Violence and fear In Francesca Simon's Series of Horrid Henry

Esma Dumanli Kadızade* and Can Sakar

1Department of Turkish Education, Faculty of Education, Mersin University, Turkey.
2Department of Turkish Education, Faculty of Education, Istanbul, Aydin University, Turkey.

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Children's literature is the literary work concerned with the level of interest, need, readiness and development of children. It started in Europe and the Tanzimat in the 16th century. Children's books both local and foreign ones, enhance their cognitive and affective developments cumulatively. This study examines violence and fear in Francesca Simon's series of "Horrid Henry". This work identifies the frequencies of violence and fear elements in the series as well as their effects on the child development were. This study uses qualitative research method using document analysis. Francesca Simon's books were collected and scanned. The data obtained were interpreted based on the research problems. The result shows that Horrid Henry series contain violence (f: 185) (physical (f: 38) and emotional violence) (f: 147) and fear (f: 10), originating from both humans (f: 6) and animals (f: 4). Although this series may negatively affect children, it is possible to say that it contributes a great wealth of knowledge to children's literature.

Keywords: Horrid Henry, children's literature, violence, fear.

INTRODUCTION

The influences of literature and its sub-derivatives is seen on the social man completing his/her intellectual development. Literature can be described as the way people express their emotions and thoughts as well as any other aesthetic works. It is not wrong to say that children's literature began and developed in other parts of the world long ago than it did in Turkey. It began in Turkey in the 16th century; a product of Renaissance (Nas, 2004: 1). Children's literature became apparent in Turkey with the emergence of pedagogy studies after the declaration of the rescript of Gulhane in 1839. There are different definitions of the term, children's literature, which can be considered as a relatively new literary field. These different definitions of terms constitute problems in many areas of our literature including children's literature (Temizyurek, 2003: 161). According to Sinar (2013: 575), children's literature refers to the literary disposition constituting works written, compiled and arranged to

*Corresponding author. E-mail: esmakadizade@mersin.edu.tr, cansakar@aydin.edu.tr

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prepare children for the future based on their age, interest, needs and expectations. According to Sever (2012: 17), "children's literature (letters) is the general work that enhances children's ability to appreciate and enrich their world of emotions and thoughts with linguistic and visual messages of artistic quality based on their language development and comprehension levels, starting from early childhood to puberty.

It can be said that children's works of literature affect their social development, individual development, linguistic development, cognitive development, and personality development. 'Children's literature should be effective enough to raise sensible individuals; children with good reading culture and well-balanced emotional and thinking faculties; and children who love science and arts, with the ability to ask questions and discuss (Sever, 2012: 198). In other words, children's literary works should be formed on based on some tenets in order to instil these characteristics in children cumulatively. Children's literature works should support children in the acquisition of these characteristics. In this regard, writers have a vital role to play in creating works for children. Children's books can be authored by a writer who is conscious of writing for children (Sirin, 2007 as cited in Cevik and Müldür, 2014).

The Concept of Violence

The concept of violence can be perceived as a whole of cognitive attitudes which arise from the combination of multidimensional variables and how individuals relate to themselves or other objects. Examining the sources etymologically, Turkish language has not been used to give a general definition of the concept Violence, in its narrow sense, is a harsh and painful act directed physically against oneself or another person (Gunerı, 2016: 9). The various definitions have some features in common: It is an act of using power to hurt, injure, or kill an individual or to destroy property; the use of physical force against the law; it involves a threat to use violence to reach a goal that is against the law; acts of physical destruction contrary to generally accepted laws and moral principles; unnecessary breaking and destruction of properties unlawfully; use of coercion beyond what is acceptability in social relations (Ozgerkmen and Golbasi, 2010: 24).

"In addition to the use of force in violence, all words, attitudes and actions that reflect aggression, physical or mental affects are important" (Ozgur et al., 2011: 54). Aggressive behaviour and violence have long been areas of exploratory interest for social scientists and practitioners [for example Berkowitz (1993) as cited in Lewis and Fremouw (2001: 105). From a theoretical point of view, it appears that there are more than one argument on the formation and development of violence on the human self. Beck, the founder of cognitive behavioural theory, explains the cognitive bases of anger and aggression as follows: In order for the threat perception to emerge, one must be an object of a deliberate attack, oppression, criticism, prevention, rejection, poverty, and objection (Gunerı, 2016: 14). Taking this into consideration, it can be said that the concept of violence develops from the relationship that the individual has with a whole range of variables. It can be deduced that an individual’s distance from violence and aggression is determined by his/her experience either with self or his /her environment. According to social learning theory, which was developed from Bandura’s ideas, violence occurs for a lot of reasons. In Bandura’s theory, people show aggressive attitudes towards others for the following reasons: Their experience makes them aggressive, when they are appreciated or rewarded for such actions they tend to repeat them, and when they are encouraged to be aggressive by specific social and environmental conditions (Adak, 2004: 29-30, as cited in Kaplan et al. (1994: 176). Children must manifest what they read in any literary work whether positive or negative. Using social learning theory on this, these violent children’s books will have great negative impact in children making them aggressive and exhibiting it physically. Production of good children’s literature will help the child’s development, specific cognitive and affective structures in the society.

Authors should design contents that would help in developing and improving children in various ways. It is very important that the issue of violence is presented to children mildly without exaggeration. Despite the lack of consensus in the definitions of violence, the most appropriate definition of violent acts as: "There is violence when and where one or more members in mutual relations act directly or indirectly, either once or sporadically to harm the physical, moral, spiritual integrity, property, symbolic and cultural values of others" (Kara, 2007: 62, as cited in Michaud (1978: 20). As Michaud points out, it is necessary that violence is used proportionately and in an organized way without harming the cognitive development of children; every work must provide an environment for children to play a healthy role in and to make their attitudes towards multidimensional variables conduct positive. Apart from its admonishing, instructive and punishing qualities, violence in juvenile literature has other importance (Nimon, 1993: 29). It can be considered that the moderate use of elements such as fear, pain, evil, grudge, hatred, etc. should not distort the cognitive development of children; rather these elements should be used moderately to make children more curious and have the ability to understand and explain these books.

The concept of fear

It would not be right to limit the concept of fear to a single
and fixed definition because it is complex and has a plurality of variables. Fear can be defined as a whole of events that affect people’s personalities and act as a catalyst of their physical or emotional actions, either from a certain or an uncertain source. Generally, fear can also be described as an emotional reaction that results in a fight-or-flight response when a stimulus is perceived as threatening (Eren, 2005: 2). It is possible to talk about the impact of more than one sensations emerging from fear. In fact anger is the strongest emotion that looks so much like fear among other emotions. Fear and anger are close because they affect people in different ways (Parrott, 2001). Where there is fear, happiness disappears. In some studies, it was determined that there is a relationship between emotions and variables such as age and gender. Although studies by other researchers (Taylor et al., 2001; Tong and Song, 2004 as cited in Elışüşük, 2018: 92) have shown that there is no significant relationship between happiness and gender, income, age, marital status. A person who is afraid of any situation has the tendency to fear. In this context, we can say that fear emerges as a result of interaction with more than one sensation.

It is assumed that horror stories dominating children's literature in the West will instil in children life values, desire to read, satisfy their feelings of curiosity and desire to explore without causing any terror (Iskender, 2016: 297). This can lead to the child's cognitive and social development positively when the element of fear is used modestly. According to the work of many theorists, reading of books containing terrific and horrific charms affects young and old people differently (McCort, 2016). It has more effect on children than adults. The proportionate use of fear can motivate children to read literary products. On the other hand, excessive use of fear element in books may lead to the formation of some cognitive problems in children. Though, children have the tendency to view beating and violence in books as a play because they are used to it (Dumanlı, 2016: 96), and also it can activate their sense of curiosity making it possible for them to explore and analyse events in a constructivist manner.

The works of the American writer, Francesca Simon should not be ignored. Among the authors of children's books, she has written a lot of books for children around the world. Since 1989, she has devoted her whole time to writing children's books, and till date she has produced more than 50 books. Simon won The Children's Book of the Year in 2008 at the Galaxy British Book Awards for Horrid Henry and the Abominable Snowman. Horrid Henry series has been published in 24 countries worldwide and sold a total of 15 million copies. The series is also shown on television as a cartoon series’ (Simon, 2012: 4a).

**The problem of the study**

This review attempts to answer the following questions:

A) What are the elements of fear and violence in Francesca Simon's "Horrid Henry's Series"?
B) How are the elements of fear and violence in Francesca Simon's Horrid Henry series dispersed among themselves?
C) What are the results of examining critically the elements of fear and violence in Francesca Simon's "Horrid Henry Series"?

**The limitations of the study**

The research population is Francesca Simon's "Horrid Henry's Series", written and intended for children as the main readers. This research was prepared based on the report of Renaissance Reader UK web site published in 2016. The limitation of the work is of all Francesca Simon’s “Horrid Henry's Series” one of the most popular 20 children's book series, only five were analysed "Horrid Henry's Holiday", "Horrid Henry's Birthday Party", "Don't be Horrid, Henry!", "Horrid Henry Gets Rich Quick" and "Horrid Henry and the Bogey Babysitter".

**METHODS**

**The model of the study**

The research model is '...regulating the conditions necessary for the economical collection and resolution of data based on the purpose of the study' (Karasar, 2002: 76, as cited in Selltiz et al., 1959: 50). In this research, children’s story books written by Francesca Simon were examined in terms of the elements of violence and fear used in them. In this study, qualitative research method is used. The method of document analysis is based on the principle of examining and processing documents in various ways and reaching a conclusion accordingly. Document analysis usually involves: “Getting the document, checking the authenticity of the document, analysing and understanding the data in the document and using the data” (Simsek, 2009: 43). 5 story books namely "Horrid Henry's Holiday (Simon, 2012a)", "Horrid Henry's Birthday Party (Simon, 2012b)", "Don't be Horrid, Henry! (Simon, 2011)", "Horrid Henry Gets Rich Quick (Simon, 2012c)" and "Horrid Henry and the Bogey Babysitter (Simon, 2015)" among Francesca Simon’s "Horrid Henry's Series" were analysed in this work.

**FINDINGS**

In this work, the elements of violence used in Francesca Simon's selected books of Horrid Henry's Series are examined under two subheadings: "Elements of Physical Violence" and "Elements of Emotional Violence". While the elements of fear in the same books are examined under three subheadings: "fear originating from humans", "fear originating from animals" and "fear originating from inanimate objects".

**The elements of violence and fear in the book "Horrid Henry and the Bogey Babysitter"**

The elements of violence used in the book "Horrid Henry
Table 1. Violence Elements in the Book "Horrid Henry and the Bogey Babysitter".

| Types       | F | Page No. | Types          | F | Page No.                        |
|-------------|---|----------|----------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Attacking   | 4 | 13,18,33,77 | Yelling        | 37| 17,18,29,29,32,33,36,37,48,53,55,55,59,63,6  |
| Cutting     | 3 | 15,45,68 | Using Bad Words | 24| 12,18,27,30,32,36,37,40,48,49,55,55,57,57,5 |
| Shredding   | 2 | 29,46 | Howling        | 7 | 16,16,17,18,36,42,42           |
| Pulling     | 3 | 33,56,56 | Threatening    | 5 | 43,49,61,67,80                 |
| Pushing     | 1 | 23 | Roaring        | 1 | 73                           |
| Throwing    | 1 | 35 | Growling       | 1 | 42                           |
| Crashing    | 1 | 78 | Screaming      | 1 | 84                           |
| Kicking     | 1 | 84 |                             |   |                               |
| Total       | 16| 76 |                             |   |                               |

Table 2. Fear elements in the book "Horrid Henry and the Bogey Babysitter".

| Types                               | Frequency | Page No. |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Fear originating from humans        | 3         | 37,38,42 |
| Fear originating from animals       | 3         | 47,49,49 |
| Total                               | 6         |          |

In analysing the content of the story book "Horrid Henry and the Bogey Babysitter", it is seen that a total of 92 violent elements are used: 16 for physical violence and 76 for emotional violence. The emotional violence includes 37 "yelling", 24 "bad words", 7 "howling", 5 "threatening", 1 "roaring", 1 "growling" and 1 "screaming". The physical violence includes 4 "attacking", 3 "cutting", 3 "pulling", 2 "shredding", 1 "pushing", 1 "throwing" and 1 "kicking".

The horror elements in the book, "Horrid Henry and the Bogey Babysitter" and their frequency values are listed in Table 1.

In the content of the book "Horrid Henry Gets Rich Quick", it is seen that 60 elements of violence are used: 15 are elements of physical violence and 45 are elements of emotional violence. The violence elements include 7 "use of bad words", 6 "threatening", 1 "enraging" and 1 "howling". The physical violence elements include: 4 "Pushing", 3 "attacking", 3 "pinching", 1 "hitting", 1 "elbow throwing", 1 "tripping", 1 "hair pulling" and 1 "pulling".

The fear elements in the book, "Horrid Henry Gets Rich Quick" and the frequency values of these elements are presented in Table 4.

In analysing the content of the book, "Horrid Henry Gets Rich Quick", it is seen that 1 fear element is used and is the "fear originating from humans".

The Elements of violence and fear in the book, "Horrid Henry's Birthday Party"

In the content of the book "Horrid Henry's Birthday Party", a total of 17 violence elements are used: 3 are physical violence, while the other 14 are emotional
Table 3. ‘Violence elements in the book “Horrid Henry Gets Rich Quick”’

| Types       | Frequency | Page No. | Types       | F       | Page No.                                                                 |
|-------------|-----------|----------|-------------|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pushing     | 4         | 10,10,75,77 | Yelling     | 30      | 9,11,12,12,27,32,32,34,34,42,52,52,53,63,65,71,72,72,72,73,87,87,88,88,88,88,88,90,90,91 |
| Attacking   | 3         | 12,32,90  | Using Bad Words | 7       | 12,16,57,63,79,84,88                                                  |
| Pinching    | 3         | 10,16,53  | Threatening  | 6       | 16,16,33,39,54,73                                                      |
| Hitting     | 1         | 11        | Enraging     | 1       | 34                                                                     |
| Elbow throwing | 1     | 10        | Howling      | 1       | 90                                                                     |
| Tripping    | 1         | 10        |              |         |                                                                         |
| Hair pulling | 1        | 39        |              |         |                                                                         |
| Pulling     | 1         | 76        |              |         |                                                                         |
| Total       | 15        |           |              | 45      |                                                                         |

Table 4. The elements of fear in the book “Horrid Henry Gets Rich Quick”.

| Types                      | Frequency | Page No. |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Fear originating from humans | 1         | 81       |
| Total                      | 1         |          |

Table 5. The elements of violence in the book “Horrid Henry’s Birthday Party”.

| Types           | Frequency | Page No. | Types       | Frequency | Page No. |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| Physical Violence |          |          | Emotional Violence |         |          |
| Kicking         | 2         | 54.68    | Yelling     | 11        | 33,37,48,50,54,64,73,74,74,74,74 |
| Hitting         | 1         | 66       | Threatening | 2         | 51.54    |
| Hate speech     | 1         |          |             | 1         | 61       |
| Total           | 3         |          |              | 14        |          |

Table 6. The Elements of Fear in the Book “Horrid Henry’s Birthday Party”.

| Types                      | Frequency | Page No. |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Fear originating from humans | 1         | 38       |
| Total                      | 1         |          |

The 14 emotional violence elements include 11 “yelling”, 2 “threatening” and 1 “hate speech”. The 3 physical violence elements include 2 ”kicking” and 1 “hitting”.

The elements of fear and violence in the Book “Horrid Henry’s Holiday”

The elements of violence and fear in the Book “Horrid Henry’s Holiday” and the frequency values of these elements are listed in Table 7.

In the content of the book “Horrid Henry’s Holiday”, a total use of 6 violence elements (1 physical and 5 emotional) are used. The emotional violence elements include 5 “yelling”. The physical violence element in the
Table 7. Violence Elements in the Book "Horrid Henry's Holiday".

| Physical Violence | Emotional Violence |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Types             | Frequency | Page No. | Types | Frequency | Page No. |
| Kicking           | 1         | 59       | Yelling | 5         | 42, 42, 42, 49, 52 |
| TOTAL             | 1         |          |         | 5         |          |

Table 8. Fear Elements in the Book "Horrid Henry's Holiday".

| Types                          | Frequency | Page No. |
|--------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Fear originating from humans   | 1         | 49       |
| Total                          | 1         |          |

Table 9. Violence Elements in the Book "Don't be Horrid, Henry!".

| Physical Violence | Emotional Violence |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Types             | Frequency | Page No. | Types | Frequency | Page No. |
| Kicking           | 1         | 30       | Yelling | 7         | 32, 34, 40, 42, 51, 56, 57 |
| Casting down      | 1         | 31       |        |           |         |
| Hitting           | 1         | 32       |        |           |         |
| Scattering        | 1         | 33       |        |           |         |
| Total             | 4         |          |        | 7         |         |

Table 10. The Elements of Fear in the Book "Don't be Horrid, Henry!".

| Types                          | Frequency | Page No. |
|--------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Fear originating from animals  | 1         | 55       |
| Total                          | 1         |          |

book is 1 "kicking".
The elements of fear in the book "Horrid Henry's Holiday" and the frequency values of these elements are presented in Table 8.
In the book "Horrid Henry's Holiday", 1 fear element is used and is the "fear originating from humans".

The elements of violence and fear in the Book "Don't be Horrid, Henry!"
The elements of violence in the book, "Don't be Horrid, Henry!" and the frequency values of these elements are shown in Table 9.
In the content of the book "Don't be Horrid, Henry!", 11 violence elements are used: 4 is physical and 7 is emotional. The emotional violence elements include 7 "yelling". The physical violence elements in the book are 1 "kicking", 1 "throwing", 1 "hitting", and 1 "scattering".
The elements of fear in the book, "Don't be Horrid, Henry!" and the frequency values of these elements are given in Table 10.
In the book, "Don't be Horrid, Henry!" 1 fear element is used and is the "fear originating from animals".

Conclusion and Recommendations
In analyzing Francesca Simon's "Horrid Henry" series, it is observed that the works contain elements of physical and emotional violence and fear. From the 185 elements of violence, 38 are examples of physical violence, while 147 are emotional violence.
Although it is thought that this series may negatively affect children's readers, it contributes a wealth of knowledge to children's literature. Considering that the
target group for the series is primary school children, it is obvious that these children are in the stage of doing concrete work. “Children can produce alternative solutions to problems during the concrete operational stage, while in abstract operational stage, they thinking multidimensionally, abstractly and analytically” (Ozsoy, 2008:721, as cited in Piaget). During the concrete operational stage or last stage, children identify themselves with the events or characters that direct those events. Children accepting those violent acts within themselves and the external environment would inevitably demolish their social structure instead of them being constructive. Furthermore, it should not be overlooked that children exposed to excessive use of yelling may exhibit impatient, insensitive or selfish attitudes in their social environment as “yelling” is the most frequent element of emotional violence used in the book.

It is seen that there are many elements of violence used in Horrid Henry Series. The language fashions that have gained personal characteristics are settled in the childhood period; in the following years they basically remain same although they experience a very limited change due to education and social environment” (Koprulu, 2015: 22). The linguistic characteristics of books given to children to read, which is one of the 4 basic language skills, are very important to regulate and enrich children's vocabulary. The use of negative vocabulary in the series would make the vocabulary of children not to be well structured.

The affective domain can be defined as the field of development that embraces the world of emotions and thoughts of individuals. The elements of violence used in Horrid Henry series would have a negative effect on the affective development of children at primary school level. Exposure of children, who are just knowing their emotion and thought, to a negative schema may cause them not to use their feelings in a healthy and consistent way in the future. In this respect, the multiplicity of words that contain violence elements in the book would adversely impact the mental structure of children as well as their affective structure.

Upon examination of Francesca Simon’s “Horrid Henry’s Series”, a total of 10 fear elements are used. Among these 10, 6 are “fear originating from humans” and 4, "from animals". Considering that the violence elements are used more frequently and distributed proportionately and consistently than the fear elements, this can make the children to be devoted to the book they read. The child would follow the story arc with curiosity due to the consistent and proportionate use of fear elements, and can get to the last page without getting bored.

After examining the content of Francesca Simon's Horrid Henry's Series, it is seen that they do not have suitable examples for children’s cognitive and affective developmental characteristics. Despite the appropriate use of fear elements, the elements of violence are used excessively, and this can create adverse effects on the pupils of primary school in various ways. In this context, we should be aware of the abundance of the elements of fear and violence in the content of the “Horrid Henry’s Series” and care should be taken when recommending it for children readers.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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