statement about how the wolves hunted and why the villagers were always ready.

"Tell me, my friend." he says: "How can you keep being so plumpy while I have been starving for days like this?" The dog replies merrily: "People feed me." "Is that all?" the wolf says surprisingly. "You must be working hard, then?" "No, no!" the dog says. "All I do is watching the garden at night." "Are they giving you food for this? Are they looking after you for this only?" the wolf asks. "If

that's all, I will help you too, together we can protect the garden. It is very difficult to find food outside; you don't know what that means!" (Çapraz Baran, and Diren, 2019: 150). It is seen in these sentences that one-dimensionality principles included. The basis of this principle is that everything that happens in the tale world is considered ordinary and natural. In the sentences, the wolf and the dog are seen to be the heroes of the real world. However, the wolf's speech and the dog's speech did not surprise them both.

It is also seen that the tale principle of abstract style, which is one of the principles of Max Lüthi, was included in the *Freedom* tale. "*Looking for prey because of hunger, the wolf sees a village in the distance. The wolf is miserable.*" "*The chain around my neck shed my hair. The owner of this place put me in chains and keeps me chained in this garden all day.*" (Çapraz Baran, and Diren, 2019: 150). As seen in the examples, the dog, the wolf, the owner of the dog and the villagers are mentioned, however detailed information and descriptions of these beings are not included.

The event described in the tale is not completely independent from the present world; the event has a connection with the real world. However, heroes are sublimated by isolating them from the real world. "*The wolf is very happy about this situation. The wolf envies the dog's life. Together they go to the place the dog guards. But for a moment wolf recognizes a trace on the dog's neck. The hair on the dog's neck has shed. "What happened to your neck dog did you have a fight?" "The chain around my neck shed my hair. The owner of this place puts mein chains and keeps me chained in this garden all day." The answer is not for the wolf: "Then goodbye, my poor friend." says the wolf and quickly moves away. "Sorry, friend, I changed my mind. I can be hungry, but I prefer to be free." The wolf says goodbye to the dog*" (Çapraz Baran, and Diren, 2019: 150). As seen in the example, the fact that the wolf and dog are living beings in the real world shows the existence of the principle of all-inclusiveness, also it is seen that the dog is given the ability to speak, to think, to question and analyze which means sublimation.

Another tale included in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Turkish course book is *Who Knows the Value of Goodness*. When the tale was examined according to the tale principles of Max Lüthi, it was seen that the one-dimensionality principle was included in the tale. "*The wolf saw a villager walking on his way with a sack on his back. Begging the villager: -Hunters are after me, please save me.*

Peasant asks:

- How, pure heartedly.

Breathlessly the wolf says:

- Easy. Just let me get in the sack on your back!

The peasant lowers the sack to the ground and empties the corn out of the sack, inserts the wolf into the sack, and hit the road as earlier." (Çapraz Baran, and Diren, 2019: 192). The basis of one-dimensionality principle is

**Table 1.** Evaluation of tales in Turkish course books with reference to Max Lüthi's principles.

Tale	One-dimensionality		Depthlessness		Abstract syle		Isolation and universal interconnection		Sublimation and all-inclusiveness	
	Exists	Non-existent	Exists	Non-existent	Exists	Non-existent	Exists	Non-existent	Exists	Non-existent
Freedom	X			X	X			X	X	
Who Knows the Value of Goodness?	X		X		X		X			X
Giving Is Gaining	X			X		X		X		X
The Turtle and The Two Ducks	X			X		X		X	X	
The Cat and The Mouse	X			X	X			X	X	

that everything that happens in the tale world is accepted as usual and considered natural. The wolf and the villager are the heroes and part of the real world. However, the wolf's speech did not surprise the peasant at all, and the peasant considers this situation as usual.

Another principle determined in the *Who Knows the Value of Goodness?* tale is the principle of depthlessness. *"The wolf accepted the peasant's offer; the wolf and the peasant set off together. On their way, they come across with an old horse." "That day things did not go well. First, it was trapped and barely survived."* (Çapraz Baran, and Diren, 2019: 192). When the sentences are examined, it is observed that the principle of depthlessness is included. In the first sentence, not including the physical characteristics of the horse, which is one of the tale heroes, not describing the horse, only including the name of the horse; in the second sentence, not including the information about the trap into which the wolf fell, not including the suffering of the wolf in the trap, but only including the name of the trap

indicates that the depthlessness principle was taken into consideration in the tale.

In *Who Knows the Value of Goodness?* the lack of detailed information about the physical and personality traits of characters such as peasants, wolves, horses, hunters, foxes, while only including the names of the characters indicates that the abstract style principle is taken into consideration. In addition, the fact that the heroes (wolf, horse, and fox) in this tale have their own characteristics peculiar to their world and continue their existence in the plot given to them indicates that the principles of isolation and universal interconnection of Max Lüthi were taken into consideration.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Turkish course book, the tale of *Giving Is Gaining* is included. When the tale *Giving Is Gaining* is examined according to Max Lüthi's tale principles, it is seen that the principle of depthlessness is not included. *"Yes, the peasant insisted. Because whenever I knock on this door, you are the one who opens it. Whenever my products are gone because of*

*drought, you give me food every day. I hope, this grape bunch brings you divine mercy warm like sunlight and beautiful like rain. Because, look how beautiful they were created". "So, he decided to serve the bunch to his tutor because, he was the one who taught them knowledge and wisdom". "When the cook brought him his lunch, he gave the grape bunch to him as a gift. You are the closest one to the wonders such as vegetables and fruits created by Allah, and therefore you know best what to do with these divine works of art"* (Ceylan et al., 2019). It can be stated that the sentences contain detailed information about tale elements and since the expressions uttered are explained with their justifications, the principle of depthlessness is not included.

In the tale, the principle of abstract style is also ignored. Descriptive expressions about the tale heroes were used in many parts of the tale, and the characteristics of the heroes were given in detail: *"His friend led him to experience similar feelings with his compassion, modesty, kindness and coziness". "No one could appreciate the*

beauty and wonders of these grapes more than the student who was responsible from the books. He was a young man who became famous in the madrasah with his contemplation and tactfulness. As soon as he saw the grapes, he deeply realized that divine arts and embroidery could reflect at the highest degree even in the smallest thing." (Ceylan et al., 2019).

The tale in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade Turkish course book is *The Turtle and the Two Ducks*. This tale was examined according to the tale principles of Max Lüthi. "Once upon a time in our world there was a turtle that dreamed constantly. It was bored with its den and almost disgusted. The turtle wanted to see the country and get to know the world and everything in it better. One day, the turtle told this beautiful dream to two wild ducks. These wild ducks were as benevolent creatures as they were beautiful, and they told the turtle that they could help make his big dream come true. They showed him the sky" (Kir et al., 2018). In these sentences, mentioning the features of the turtle, which is the hero of the tale, and including the detailed information about the turtle, does not coincide with the principles of depthlessness and abstract style of Max Lüthi. In tales generally, any city and person are mentioned. City and personal names are not included. However, the abstract style principle was ignored by including the names of the city and the people in the tale: "Do you see this endless road?" They said. "We'll carry you all the way to America. You can see many republics, many kingdoms, many peoples; you can witness many different traditions; you see many places. Odisseus (Odiseus), the hero of the epic of Homer (Homer), had seen only this much" (Kir et al., 2018).

In the tale, *The Turtle and the Two Ducks*, it is possible to come across situations that conform to the Max Lüthi's tale principles as mentioned above. In the preceding sentences, the one-dimensionality principle was followed. In the one-dimensional principle, the fundamental philosophy is that everything that happens in the tale world is accepted as usual. In the sentences, the turtle and two ducks are the heroes of the real world. However, the speech of the turtle does not surprise the two ducks, and the speech of the two ducks does not surprise the turtle.

"Miracle! Miracle! Everybody was shouting. "Come, come and see the queen of turtles passing through the sky!" Do you think the turtle will ignore these words? "Queen? Yes true! I'm really the queen; don't you dare make fun of it!" he said immediately." It is seen that one-dimensionality, sublimation and all-inclusiveness principles are followed in these sentences. In the statement given, the turtle talking to people is considered usual and people are not surprised. This is an indication of the one-dimensionality feature. While the flying of two ducks, humans and turtle is a situation about the real world, the turtle's speech and seeing itself as a queen is a feature of the sublimation principle.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Turkish course book, the tale *The Cat and the Mouse* is included as a listening text. When this

tale was examined according to the principles of Max Lüthi, the sentences "I understand what you mean," King Devşerin said. Beydeba answered, "The story of the cat and the mouse that get over the common danger they encountered together is the best example for this situation" (Eselioğlu et al., 2019) not including detailed information about the heroes, but only mentioning the heroes coincide with the abstract style principle. At the same time, the sentences, "It makes its net in a hollow close to where the cat lives. The cat is caught off guard. Walking around trying to feed itself the mouse sees its deadly enemy struggling in the net" (Eselioğlu et al., 2019) do not include the details about the trap that the cat was caught in, how the cat was caught, what happened in the trap and how it was and this shows that the principles of one dimensionality and abstract style are taken into consideration.

"Leaving aside the internal conflict, the mouse approaches the cat:

-How are you?

Being convinced that this question is sarcastic rather than being sincere the cat answers:

-How am I? I am in trouble and having hard times as you wish. The mouse understands that it was misunderstood.

- No, don't talk like that.

The mouse shows the weasel and the owl.

-Look, I'm in trouble like you.

It gets to the point. Since our problem and enemy are common, we should cooperate.

The cat is curious:

-How come?

Rat satisfies cat's curiosity:

-If you ensure my life safety, I can cut your strings and save you." In these sentences, it is seen that the principles of sublimation and all-inclusiveness are followed. While the cat, mouse, owl and weasel are related to the world in the given sentences, the conversation of the mouse and the cat, exchanging ideas and their agreement by considering their mutual interests is a situation related to sublimation. It can be stated that sublimation and all-inclusiveness principles of Max Lüthi are taken into consideration in the related tale.

## RESULT, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the research, it was determined that the tale, *Freedom* in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Turkish course book is in accordance with the principles of one-dimensionality, abstract style, sublimation and all-inclusiveness. In another tale used in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, *Who Knows the Value of Goodness?* while the text contains the principles of one-dimensionality, depthlessness, abstract style, isolation and universal interconnection, it is determined that there is no place for the principles of sublimation and all-inclusiveness.

In *Giving Is Gaining* tale, in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Turkish course book, only the principle of depthlessness is

included. Apart from that, the principles of one-dimensionality, abstract style, isolation and universal interconnection, sublimation and all-inclusiveness were not included in the tale. In the tale, *The Turtle and The Two Ducks*, in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade Turkish course book, the principles of one-dimensionality, sublimation and all-inclusiveness are included. However, it was determined that the principles of depthlessness, abstract style, isolation and universal interconnection are not included in it. In *The Cat and The Mouse*, in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Turkish course book, it was determined that the principles of one-dimensionality, abstract style, sublimation and all-inclusiveness were not included, while the principles of depthlessness, isolation and universal inter-connection were not included.

This text-centered approach applied to European tales by Max Lüthi is of great importance in terms of revealing the characteristic features of the tale. When the tales in the Turkish course books were examined according to the five basic principles of Max Lüthi, no tale with all five basic principles was found. This shows that the tales in the course books do not have universal features. While the tales, which are literary works, are included in the Turkish course books, it can be stated that some basic principles might have been ignored because of the concern of acquiring value and giving advice to students via these texts.

It is possible to find studies similar to this in literature. Gümüş (2017a) determined that Turkish tales have these five basic principles determined by Max Lüthi and indicate universal features in the study in which Turkish tales were analyzed via Max Lüthi approach. In another study where Gümüş (2017b) examined the *Mrs Nardaniye* tale according to the Max Lüthi method, it was found that the tale had almost all the features of the basic principles in style and form and indicates a consistency in terms of text. In the study of Çiçek (2018) in which the novel *Bin Hüzünlü Haz* was analyzed according to Max Lüthi principles, it was determined that there were more than one tale elements in the novel. It was stated that this feature contributes to the fact that the work has a universal feature.

Tales are valuable works of art that help the socialization process of children and act as a bridge between the past and the future in transferring cultural values from generation to generation. They contribute to the development of the child in many ways, especially to the first language development. Via tales, children embark on a curious adventure in the vast world of imagination; besides, they discover the tastes and delicacies of their first language. In this regard, tales are one of the most important literary genres that can be used in activities aimed at developing basic language skills.

The existence of one-dimensionality, which is one of Max Lüthi principles, in the tales, gives the child the understanding that everything in the tale is natural and ordinary. Thus, the child empathizes with heroes in the

tale world, evaluates events and characters in a more realistic way. Considering the principle of depthlessness, the lack of profoundness in the tale makes it easier for the child to understand the tale without struggling in details. Giving superficial information about the characters in the tale in line with the abstract style principle helps children understand the plot rather than focusing on the personal features of the characters in the tale. Including the principles of isolation and universal interconnection and sublimation and all-inclusiveness in the tales, helps the child establish a balance between the real world and the imaginary world. In this context, while choosing tales for Turkish course books, evaluating tales according to Max Lüthi principles in terms of both adapting them to other tales and having universal principles can make an important contribution to bringing quality works of art together with children.

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