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TRENDS IN GRADUATE THESIS ABOUT CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN TURKEY

Annotation. *Children's books are defined as products whose subjects are unique, original, appealing to children's world and enabling them to look at the world from new perspectives. Accordingly, these literary works, which are prepared by considering the developmental characteristics of children, are books that aim to provide children with a new skill without ignoring differences in thought, relativity and life realities. In this study, 60 theses were examined as a result of the search made by using the keyword «children's books» in YOK national thesis centre. Thesis classification form was used to analyse these theses. In this form, it is possible to classify the theses according to the subheadings such as the title, subject, method, data collection tools, sample and data analysis methods. In the distribution of these studies according to their years, they were handled according to the filter of the closest uploads to the YOK national thesis centre. For this reason, theses belonging to the years 2022, 2021, 2020 and 2019 were examined. Of the 60 theses written on the subject in these years, 53 were master's theses and 7 were doctoral theses. In the theses, qualitative method was mostly used as the research method, books were mostly preferred as the sample, and it was determined that students and teachers were also selected as the sample.*

Keywords: *children's books, children's literature, content analysis, postgraduate theses, abstract.*

Introduction

Children's books are works written specifically for children. They appeal to the world of children in every aspect and are written according to their level. In the literature, children's books are defined as works that cover children's literature and appeal to childhood [1]. Children's books, as a unique genre of literature, play a key role in the development of children. They provide not only entertainment, but are also a powerful learning tool. It is important to emphasize that books for children are developed with special attention to their level of development, which allows kids to learn information more effectively and form various skills [2]. In this context, children's books can also be defined

as books whose authors aim to provide children with various skills by bringing together the materials at their disposal [3]. Unlike adult books, children's books have developed a literature specific to children, and it is emphasised that this field needs special attention and meticulousness. The fact that these works, which reach the realms of children's dreams and thoughts, are prepared with particular attention to the developmental levels of children is expressed as their most prominent feature [4]. Children's literature has its own unique specifics, and its creation requires a special creative approach. The authors of children's books strive not only to tell interesting stories, but also to instill valuable lessons, new knowledge and skills in children. The main purpose of these works is to promote the full development of the child, taking into account his peculiarities in thinking, relativity and life realities [5]. Because children, who have just started to make sense of the world according to their developmental levels, should turn to works structured according to their own comprehension skills [6]. Accordingly, the aim of these literary works, which are prepared by taking into account the developmental characteristics of children, is to provide children with a new skill without ignoring differences in thought, relativity and life realities. In this context, it is possible to define children's books as products whose subjects are original, appeal to children's world and enable them to look at the world from different perspectives [7]. Books that do not contribute to the development of children and are not suitable for children in terms of content should not be considered in this context. In this context, children's literature and children's books gain importance. Many children's books are published every year. It is a very difficult task to choose the appropriate ones for children from these books. Parents and teachers have a great responsibility in this regard. Children's books have an important place in the development of the child. It is effective in the development of many skills such as language skills, imagination, communication skills. Children's books occupy an important place in the formation of children's skills. They not only contribute to the development of language skills, but also stimulate imagination and develop communication skills. In this context, parents and teachers are responsible for choosing the right literature that promotes the comprehensive development of children. At this point, there is a need to examine the researches and theses written about children's books in some time periods and to classify and evaluate the results. In this context, the problem of this research is to answer the question «What are the trends in theses about children's books in Turkey?». Thus, postgraduate theses on children's books will be identified and evaluated by classifying them according to their type, years of study, research methods, sampling, data analysis methods and data collection tools. As a result, it will contribute to the field by determining the trends in theses on children's books and shed light on other studies to be conducted. In this way, it will guide researchers.

Materials and methods

Document analysis method, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the research. In this context, the main purpose of document analysis is defined by Yıldırım and Simsek as analysing and interpreting the narratives of the sources related to the subject or phenomenon under investigation. Accordingly, it was deemed appropriate to analyse the analysis with descriptive content analysis method. Descriptive content analysis is defined by Calık and SOzbilir as the analysis method in which the trends of the studies on the subjects and phenomena are determined and the results are defined and evaluated [8].

This study is limited to 60 theses on children's books published in the YOK National Thesis Centre between 2019 and 2022. For a deeper understanding of current trends in the field of children's literature in Turkey, an analytical study of postgraduate dissertations was conducted. The classification and evaluation of these works by type, years of study, research methods, sampling, data analysis methods and data collection tools will reveal the accents and features of the research conducted. All theses that make up the sample are obtained through YOK National Thesis Centre. In this context, each of the theses that are the subject of the sample was specially examined and all studies that addressed various dimensions related to the subject of children's books were included in the scan. In this context, by using keywords related to the subject, 60 theses related to the subject were included in the sample of the research. Each thesis was carefully studied, and those that related to children's books or mentioned this topic were included in the sample for analysis. This approach guarantees the accuracy and compliance of the research with the set goals.

In this study, the forms developed for categorising the theses were discussed and a thesis classification form was created [9]. In the final thesis classification form created in line with the opinions of the advisors, it is stated that the subheadings and their subheadings are listed as the title of the thesis, subject, method, data collection tools, sample and data analysis methods.

The data obtained from the theses on children's books were examined, organised and classified according to the titles in the thesis classification form. The data obtained from the dissertations were systematized and classified in accordance with the developed classification form. This allows us to highlight trends and features in the field of research on children's books [10].

Each of the theses accessed in line with the research was analysed one by one, and those that included the subject of children's books and those that directly mentioned this subject were included in the analysis. In order for the analyses to be reliable, care was taken to ensure the distribution of the theses by including them in different classes in line with the colophon, topics, research designs, samples, data collection tools and data

analysis types. After these stages, the theses were analysed through descriptive statistics and visualised with graphs and frequency tables. For clarity, the results of the analysis were presented using descriptive statistics and visualized using graphs and frequency tables. This provides a visual representation of the key results and allows you to highlight the most significant aspects of the study.

Result

Sixty theses related to children's books were identified. Data on the titles, research topics, research methods, samples, data collection tools and data analysis methods of the theses were analysed and the results were expressed in figures.

The theses, which were accessed by using the keyword «Children's Books» in the search engine of YOK National Thesis Centre, were sorted according to their dates by filtering «most recent first». Thus, the 60 most recently published theses were sorted as belonging to the years 2022, 2021, 2020 and 2019. Accordingly, the distribution of studies according to years; 15 in 2022, 27 in 2021, 15 in 2020 and 3 in 2019.

The results of the percentage distribution of the prepared postgraduate theses according to years are presented in Figure 1:

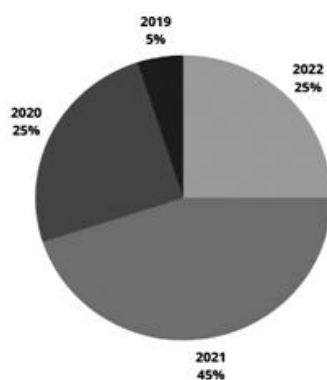


Figure 1. Percentage Distribution of Theses by Year

When Figure 1 is examined, it is seen that the year with the highest number of theses written between 2019-2022 related to children's books is 2021 and the year with the lowest number is 2019.

When the theses are analysed according to their types, it is seen that the majority of them are master's theses. Of the 60 theses about children's books that were accessed and examined from YOK National Thesis Centre, only 7 were doctoral theses and 53 were master's theses. In this context, the percentage distribution of the theses according to their types is given in Figure 2 below.

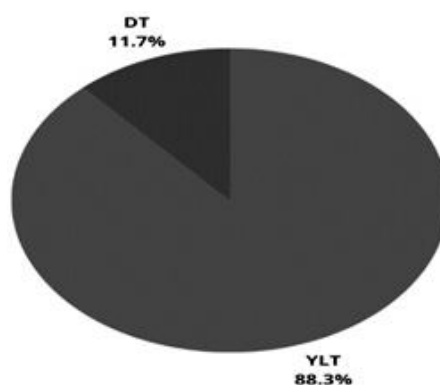


Figure 2. Percentage Distribution of Theses According to Types

When Figure 2 is analysed, it is seen that the percentage of master's theses is 88.3%, while the percentage of doctoral theses is 11.7%.

When the theses were analysed in terms of the research methods used, it was found that qualitative methods were used the most. When 60 theses on children's books were analysed, it was seen that qualitative research methods were used in 39 of the theses, quantitative methods were used in 15 of them and mixed methods were used in 6 of them. Percentage distributions are shown in Figure 3.

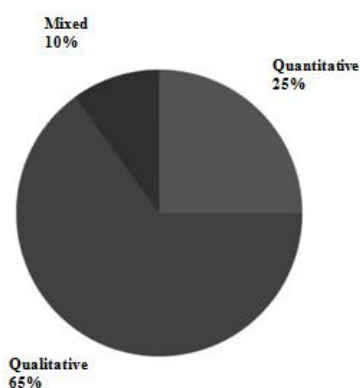


Figure 3. Percentage Distribution of Research Methods Used in Theses

When Figure 3 is analysed, it is seen that 10% of the theses were prepared with mixed method, 25% with quantitative method and 65% with qualitative method. Accordingly, parallel design method was used in one of the studies prepared with mixed method, and explanatory method was used in the remaining 5 studies prepared with mixed method. On the other hand, among the studies prepared with quantitative methods corresponding

to 25% of the theses reached, 2 studies were analysed with quasi-experimental method, 3 studies with survey model and 10 studies with descriptive analysis method. Accordingly, the percentage distribution of the studies prepared with quantitative methods is as follows:

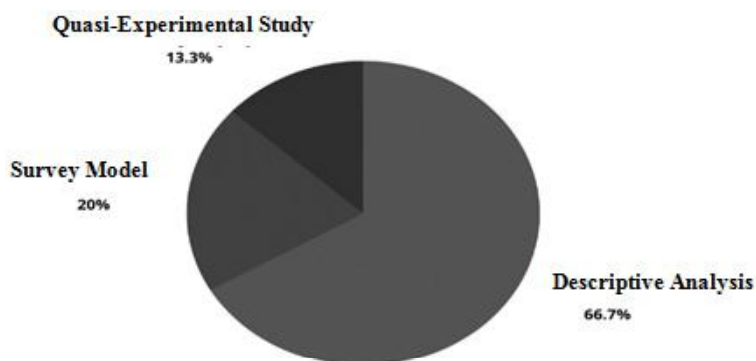


Figure 4. Distribution of Quantitative Study Methods

When Figure 4 is examined, it is seen that descriptive analysis method was used the most among the quantitative studies. The quasi-experimental study method was used the least.

The number of qualitative studies found in the analysed studies was 39. Document analysis method constitutes the majority of these. It is seen that the studies prepared with qualitative methods are distributed as 2 case studies, 4 case analyses, 2 basic interpretative methods and 33 document analyses. In line with this data, the total percentage distribution of mixed, qualitative and quantitative methods, together with all sub-types, is given in the graph below:

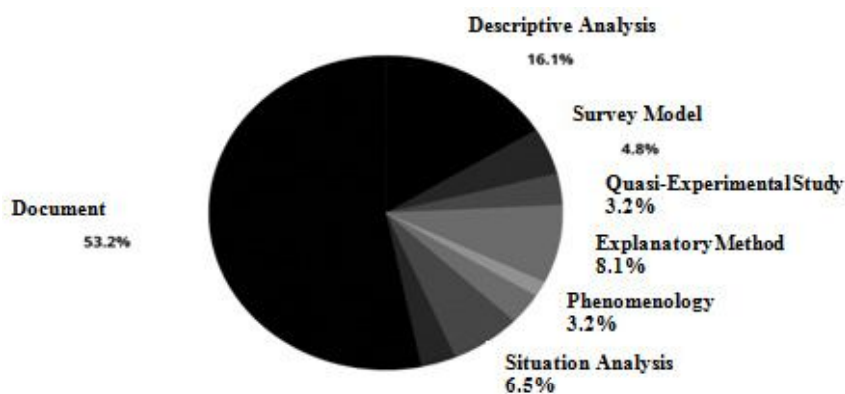


Figure 5. Percentage Distribution of All Research Methods

When Figure 5 is analysed, it is seen that document analysis was used the most among the research methods, while quasi-experimental study and case study were used the least.

When the 60 theses on children's books obtained from YOK National Thesis Centre were examined in terms of sampling, it was determined that in the majority of the theses (44 of them), books, works or works were selected as the sample. At this point, document analysis and descriptive analysis methods were mostly followed in this large sample group of children's books. On the other hand, in the mixed part of the sample, three mixed samples were encountered as «Preschool children and books», «various experts, graphic designers, teachers and parents» and «students and parents» in one study each. On the other hand, it was observed that preschool children were the sample in three studies and primary school students were the sample in four studies. Among the four studies in which primary school students were the sample, fourth grade students were included in the sample in 2 studies and third grade students were included in the sample in 2 studies. 1 study included secondary school students, and the students in the sample of this study were selected to be at the secondary school level in a mixed way. On the other hand, in two studies, only teachers were included in the sample, and these teachers were stated as preschool teachers in both studies. Finally, in one study, the sample consisted of parents, but in this study, the opinions of parents were consulted. Accordingly, the percentage distributions of the sample groups within the framework of all study samples are presented graphically as follows:

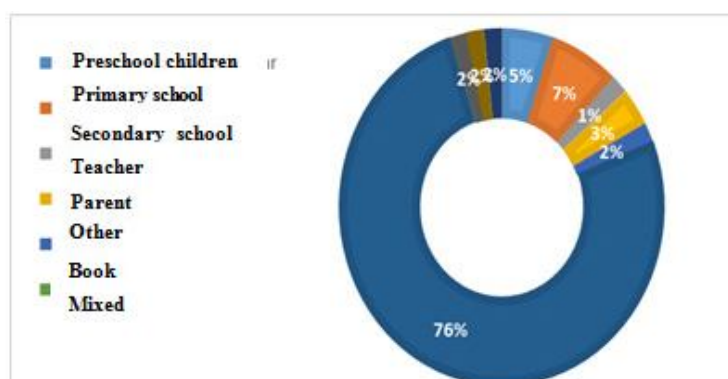


Figure 6. Distribution of theses according to their samples

When Figure 6 is analysed, it is seen that the largest sample is selected as books. In the classification of 60 theses obtained from YOK National Thesis Centre in terms of data analysis methods, the distribution of quantitative, qualitative and data analysis methods is given in the table below:

Table 1: Distribution of Theses According to Data Analysis Methods

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS		QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS	
Content Analysis	25	Descriptive	10
Document Analysis	14	Predictive	11
TOTAL	39	TOTAL	21

When Table 1 was examined, it was determined that qualitative data analysis methods were mostly used, and the content analysis method was applied the most. Among the quantitative data analysis methods, descriptive analysis was used more frequently. According to the table above, the percentage distribution of all data analysis methods of the studies is given in the graph below:

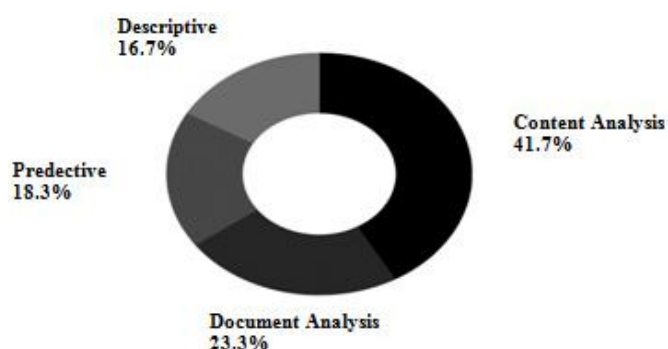


Figure 7. Percentage Distribution of Theses According to Data Analysis Methods

When Figure 7 is examined, 18,3% of the studies followed the predictive data analysis method, while 16,7% followed the descriptive analysis method. On the other hand, 41,7% content analysis and 23,3% document analysis methods were used as data analysis methods in the studies.

The percentage distribution of the universities to which the institutes where the theses analysed are affiliated are shown in Table 2.

When Table 2 is examined, it is determined that 32 postgraduate theses on children's books were conducted in 32 different universities between 2019 and 2022. It was determined that most of the theses were conducted at Hacettepe University with 9 theses, Gazi University with 6 theses and 3 theses were conducted at the institutes affiliated to Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distributions of the Universities Affiliated to the Institutes where the Theses were Conducted

Universities	Theses reached		Universities	Theses reached	
	f	%		f	%
1. Hacettepe	9	15	18. Fırat	1	1,7
2. Gazi	6	10	19. Zonguldak Bulent Ecevit	1	1,7
3. Erzincan Binali Yıldırım	5	8,3	20. Kutahya Dumlupınar	1	1,7
4. Trakya	4	6,6	21. İstanbul Aydın	1	1,7
5. Nigde Omer Halisdemir	3	5	22. Giresun	1	1,7
6. Siirt	3	5	23. Ağrı İbrahim Celen	1	1,7
7. Mersin	2	3,3	24. Bursa Uludag	1	1,7
8. Yıldız Teknik	2	3,3	25. İstanbul Yeni Yuzyl	1	1,7
9. Sakarya	2	3,3	26. Afyon Kocatepe	1	1,7
10. Cumhuriyet	1	1,7	27. Kırıkkale	1	1,7
11. Necmettin Erbakan	1	1,7	28. Bahcesehir	1	1,7
12. Maltepe	1	1,7	29. Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy	1	1,7
13. Recep Tayyip Erdogan	1	1,7	30. Ataturk	1	1,7
14. Dokuz Eylul	1	1,7	31. Gaziosmanpasa	1	1,7
15. Fatih Sultan Mehmet	1	1,7	32. Ozyegin	1	1,7
16. Cankırı Karatekin	1	1,7	33. Trabzon	1	1,7
17. Bayburt	1	1,7			
Total				60	100

Conclusion

The results of the analysis of the distribution of dissertations by year provide important dynamics in research on children's books in Turkey. It can be seen that the largest number of studies were carried out in 2021, which may indicate increased interest and activity of researchers this year. The decline in research in 2019 and its rise in 2020 can be explained by various factors, including changes in the academic environment and public interest.

When the theses are considered according to their types, the scarcity of doctoral theses stands out. This shows that there is a problem in the widespread use of the field in terms of academic studies. The identified shortage of doctoral dissertations may indicate a need for additional research and development in the field of children's literature within doctoral programs. This may also be an incentive to bring attention to this topic at a higher level of academic qualifications.

When the research methods used in the theses were analysed, it was seen that qualitative method was used most frequently. It can be said that the reason for this is to make in-depth descriptions and interpretations about children's books. It requires the researcher to be involved in the process. Among qualitative researches, document analysis method was used the most. Mixed method was used less than others. The sample of the studies is mostly books. In addition, students from various age groups, teachers in various branches and parents were also selected.

Qualitative data analysis was mostly used to analyse the data. In qualitative data analysis, it was determined that content analysis was mostly used. The fact that the data analysis methods are close to each other shows that the literature is enriched with different methods. The frequent use of qualitative methods and, in particular, the method of document analysis may indicate the complexity and depth of the analysis of the content of children's books. Involving the researcher in the process of analyzing texts can provide a deeper understanding of the essence of the material under study.

Looking at the universities where the theses were conducted, it was determined that the most studies were conducted in the institutes affiliated to Hacettepe University with 9 studies. This is followed by Gazi University with 6 studies. 33 different universities were found to have conducted studies. This shows that the study was handled in different universities. The map of the universities where the research was conducted reflects the diversity of academic backgrounds and interests. Hacettepe and Gazi Universities stand out in the number of studies, which may indicate the high status of these institutions in the field of research on children's books.

In summary, in this study, the trends of postgraduate theses related to children's books in Turkey were determined. As a result of this research, it was determined in which universities the studies were conducted, which sample group they worked with, which data collection tool they used, and how they analysed the data. The information obtained as a result of this research will be useful for future researches by providing other perspectives for future researchers. Summarizing the results, this study successfully identified the trends of postgraduate dissertations on children's books in Turkey. The information obtained from the study provides a useful overview of how the studies were conducted at different universities, what sample groups were worked with, and what methods were used to analyze the data. These results can serve as a basis for future research and expansion of the field of knowledge about children's literature in Turkey.

Recommendations

- Planning researches in which different methods and applications will be used for children's books.

- Researching children's books that support children's language, cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual development and ensuring that they are widely used in schools,
- Seeking answers to different problems that will be addressed more comprehensively in the field of children's books.

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Түркиядағы балалар кітаптарын зерттеуге қатысты диссертациялық зерттеулердің тенденциялары

Аннотация. Балалар кітаптары тақырыбы ерекше, қайталанбас. Балалар әлемі үшін тар-тымды және әлемге жаңа көзқараспен қарауға мүмкіндік беретін өнімдер ретінде анықталады. Тиісінше балалардың даму ерекшеліктерін ескере отырып, дайындалған бұл әдеби шығармалар ойлау, салыстырмалылық және өмірлік шындықтағы айырмашылықтарды ескермей, балаларға жаңа дағдыларды үйретуге бағытталған кітаптар болып табылады. Бұл зерттеу Йокүлттық диссертациялық орталығында «балалар кітаптары» кілт сөзін іздеу нәтижесінде 60 диссертацияны қарастырды.

Осы тезистерді талдау үшін тезистерді жіктеу формасы қолданылды. Бұл формада тезистерді тақырып, әдіс, деректерді жинау құралдары, іріктеу және деректерді талдау әдістері сияқты субтитрлерге сәйкес жіктеуге болады. Бұл зерттеулерді жылдар бойынша бөлу кезінде олар Йока ұлттық диссертациялық орталығына жақын жүктеме сүзгісіне сәйкес өңделді. Осы себепті 2022, 2021, 2020 және 2019 жылдарға қатысты диссертациялар қаралды. Осы жылдары осы тақырыпта жазылған 60 диссертацияның 53-і магистратура және 7-і докторантура болды. Диссертациялар негізінен зерттеу әдісі ретінде сапалы әдісті қолданды, іріктеме ретінде кітаптарға артықшылық берілді және студенттер мен оқытушылар да іріктеме ретінде таңдалғаны анықталды.

Кілтті сөздер: балалар кітаптары, балалар әдебиеті, мазмұнды талдау, аспиранттық диссертациялар, рефератта.

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Тенденции диссертационных исследований, касающиеся изучения детских книг в Турции

Аннотация. Детские книги определяются как продукция, тематика которой уникальна, оригинальна, привлекательна для детского мира и позволяет им взглянуть на мир с новых точек зрения. Соответственно, эти литературные произведения, подготовленные с учетом особенностей развития детей, представляют собой книги, цель которых – привить детям новые навыки, не игнорируя различий в мышлении, относительности и жизненных реалиях. В этом исследовании было рассмотрено 60 диссертаций в результате поиска, выполненного по ключевому слову «детские книги» в национальном диссертационном центре Йок. Для анализа этих тезисов была использована форма классификации тезисов. В этой форме можно классифицировать тезисы в соответствии с подзаголовками, такими как название, тема, метод, инструменты сбора данных, выборка и методы анализа данных. При распределении этих исследований по годам они были обработаны в соответствии с фильтром ближайших загрузок в национальный диссертационный центр Йока. По этой причине были рассмотрены диссертации, относящиеся к 2022, 2021, 2020 и 2019 годам. Из 60 диссертаций, написанных на эту тему в эти годы, 53 были магистерскими и 7 – докторскими. В диссертациях в качестве метода исследования в основном использовался качественный метод, в качестве выборки предпочтение отдавалось книгам и также были выбраны студенты и преподаватели.

Ключевые слова: детские книги, детская литература, контент-анализ, аспирантские диссертации, авторефераты.