The Scenes of Violence in a Digital Writing Environment: The Sample of Wattpad

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ABSTRACT

The social and technological developments experienced have led the 21st century children to digital tools for education, entertainment and communication. The concepts of literacy were also affected by this tendency, and with the spread of extracurricular reading and writing activities, students' literacy tendencies rapidly began to evolve from paper to screen. The Wattpad is also a text writing and sharing application that children and young people engagedly turn to. In this uncontrolled free platform, thousands of stories written in various forms of expressions on all kinds of subjects are presented to the admiration of children in the developmental age and are quickly consumed by many children and young people who are not yet digitally literate. In this qualitative research, which is designed as a case study, 6 stories that were awarded in 2018 within the scope of the Wattys Awards given by Wattpad each year with user votes were examined within the framework of the concept of violence. The data were obtained through document analysis and they were analyzed with the descriptive analysis method according to Polat's (2016) classification of "physical violence, sexual violence, emotional violence, economic violence and cyber violence" and analyzed according to the determined codes and categories. The findings show that there are many elements of violence in the stories examined and that these mainly include physical and emotional violence types. The acts of "killing" and "dying" in the physical violence, and the insults aimed at disdaining and ridiculing were the most common forms of emotional violence. The fact that these stories, in which all kinds of violence were encountered, were deemed worthy of awards by the readers, revealed that readers had an interest in violent genres, and Wattpad fed this interest of young readers. For this reason, it is recommended that Wattpad application be used under the family supervision and an editorial application be implemented within Wattpad itself.

Key words: Wattpad, Violence, Children Literature, Digital Writing

INTRODUCTION

It is commonly seen that the new tendencies of 21st century children and young people who spend time in digital media for many purposes such as education, entertainment and communication change their understanding of literacy as well. In this new literacy that cuts across the boundaries of the school, it is clearly seen that the time students spend in the digital environments also affects their reading and writing skills. These activities/interactions that take place on a Daily basis and socially and that do not seem significant in comparison to the in-school education play a major role in the development of literacy skills (Lotocki, 2018). However, the innovations brought by the digital world to literacy have led to the emergence of another concept: Digital literacy. Basic technology usage skills are required for digital literacy; however, digital literacy is much more than learning how to use a computer and keyboard or do online search (Buckingham, 2008). Influential citizens and employees of the 21st century are expected to be able to demonstrate a range of functional

and critical thinking skills related to information, media and technology, question how the individuals interpret the messages differently, how values and perspectives are included and excluded, and how the media can influence the beliefs and behaviors, and eventually are expected to be digital literate who can choose the relevant information from the relevant sources (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2019). Because in this age, where digital literacy gains importance, children spend most of their time in front of the computer, television and telephone. According to the data from TURKSTAT (2013), 47.4% of children who are between ages of 06 and 15 in Turkey use the internet approximately 3-10 hours a week. These children use the internet mostly for homework or learning purposes, playing games, seeking information, and surfing in social media. In addition, the average age of children starting to use computers is 8, the age of using the internet is 9, and the age of using mobile phones is 10, which shows the extent the media surround children's lives and increases the importance of the content

presented. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that these data are before the Covid-19 pandemic because the pandemic has caused many adults and children to change their habits. Increasing the time spent at home has also increased the time children spend in front of the screen (Nathan et al., 2021). For this reason, the question of which digital content children interact with has become a worrying question in the minds of both educators and families.

The common point of the studies that reveal the negative effects of media on children is the idea that children are affected by the content they listen, play, read in the media and that violence is normalized in the eyes of children because of media (Avcı, 2011; Bandura & Walters, 1963, Bilgi, 2005; Şentürk & Turğut, 2011; Tokdemir et al., 2009). American Psychological Association (2013) expressed this situation as follows: "The discussion is over. Over the last three decades, the most common finding in research on mass communication has been that exposure to violence scenes in the media increases aggressive behavior in children." This striking fact brings to mind the question: Why and how are children affected by the media? We can answer this with the principles of Social Learning Theory: The real sources of aggression are not aggressive impulses induced by instinctive genes and inhibitions that force the person into innate violence; but the encouragement to direct aggression under the influence of social and environmental conditions (Bandura, 1977). In other words, individuals gain their social behaviors through their experiences and observing models. By watching and observing their models, the child learns which behaviors are socially approved or rewarded in the society on the one hand, and which ones are punished or condemned on the other (Avcı, 2011, p. 13). It is useful to underline the concept of "model" here because, according to Yavuzer (2001, p. 188), the child self-identifies with a model in the development of his personality. While this model was a mother, father and close relative in the beginning, it gradually gives way to friends, movie and book heroes. In this respect, the fact that the characters of the book are morally and socially unhealthy causes the child to identify with a bad model. The negativity created by such heroes on children's character and personality formation has also been revealed by various studies (Bushman & Huesmann, 2006; McCrary, 1999; Uysal, 2003; Walmavan der Molen, 2004). As a matter of fact, there are studies showing that adolescents frequently resort to violence at school or are exposed to various types of violence (Alikasifoğlu et al., 2004; Kapçı, 2004; Kepenekçi & Çınkır, 2005). All of these show that the mass media encompass life in various ways with the changing and developing technology, and children and adolescents are the most affected ones by this (Okur-Berberoğlu, 2015).

WATTPAD

Wattpad, a popular media application that can be accessed via both computers and smartphones, is a text writing and sharing application that children follow with enthusiasm. Participants have the opportunity to produce and share their own texts in this digital environment, to create their own virtual libraries according to their interests, to read and

comment on other users' products and to shape their stories. This new generation of digital story creation is also called transmedia storytelling. This fresh genre can be thought of as a new world based on the demand of the audience to follow the content between different media platforms. The prominent features of this application are the presentation of the same content in various ways in different channels and the fact that a fan base not only consumes the content offered in these various channels passively, but also creates a community that contributes to production (Güran Yiğitbaşı, 2018).

Some of the studies that examined the effects of Wattpad on children demonstrated that Wattpad contributed to reading habits (Güran Yiğitbaşı, 2018; Sari, 2016) and improved reading comprehension (Hanifah & Bharati, 2019; Rahman & Iwan, 2019; Sari, 2016); others put forward that Watpadd improved children's writing skills (Adiningtyas, 2020; Eskimen & Erdoğdu, 2020; Hanifah & Bharati, 2019; Permatasari et al., 2020; Yuniar et al., 2019) and positively affected their writing attitude and motivation (Eskimen & Erdoğdu, 2020). Wattpad can be a remarkable application in terms of being a social environment where young people receive peer support, share their tastes, interests, values and feelings, and support their reading experiences outside of school. However, in addition to these positive features, the fact that children of all ages can easily access the application, which does not have a control system, brings some dangers with it. As a matter of fact, there are studies (Ağır, 2016, 2017; Karaosmanoğlu, 2019; Kaya et al., 2019; Sert Ağır, 2019) which reveal the risks that Wattpad may pose in terms of personality development due to its negative content. There are also studies that find Wattpad heroes' behaviors and attitudes against gender equality (Akar, 2019; Örgen & Güneş, 2018; Aytekin & Yavuz, 2019). Studies by Ak Başoğul (2018; 2021) also show that secondary school Turkish teachers find Wattpad texts objectionable for their students due to the elements they contain such as violence and sexuality. All these research results make it necessary to investigate the violent content of Wattpad, which is frequently used by middle school students (Tirocci, 2018).

VIOLENCE

Violence, which is one of the main problems of social life, is a concept that expresses the brute force applied by an organ in its narrow sense, and all human rights violations in a broad sense (Özerkmen, 2012, p. 4). In the report of the World Health Organization (Krug et al., 2002), violence means "deliberate use of physical force or power in a way that results in, or is highly likely to result in, injury to oneself, another person, a group/community, death, physical harm, development disorder or deficiency in a threatening or literally meant way." According to Michaud (1991), in an environment of mutual relations, if one or more of the parties behaves in a way that harms the others' values directly/indirectly or collectively, the physical integrity, traditional (moral/ethical/spiritual) integrity and property, symbolic and cultural values, whatever the rate is, there is violence.

There are classifications regarding different types of violence that affect individual and social life (Krug et al., 2002;

Meyer & Farrell, 1998; Polat, 2016). In the distinction of types, sometimes the person being exposed to violence and sometimes the method of usage of violence is taken as a basis. Polat (2016) defines five types of violence as "physical, emotional, sexual, economic and cyber" according to the type of violence applied. Physical violence, which means harming a person by applying physical force, is the most widely known type of violence in society. Actions based on brute force such as beating, killing, murdering, and mauling are considered under this genre. Emotional violence, which is based on mental damage, includes acts such as humiliation, mocking, insulting, exploitation, mistreatment, and verbal expressions. In sexual violence, which involves a sexual act, using unwanted sexual words, or commercial sexual use of a person, the purpose is not only to take advantage of sexuality but to force, embarrass and harm the person who is being violent. Economic violence refers to the use of pecuniary resources as an element of enforcement, threat and control. An example of this type of violence is to restrict a person's economic freedom or to allude to their financial existence. Finally, cyber violence is the misuse of technology to harm someone. It is carried out especially with basic information tools such as telephone and computer (Polat, 2016).

The studies carried out on the Wattpad application revealed that the contents should be examined in depth with regards to violence and encouraged us to conduct a study on this subject. In this sense, the purpose of the present study is to examine and interpret the award-winning texts written on Wattpad with regards to violence. For this purpose, an answer to was sought the following question in this study:

What kind of image do the violence elements in the Wattpad texts display according to their types?

METHOD

Under this heading, information about the research model, data collection and analysis were presented.

Research Model

This qualitative research, in which the award-winning texts published on Wattpad are examined within the framework of the concept of violence, is designed as a case study. Case study is the study of real life, a situation in the current context or environment (Creswell, 2016). The purpose of case studies is to provide in-depth information and understanding of one or more situations (Gliner et al., 2015). In this study, a case study design was preferred to determine the characteristics of Wattpad texts in terms of violence elements and to discover in which types of violence these elements are presented.

Data Collection

In qualitative research, data are collected through observation, interviews and documents (Berg & Lune, 2015; Merriam, 2013). The data of our research were obtained through document analysis, and 6 stories that were awarded in 2018 within the scope of Wattys Awards, which are determined by the votes of Wattpad application users every year, were analyzed. Document analysis, like other methods used in qualitative research, requires the analysis and interpretation of data in order to make sense, establish an understanding of the relevant topic, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The documents of our research are the stories in the digital writing application called Wattpad that reaches different audiences via the internet. Documents obtained from mass media such as television, cartoons and the internet are valuable resources for determining the perspective of the society in a certain time period, comparing groups in some dimensions and following the changes in cultural trends (Merriam, 2013). Detailed information on the stories examined is shown in Table 1.

Writers can constantly change the stories on Wattpad, so the stories have a dynamic structure. For this reason, in the application, readers were informed by writing "completed" to some stories and "continues" to some stories. Information about the stories examined in our study was reached on 17.09.2019, and changes made after this date have not been taken into account.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the research data. Descriptive analysis is the summarization and interpretation of the data collected during the research process according to previously determined themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In this study, the classification of violence by Polat (2016) was used. The analysis was made on the basis of words and sentences, taking into account the definitions and examples of types of violence. Accordingly, violence has been handled in five types: "physical, sexual, emotional, economic and cyber." Six stories selected were analyzed around five themes, and codes and categories related to the themes were found. The theme and categories are shown in Table 2.

As seen in Table 2, 5 categories were reached for the physical violence theme and seven categories for the emotional violence theme. Any category couldn't be created for other types of violence, as few codes were determined. In order to ensure the reliability of the study, an expert working in the field of guidance and psychological counseling was asked about the accuracy of the coding and changes were made in line with the corrections she gave. In addition, the consensus among researchers was examined in coding. The consensus among researchers was calculated as 82% using the formula of Consensus/(consensus + disagreement) X 100 proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994). Since at least 70% of consensus among coders is required to ensure the reliability of the research (Yıldırım & Şimşek 2013, p. 233), it can be said that the research is reliable.

FINDINGS

The findings of the 6 stories examined within the scope of this study were discussed under 5 sub-headings of physical violence, emotional violence, sexual violence, cyber violence and economic violence.

Table 1. Information on stories analyzed

	The Name of the Story	The Author	Number of Chapters	Number of Reads	Status	The Category of Wattys
S1	Cesedim Aşk Kokuyor (My Corpse Smells Love)	Agâh Ensar Can	35	60.6K	Completed	Originals
S2	Tuvaldeki Kan (The Blood on the Canvas)	aysgl_mrcn	35	41.3K	Continues	Breakthroughs
S3	Vera	golgeyazar15	13	80.2K	Continues	World-founders
S4	Gecenin Karanlığında: Salgın (In the Darkness of the Night: The Pandemic)	Yücehan Özkan	27	24K	Completed	Heroes
S5	Hazar Denizi (The Caspian Sea)	anonimandalina	20	94.8K	Continues	Game Changers
S6	Pamuk Prenses Bir Katil (The Snow White: A Murderer)	oziwuzhere	14	26.1K	Completed	The "Incompatible"s

Table 2. Themes and categories

Themes

Physical Violence Categories	Emotional Violence	Economic Violence	Sexual Violence	Cyber Violence
Act of Physical Violence	Lie			
Physical Response	Emotional Reaction			
Perpetrator of Violence	Disdain, Teasing and Insult			
The Victim of Violence	Intimidation			
Violence Tools	Isolation			
	Attitude			
	Emotion			

Findings Related to Physical Violence

The components of violence in 5 main and 3 subcategories of the physical violence theme are illustrated in Table 3:

According to Table 3, the story that contained the most physical violence element was the S1. In this story, due to the multiple use of the 100 physical violence code in the text; the element of physical violence was encountered 344 times. The story with the least physical violence elements was the S5. The most frequently repeated codes of violence were "killing" (f=78), "to dying" (f=46) and "shooting" (f=24). It was found that while S1, S3 and S6 contained physical violence elements from each category, S2 and S4 contained violence elements from 4 main and 3 subcategories, and S5, only 1 from main and 2 from subcategories.

When physical violence is analyzed according to its categories, it was found that the term of violence was used 78 times in the "bullying" category, 248 in the "killing" category, 235 in the "harming" category, 47 in the physical response main category, 29 in the main category of the perpetrator of violence, 41 in the main category of the victim of violence, 143 in the main category of "violence tool". It has been determined that the item is included. The following paragraphs are the examples including the element of physical violence in the stories:

"I'd seriously consider cutting a corpse with an axe. I had no idea how he persuaded me. I stuck the ax in the waist of the corpse and pulled it back out. I stuck it one more time so it could come off, and one more time. Rumpel began clapping as the body was split in two. "Bravo! Bravo!" I just skipped it and this time I began to disjoin the arms from the body. Then her legs. Of course I vomited as well while doing all this. However, before it continued, I got used to blood and skin. When the body was cut into pieces, I turned to Rumpel. Understanding the question mark in my gaze, "Next thing to do is to burn it. But where?" she murmured. (…) "We don't even have a crappy camera system in our poor and worthless neighborhood. We put the body in a garbage bag, then throw it away and burn it. That's it, Pera! Let's burn so as not to get burnt!" (S6).

"The officer, who had got it in for me in the orphanage, said that if I did not finish painting the cell until the evening, the beating would be doubled in the evening (…) The bastinado I was subjected to yesterday made it difficult for me to even stand on. (…) When I thought of the beating last night, I grasped the brush harder. The screams and prayers I shouted after every beating he hit, and the endless and unrelenting rage of that official. My tears that dried up due to crying every night, my itchy hair with lice and my feet that lost their function due to pain summed up my day-to-day exhaustion. (…)" (S1).

In the stories, it is clearly observed that the main characters were subjected to violence by one or more people or utilized violence as a force. These two paragraphs above nicely illustrate this.

Findings Regarding Emotional Violence

The elements of violence under the 7 categories of the emotional violence theme "Lying, Emotional Reaction, Insult/Teasing/Insult, Intimidation, Isolation, Attitude, Emotion" are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 3. Findings of physical violence

Story	Code Frequency	Codes
S1	344 (code 100)	Act of Physical Violence: *Bullying*: laying hold of/seizing by the collar (3), getting someone sent to jail (2), pulling about/pushing around (4), sitting some down, housebreaking, spitting at someone (2), pushing (13), dragging someone, tying some up (2), kidnapping (3), shutting someone up, convicting, handcuffing (2), preventing someone, pouring out someone's meal, bringing someone in, detaining someone, taking hold of someone (2). *Murder*: death agony, taking someone's life (3), ending someone's life, finishing someone off (5), unidentified murder, shooting to pieces (2), breaking someone's pen, massacre, killing someone (57), dying (46), death (4), tearing someone down, murder (3), terminating, assassination, wiping off the face of the earth, annihilating someone, gunning someone down (5). *Harming*: stabbing (3), assaulting (2), biological attack, beating (3), hitting (someone) (8), pounding on someone (2), crushing someone (with a car), kicking around (9), torture, oppressing someone (2), smacking, hurting someone (5), whipping (3), throwing (stone), knocking over (2), releasing brake, punching (someone) (4), head butting, piercing (one's hand), pinning against the wall (2), knocking about , beating up (2), taking one's own life, explosion (2), knocking someone off, thrusting (something on someone), slapping something (onto someone), making a mess, flapping, (hitting) operating, stabbing, putting the squeeze on someone, barreling into, playing one side against the other, confrontation, shooting with a gun (2), suppressing. Physical Response: pain (6), blood (11), groaning (2), getting a black eye. Perpetrator of Violence: murderer (9), villain (2), gang, executioner (7). The Victim of Violence: victim (2), corpse (6), carcass, the dead (3). Violence Tools: hand grenade, gun (17), dagger, axe, bullet (5), snapper, baton, pistol (4), tools (2), pump-rifle, barrel (2), trigger (2), bullet casing (3), shackles.
S2	74 (code 35)	Act of Physical Violence: *Bullying*: laying hold of/seizing by the collar, coercing, tying (on a chair), pulling about, pulling (someone's hair) (2), flinging someone (3). *Murder*: strangling, shredding, bumping somebody off, killing (16), death, homicide, gunning someone down. *Harming*: crashing, assaulting (3), causing pain, hitting (someone), blow/hit (3), kicking, physical bullying (3), torture, strangling (4), smacking (2), scratching, hurting someone, flapping, scuffling, punching (3). Physical Response: blood (5), floundering. The Victim of Violence: the dead (5), victim, corpse. Violence Tools: gun (2), fork.
S3	55 (code 37)	Act of Physical Violence: *Bullying*: depriving someone of food, imprisoning, tying (someone's hands), holding captive, bashing around. *Murder*: agonizing, swallowing, killing (5), dying (3), death, dismembering (2), wiping out, gunning someone down (2). *Harming*: crashing\ sticking (4), assault (3), biological attack, beating, shooting with a gun (2), flying at someone, snatching, blow, throwing about, hitting (at the wall), kick, blowing down, setting on fire. Physical Response: blood (3), groaning, pain (2). Perpetrator of Violence: flesh eating (creature). The Victim of Violence: corpse. Violence Tools: spear, saw, weapon (2), bomb.
S4	198 (code 51)	Act of Physical Violence: *Bullying*: seizing by the collar, pulling (the trigger), making someone kneel down, flinging someone (10), grappling. *Murder*: shearing, beating down (7), neutralizing someone (2), finishing off (2), massacre, killing someone (17), dying, tearing someone down (5), firing the gun dry, shooting with a gun (9). *Harming*: crashing (3), sticking (3), shooting with a gun (24), pounding on someone (4), blow (3), crushing (3), throwing about (4), crashing (2), kicking (2), setting on fire, shooting, make a hole (on the head), coming upon (4), piercing (head), blowing up (2), biting off (2), splitting (2), punching someone out, causing to fall, blowing something up. Physical Response: blood (4). The Victim of Violence: corpse, the dead. Violence Tools: bomb (2), weapon (6), knife (16), axe (7), bullet (3), gun (5), rifle (10), bullet (11), shield, rifle butt (2), barrel, cartridge, rocket (2).
S5	11 (code 6)	Act of Physical Violence: *Bullying*: dragging. *Harming*: causing pain, hitting (someone, blowing/hammering in the head (4), head butting, pulling by someone's arm (3).

(*Contd...*)

Table 3. (*Continued*)

Story	Code Frequency	Codes
S6	141 (code 50)	Act of Physical Violence: *Bullying*: throwing someone out of the house (3), seizing by the collar, pull someone's hair, pushing (3). *Murder*: strangling, torturing to dead, blowing someone's brains out, killing oneself (3), annihilating someone, murdering (8), dying (3), homicide (3), shooting with a gun (7). *Harming*: crashing, sticking (4), shooting, hitting (someone) (4), blow (2), crashing, kicking (2), burning (a dead body) (3), shooting, flinging someone, fighting (2), throwing (something at someone's head), feloniousness (2), crushing, savagery, grappling, brake failing (2), cutting off (a limb), driving into a corner (2), swinging (head out of window), injuring someone, smashing (someone's face), suppressing, cutting into pieces (2). Physical Response: blood (10), groaning. Perpetrator of Violence: murderer (9). The Victim of Violence: victim (3), corpse (15), hostage. Violence Tools: saw (2), weapon (8), dagger, knife (9), axe (4), walking stick, bullet.
Total	823 (279 codes)	

Table 4. Emotional violence findings

Story	Code Frequency	Codes
S1	212 (code 128)	Lie: slander (2), deception (2), calumniation. *Emotional Reaction:* shouting out, rebuking, reproach, pain, shouting (32), seeing red; *Disdain, Teasing and Insult:* (sh*t, crap, slack, psychopath, jack*ss pastic, wacky, lackey, despicable, villain, shitty leg, imbecile, alley cat, inconsiderate, rude, nignog, swindler, dick head, idiot, stupid, dingy, ars*h*le, crazy, mean etc.) insult (67), insulting (2), swearing, giving orders, irritating (2), teasing, messing with someone's head, underestimating. *Intimidation*: rebuffing, threat (17), making someone lose appetite, shutting somebody up, scolding, interrupting, emotional bullying (4), inflicting pain, parental pressure, devastating (2), sucking someone dry (2), make someone's life miserable, driving somebody mad, driving somebody nuts (3), digging a pit for somebody, making (someone's) bones (2), playing ducks and drakes with (someone), falling victim to someone's wrath (2), shining (someone) on (3), pulling something on someone, pulling somebody down, stabbing in the back, breaking to pieces (2). *Isolation*: make someone dependent, cleaning somebody out (3), tying somebody's hands, depriving somebody of something, blacking something out, stealing someone's life, dismissing. *Attitude*: jumping down one's throat (4), pointing a gun (1), handling without gloves (2), being rude (4), desecration of a corpse, attitudinizing, taking advantage of (someone) (2), retaliation, banging one's fist on the table, shutting the door on. *Emotion*: taking revenge on (2), vengeance (8), rage, anger (3), betrayal (2).
S2	37 (code 18)	*Emotional Reaction*: shouting (8). *Disdain, Teasing and Insult*: insult (2), cursing someone, ignoring. *Intimidation*: calling somebody to account, attacking someone verbally, threatening (8), emotional bullying (2), being red-hot, bothering. *Attitude*: insidiousness, being irritated (3), glaring, slamming the door, throwing a glance at, banging one's fist on the table (2), opening the door without knocking (inconsiderateness) *Emotion*: jealousy
S3	3	*Emotional Reaction*: bursting out, scream. *Intimidation*: frightening.
S4	17 (code 10)	*Emotional Reaction*: growling, screaming (2); Disdain, Teasing and Insult: insult (scumbag, bastard, rat-bastard) (3); Intimidation: threatening (5); *Attitude*: jumping down one's throat (2), desecration of a corpse (2), charging down on someone, run onto (someone)
S5	18 (code 18)	*Emotional Reaction*: reprimanding; *Disdain, Teasing and Insult*: (stupid, stupidly, jack*ss, brainless) defamation (12), swearing, being opinionated (employing someone with a conviction); *Intimidation:* offending, mistreating; Attitude: misbehaving.
S6	47 (code 27)	*Emotional Reaction:* screaming (4). *Disdain, Teasing and Insult*: (foolish, evil, moron, dirtbag, sh*t-ass, villain, psychopath, foolish) defamation (11), swearing; *Intimidation*: threatening (with a fork, knife, weapon, scratching someone's eyes out) (14), hissing, lifting up one's voice (2), frightening, emotional bullying, keeping somebody waiting, acting superior, cruelty (4). *Attitude:* being rude, misbehaving, desecration of a corpse (2), shutting the door on, giving the stink-eye. *Isolation*: kicking someone out of the house (3).
Total	334 (201 codes)	

According to Table 4, the story containing the most emotional violence element was S1. In this story, the element of emotional violence was encountered 212 times due to the multiple use of the 128 emotional violence code in the text. The story with the least elements of emotional violence was S3. The most repeated code of violence was "insult" (f=95). The insult code represented hurtful slang expressions such as "idiot, as*shole, brainless, scumbag, bastard, rat-bastard, despicable creature, dirtbag, sh*t-ass, villain, psychopath, foolish". While there were also emotional violence elements from 7 categories in S1, it is clear that there were emotional violence elements from 5 categories in S2 and S6, from 4 categories in S4 and S5, and only from 2 categories in S3.

When emotional violence was examined according to its categories, it was found that it contained 109 violence elements in the "Disdain, Teasing and Insult" category, 98 in the "Intimidation" category, 60 in the "Emotional Response" category, 41 in the "Attitude" category, 17 in the "Emotion" category, and 5 in the "Lie" category. The following paragraph is an example of the emotional violence in the stories:

> "Ten years after my family left me, I was taken from the child protection agency by Korel Dinçer, one of the important names in the police organization, and I was raised under his supervision. After that day, I did nothing for myself. When they asked me to get it, I got it: When they asked me to come, I went there. I always waited for them to say go, but somehow I could never hear them say go. Would you let go of a person whose freedom you have in your hands? I really wish I was free, and lived freely. It is the freedom that makes human beings human. But I was never free in life. It's because there were always people whom I owed to. There always threatened and they kept fiddling with me throwing me from side to another because of my encumbrance. "(S1)

The example above shows how isolation, one of the subcategories of emotional violence, is included in stories. The reader can witness all kinds of emotional violence in some stories. It was found that the most common form of emotional violence was the insults used to belittle or ridicule.

Findings Regarding Sexual Violence

The elements of sexual violence in the stories are illustrated in Table 5:

According to Table 5, 2 sexual violence elements were encountered in S1, and only 1 in S2 and S5. There was no sexual violence item in S3 and S4. Even though there were 4 codes of sexual violence in total, since one code (Ogling at someone) was repeated, the element of sexual violence was encountered 5 times in the text. Two examples of sexual violence in the stories are as follows:

> "As I was closing the door of closet\ I jumped at the sound of a gun. I was so curious as to what happened to my mother. I couldn't get out of that closet because of fear. When my father came in the evening, he found me. They killed my mother. Alkan! They raped my mother and killed her!" (S2)

> "He began to ogle at me for a long time shamelessly." (S5)

Table 5. Findings of sexual violence

Story	Code Frequency	Codes
S1	1	Kissing (without permission)
S2	2	Harassing, Raping
S3	0	-
S4	0	-
S5	2	Ogling at someone (2)
S6	0	-
Total	5 (4 codes)	

Even though they were not frequently encountered in the stories, it was found that the sexual violence elements also appeared in Wattpad texts, as clearly seen in the examples above.

Findings Regarding Economic Violence

The elements of economic violence in the stories are illustrated in Table 6:

According to Table 6, economic violence elements were encountered in S1, S2 and S6, whereas no economic violence element was found in S3, S4 and S5. Even though there were 2 economic violence codes in total, since the codes were repeated, the economic violence element was encountered 7 times in the text. The following paragraph is an example of economic violence in the stories:

> "Many people around me have died until today. While they died only once, you killed me gradually by keeping me alive. As I woke up each and evet day, I died one more time. You sentenced me to pain. You stripped me of my job, you took the woman I loved, you took my memories from me, but I can't do the same. I managed to play your side against the others." (S1)

In the 6 stories examined, it was found that economic violence was encountered only 2 times in the form of threatening with money and stripping somebody of his/her job. The quote above exemplifies the economic violence of stripping somebody of his/her job.

Findings Regarding Cyber Violence

The cyber violence elements in the stories are illustrated in Table 7:

According to Table 7, cyber violence items were encountered only in S1 and S2, and no cyber violence element was found in S3, S4, S5 and S6. Even though there were 3 cyber violence codes in total, 5 cyber violence elements were encountered in the text because they were repeated twice. The following quote is an example of cyber violence in the stories:

> "(…) He decided to put the file he had pulled out of his bag into the drawer he had unlocked. However just in case, he removed the things inside and placed them at the bottom; but he was petrified with what he saw there. There it was the device! There was this little bugging device at the bottom of the drawer, which was always locked and of which he only had the key." (S2)

Table 6. Findings of economic violence

Story	Code Frequency	Codes
S1	1	Stripping somebody of his/her job
S2	3	Threatening with money (3)
S3	0	-
S4	0	-
S5	0	-
S6	3	Stripping somebody of his/her job (2), threatening with money
Total		7 (2 codes)

Table 7. Findings of cyber violence

Story	Code Frequency	Codes
S1	3	Harassing by text, wiretapping (2)
S2	2	Phone-hacking (2)
S3	0	-
S4	0	-
S5	0	-
S6	0	-
Total		5 (3 codes)

With the introduction of technology into our lives, it is clearly observed that cyber violence appears as one type of violence. As in the example, this violence in the stories was encountered in the way someone was wire-tapped, phone-hacked or harassed by text messages.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, in which the texts that was awarded the Watty's 2018 prize on the Wattpad digital media platform were examined within the framework of the concept of violence and types of violence, it was found that "physical, sexual, emotional, economic and cyber" violence elements were encountered in the stories analyzed, and especially the physical and emotional violence were common among them. While the acts of physically "killing" and "dying" stand out in these stories, emotionally insults are used often with the aim of disdaining and ridiculing. Even if they are in the least, there are some aspects of sexual, economic and cyber violence in the texts. The readers encounter all kinds of violence in some stories. Regarding the fact that these awards were granted in accordance with the likes of the users, it is understood that children in the age of development were keen on the violent texts and the Wattpad platform supported their interest. Furthermore, it is possible to predict that Watty's awards on the platform will attract the attention of more children to these violent texts. So, the question is; Are children able to take notice of the violence in the texts they read? According to the study conducted by Güran Yiğitbaşı (2018) with the Wattpad readers, the vast majority of undergraduate students (75%), 41% of middle school students and 57% of high school students thought that the issues covered on Wattpad contained violence.

These findings illustrate that the higher the education level of the individuals, the better they can recognize the violence. On the other hand, considering the fact that Wattpad is used especially by secondary school students (Tirocci, 2018) and only 41% of students in this age group had awareness of violence, it's possible say that many children read violent texts with interest without realizing it. It is because, it was observed in our study that many elements of violence were encountered in the Wattpad texts. In addition to the fact that the Wattpad stories involving violence were "liked" by the users, as well as the fact that all the thoughts, feelings and dreams were written down in this virtual environment, even though they were written by adults considering their peers, it should be remembered that all content is accessed by users of all ages.

According to the Social Learning Theory, individuals acquire their new behaviors by interacting with their social environment by using imitation, observation and modeling methods (Bandura, 1977). For this reason, the characters offered to children in the content and their attitudes become all the important. Because every hero in the setup of the text, all kinds of social relations, all types of behavior, implicit-explicit, presented in all ways, social and moral values have the potential to influence the children (Cüceloğlu, 2001, p.107). For example, children who take the characters who are violent or who resolve their problems through violence as role models may imitate similar behaviors. Furthermore, even if they do not take them as role models, the use of violence by the heroes in children's books to achieve their goals can lead to various emotional damages in children (Sever, 2002). As far as the findings of this study are concerned, the heroes of Wattpad stories have personal qualities who resolve their problems by resorting to violence. They achieve their goals by using violence and respond in a similar way to the violence inflicted on them. Moreover, violence in these stories is depicted as a normal part of life, it is banalized, and is often even affirmed. The heroes examined in the stories from this point of view are not elements of ideal identification for children. Furthermore, it should be remembered that this particular state of affairs in children can cause various emotional damage such as fear.

Various studies in the relevant literature ratify this finding. In his research, Ağır (2016) examined the effects of Wattpad books on the identity development of youngsters aged 11-18 and found that both main and supporting characters in the books exhibited risky behaviors such as violence, emotional and physical abuse. It was revealed that especially the main male characters displayed violent and aggressive behaviors towards the people they interacted with. In his interview with Turkish Language teachers, Ak Başoğul (2018) revealed that the Wattpad content was the leading one that teachers did not approve to be read because they constituted a negative example for children.

Many studies conducted in the relevant literature on the Wattpad platform support the results of the present study. In his study, Ağır (2017) revealed that Wattpad's most admired stories included behaviors such as carrying hurtful objects and weapons, sexual violence, violation of the rules, and

drugs that might pose a variety of risks and therefore, might have negative effects on children and youngsters. He also stated that young people who read these stories became vulnerable to violence and drug addiction. In his study where he examined the five most admired novel fictions on the Wattpad platform, Ağır (2019) found that these books contained many violent and aggressive behaviors.

In his study in which he investigated with the views, perceptions and experiences of Turkish Language teachers and secondary school students about Wattpad, Ak Başoğul (2021) revealed that students enjoyed spending time on this platform, felt themselves free, preferred digital over printed materials, and had the chance to interpret books with their peers. However, his findings also demonstrated that teachers have concerns about the Wattpad and that they did not find it appropriate for young people to spend time on this platform due to elements such as violence and sexuality. In his study, it was found that there was a conflict and disagreement between the teachers and the students. The results of this study obtained from the opinions of the teachers are consistent with the results of our research.

Kaya et al. (2019) analyzed the risky behavior tendencies of young people according to their Wattpad usage. The researchers revealed that the suicidal tendencies and overall risk behavior scores of the students using the Wattpad platform were statistically significantly higher than the students who did not use the application. In another study, Karaosmanoğlu (2019) examined the fictional texts in Wattpad and revealed that these texts contained many violent behaviors and messages such as murder, as well as risky behaviors such as alcohol and drug use.

As a result of their analysis, Örgen & Güneş (2018) stated that the Wattpad books sold a lot, they had poor literary value, contained fictional imitations, and that the messages were not suitable for children and young people. According to Akar's (2019) study, Wattpad functioned as a platform that legitimized violence against women and the creation of sexist discourses that devalued women. In another study, Fast, Vachovsky & Bernstain (2016) identified that in almost every Wattpad text, male characters were portrayed as violent together with traditional gender stereotypes.

The Wattpad platform, like other new media tools that embraces our lives, contains various positive features and possesses various risks that may damage the personality development and emotional world of the individuals, cause identification with harmful role models and encourage the tendency of violence. By all means, it is not fair to ignore Wattpad's positives altogether. In fact, Wattpad is an application that can be useful in developing reading and writing skills when the necessary supervision is provided (Adiningtyas, 2020; Eskimen & Erdoğdu, 2020; Güran Yiğitbaşı, 2018; Hanifah & Bhatari, 2019; Permatasari et al., 2020; Rahman & İvan, 2019; Sari, 2016; Yuniar et al., 2019). With this application, children experience writing processes such as generating and publishing their own texts, interacting with other users, collaborating and giving feedback. Furthermore, by using this application, they spend time on their writing skills out of school and find the opportunity to improve themselves

in terms of written communication. Moreover, this digital literacy practice contributes to their extracurricular reading habits and supports the peer communication. However, as is clearly seen in the findings of our study, the risks of this platform for children and adolescents should be taken into consideration as well. It is simply because what we read and write is as important as how much we read and how much we write.

As a result, even though it has the potential to contribute to the development of reading and writing skills, the uncontrolled freedom of the Wattpad application can leave indelible marks on the minds of developing children. The risks of this technological application can damage their personality development and harm their mental health.

SUGGESTIONS

For the children to benefit from technology, they need to be aware of the potential risks of the new media platforms and how they can deal with them. In order to be able to minimize these risks, it is important for such platforms to have an audit system within themselves. It may be suggested to establish a genre-specific editorial system within Wattpad, and introduce an age limit for some topics or articles. In this day and age, teaching the correct use of technology has become an indispensable part of children's education. Therefore, every walk of life in the society — the schools, teachers, families, non-governmental organizations — should take action in order to promote media literacy. The greatest responsibility for using Wattpad hinges on the parents. It is recommended that families follow what content their children read, what they share there, and guide their children to use that content consistently. Consequently, it is also extremely important that teachers provide guidance to children and inform them about the informed use of this platform.

There are dozens of categories within Wattpad, and hundreds of articles under each category. In order to identify the perspectives, attitudes and values of young users on different issues, studies can be carried out 'n the future both through the articles written and by providing interviews with the authors. Furthermore, conducting new studies using different qualitative methods such as Online Photovoice (Tanhan, 2020) on the social media environments such as Wattpad where children and young people are active and express their opinions freely can be instructive.

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