

**A Critical Review of the Narratives and Stories of the  
Fourth Grade Textbook of Persian Language and  
Presenting Extra-Textual Teaching Solutions**

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**Introduction**

In this article, two approaches have been used in the criticism of children's literature to examine the narratives and stories of the fourth-grade textbooks of Persian language: first, the theory of reader-oriented criticism; and second, the approach of combining pleasure and education in children's literature. It is necessary to explain these two categories on which this research was formed.

It was Chambers, the great English researcher, who for the first time applied the basics of reader-oriented criticism and theory in the field of children's literature and tried to establish a link between reader-

oriented criticism and language studies in the fields of literature and aesthetics, considering language and writing style. Based on this model, Chambers proposed the study of children's and adolescents' stories based on the separation of three categories of narratology, stylistics, and telling gaps in the story.

The second approach is the necessity of pleasure in children's literature, which was discussed by Perry Nodelman. The principle of this theory is based on a delightful approach to education in children's literature. According to Nodelman, the amusement of the text has various forms and the child can take pleasure in the text with the help of the trainer and the teacher. By preparing the student's mind, she/he can be made aware of the pleasures that the texts provide, so that she/he becomes interested in reading and distinguishes between useful and harmful texts.

### **Method, Review of Literature and Purpose**

This is a descriptive and field research at the same time; that is, the data for this study is collected by library research as well as by conducting interviews with student.

Charlotte Haag and her colleagues (1993) in *Children's Literature in the Elementary School*, deal with the impact of children's literature on children in elementary school. Other studies related to this study are Heydar Qamari's (2018) article, "Review of the Scientific Validity of Persian Primary School Books"; Gholamreza Pirouz and Maryam Faqih Abdulahi's (2016) article, "Investigation of Social Intelligence and Its Components in the Stories in the Textbooks of Persian Language in Elementary Schools"; and Zahra Saedi's (2016) Master's thesis

entitled “Critical Review and Presenting of Teaching Strategies for the Fifth and Sixth-grade Textbooks of Persian Language”.

This article aims to examine the narrative tools and story elements of textbooks of Persian language in the fourth grade of elementary school and achieve their main essence and carry out various classroom and workshop activities, and at the same time, to explore elements of reader-oriented criticism in the texts and to evaluate them from the approach of combining teaching and pleasure.

### **Discussion**

In the beginning, fourth-grade textbook of Persian language is introduced as the main source of the article. The textbook includes reading and writing skills and comes with a teacher's guide, a CD-ROM of an illustrations and audio files. After that, the textbooks are criticized because they do not pay attention in their objectives of the curriculum to elements of entertainment and pleasure. Then, twelve stories are selected from the textbook and criticized for their structure and content. The titles of these stories are as follows: “The Creator of Beauty”, “The Migration of the Swallows”, “The Secret of Signs”, “The Value of Knowledge”, “Arash Kamangir”, “The Guest of Our City”, “Waiting”, “Kindergarten”, “Commander of Hearts”, “Friends of Good Children”, “Seven Red Pearls”, “Smart School”. The researchers try to identify the narrative structure and the theme of each story, to examine each story from the perspective of story elements and the main source, to present student’s opinions about the stories based on reader-oriented criticism and enjoyable education approach, and finally, to present extra-textual teaching solutions. Students' opinions about each lesson are reflected in

the extra-textual solutions section. In this section, the students were interviewed in an open space and each of them expressed their opinions about the stories and the pleasant feeling of the stories. In this way, the ability of the students to criticize and evaluate the stories was developed. They asked questions, compared the stories, judged, and finally criticized the lessons. At the same time, they expressed their feelings towards the stories. In the discussion of the extra-textual teaching methods, an attempt was made to enhance the pleasure of reading the texts by following these methods: accompanying poetry with music in poetry lessons, encouraging students to tell stories (according to the content and atmosphere of the story), strengthening the joy of thinking in the child through questioning while reading stories, mixing the content of stories with idioms and proverbs, introducing famous figures of Persian and world literature and promoting reading their works.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of the research show that if a story has a strong structural style and uses narrative tools properly, it can be both educational and enjoyable. These stories, which use more and more structural and narrative elements than other narratives in the textbook and use humorous language, are more popular among students. Stories which do not make correct use of narrative tools, and do not pay attention to children's perspective and proper setting do not have unity and integrity and do not attract the satisfaction and pleasure of the students.

In most of the stories, the main source is not mentioned, which leaves students unaware of the references in the lessons. Direct moral

teachings and advices and conclusions in some stories have reduced their appeal to the audience; as a result, the authors of the textbook have not achieved their educational goals. In general, the textbook of Persian language in the fourth grade of elementary school is not successful in conveying the values of literature to students and fulfilling the goals of literary works.

### **Keywords**

Children's literature, fourth grade, textbook of Persian language, story elements, critical review, teaching, in-text solutions.

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