

**Analysis of the Articles Published in *Journal for Children's Literature Studies* (the First 20 Issues) with an Emphasis on Subject Matter, Theoretical Framework, Frequent Authors and Highly Cited Sources**

**Mohammad Moradi**

Associate Professor of Persian Language and Literature,  
Shiraz University

**Sedigheh Mohammadi**

MA in International Law, Research Expert Shiraz  
University

**Introduction**

In recent decades, with the recognition of the significance of children's literature in academia, many institutes in Iran and around the world have turned their attention to the criticism and analysis of works related to the world of children. One of the influential institutes in the field of criticism and theory of children's literature is the Center for Children's Literature Studies established in 2005 in Shiraz University. The activities of this center have led to the development of university programs for children's and adolescents' literature and its curriculum in 2009 and 2010 (Khosrownejad & Atashi, 2019: 24; Maktabifard, 2016: 26-27). The research-based perspective of this center was accelerated with the publication of a research journal known as *Journal*

*for Children's Literature Studies* in 2010 (Maktabifard, 2016: 27). Since then, findings of university critics have been published for those interested in children's literature through this biannual journal.

Considering the influence of this center on the expansion and direction of theory and criticism of children's literature, the present research analyzes the articles in the first 20 issues of this journal in order to identify the changes in the subject matter and the perspectives of the researchers and critics in the field of children's literature, as well as to analyze the sources, subjects and works used by researchers, and to offer suggestions in the related fields to researchers and scientific committee of the journal.

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

Only a small number of researches so far have been conducted on the fields of children's and adolescents' literature in Iran which are thematically closer to the present study. For instance, Hajvani (2010) has studied the development of children's and adolescents' literature criticism in Iran; and Rezavi and Mosanen Farsi (2010) have analyzed the citations and references in the articles published in *Research Journal of Children's Literature* and *Book of the Month of Children and Adolescents*. Sedighi (2016) has reported some of the shortcomings in theses on children's and adolescents' literature; Maktabifard (2016) has studied their methodologies; and Khosrownejad and Atashi (2010) have analyzed M.A. theses in children's literature with an emphasis on their shortcomings and common mistakes. Iranmanesh (2020) also presents a general survey of the shortcomings of children's literature. Nonetheless, the researches mentioned above do not have the same

scope and framework as the present study in its focus on research articles.

In this research, with the aim of presenting a general view of the state of researches in the field of children's literature and its shortcomings, first a full list of titles, abstracts, main bodies, keywords, information about the authors and the overall references of all the articles (145 articles) in the first 20 issues of the journal was provided, and then, with the method of content analysis, the body of information in this list was extracted based on factors such as the field of research, theoretical framework, type of work under study, study sample, subject matter, title of the book, name of the author and the writers' affiliations and the expertise. Taking into account the influence of the type of writing in the intelligent extraction of data, two methods of computer search and reading the texts were used in order to register more accurate and reliable statistical data.

### **Discussion**

From the perspective of the research field, from among 145 articles published in the first 20 issues of the *Journal of Children's Literature Studies*, more than a hundred articles are written on works of contemporary literature. In comparison with the contemporary works, 19 percent of the researches were conducted on the analysis of an ancient work from the perspective of its appropriateness and adaptability with children and adolescents or its capacity for the creation of a literary type for this audience. Most of these researches have focused on arguments such as recreation, rewriting or adapting

ancient texts with the aim of creating modern texts based on the needs of contemporary children.

From the perspective of theoretical framework, only 43 percent of the articles were written based on a recognizable theory or framework. Although all the articles with a framework do not have an independent section for explaining the theoretical framework, their authors have tried to allocate some parts of the introduction and methodology of the study to explain expressions and theories have and used a relatively clear framework for their research. However, 57 percent of the articles do not have a recognizable framework for the research. Also, 85 percent of the articles have considered children's literature as a textual entity and written literature; therefore, other related fields based on other definitions of literature are studied to a lesser degree. The frequency of prose works (70 percent) is an indicator of the significance of narrative prose works in creating an appropriate world for children. The significance of narrative prose works in the studies of children's literature worldwide is a confirmation of this view. Verse works are the subject of only 22 percent of the researches which shows the relative disregard of children's literature researchers toward poetry as a traditional-local type of children's literature.

In articles under study, the writers have chosen various methods for selecting their samples based on their study questions and subject matters. In 49 articles (34 percent) only one work is studied. In 15 articles (10 percent) the works of a particular author are studied from one or several perspectives. 17 articles (12 percent) have analyzed a collection of stories or a novel for children and adolescents. And in 21

articles (14 percent), two or several works or authors are compared with each other based on a literary theory or literary field.

From a thematic perspective, the articles are divided into five general categories. Although children's literature and its fields of research are multidisciplinary, 74 articles (more than 51 percent) have focused only on the literary characteristics of the texts. The second group are articles that are essentially multidisciplinary and their authors are often researchers and professors of university departments such as psychology, educational and cognitive sciences, social sciences and sociology. Overall, 32 articles (22 percent) fit in this category.

The researchers also found out that from amongst the most cited authors in the articles, Morteza Khosrownejad, the researcher and author of children's literature, is mentioned more than others in the articles. The authors of the articles have mentioned 26 books or articles by him in an overall number of 87 citations. The second author and the most prominent author of children's and adolescents' literature is Farhad Hassanzadeh. 45 works by Hassanzadeh in the genres of fiction, novel, play, etc. can be traced in 55 articles. The third author and researcher is Mohammad Hadi Mohammadi whose two books, *History of Iranian Children's Literature* (coauthored with Zohre Ghaeni) and *Methodology of Children's Literature Criticism*, have been cited more than others. Fictional works of Houshang Moradi Kermani have gained the same number of citations as research works of Mohammad Hadi Mohammadi (49 times). Moradi Kermani's 11 works, especially *Majid's Tales* (in five articles), *Children of the Carpet Factory* and *the Smile of the Pomegranate* (4 times each) have gained the attention of researchers more. From among the poets for children and adolescents, Mostafa

Rahmandoost is present more than others in the articles. 31 of his works are cited 33 times in the articles. Ahamd Reza Ahmadi's works (in genres of fiction and poetry and ...), Mohammad Reza Yousefi's fiction, Jafar Ebrahimi's works (mostly his poems), Ahmad Akbarpoor's fiction, especially his *Dreams of South* and *Good Night Commander*, Ali Asghar Seye Abadi's literary works and criticism, and Fariba Kalhor's fictional works are among other sources which are referred to in the reference section of the articles 21 to 26 times.

In 145 articles, approximately 2800 references are mentioned (approximate average of 20 references in each articles). The most cited book is *Innocence and Experience* which has been referred to in nearly one fourth of the articles. In 22 articles, authors have referred to one of the volumes of *The History of Iranian Children's Literature*. The most cited textbook about children's and adolescents' literature is *Children and Adolescents' Literature and the Promotion of Reading*. The two books, *Children's and Adolescents' Literature: Characteristics and Aspects* and *Methodology of Children's Literature Criticism* are cited in 14 and 13 articles, respectively.

### **Conclusion**

The study of 145 articles published in the *Journal of Children's Literature Studies* shows that most of the articles are written on contemporary literary works. From the perspective of theoretical framework, 43 percent of articles have a distinguishable framework while 57 percent of them do not. 70 percent of articles are written on prose fiction while poetry and other genres are less represented in the researches. This attention attests to the suitability of theories of

children's literature with fictional literature. Another point which is worth noticing is that 2800 references are used overall in the articles. Five most cited books which have been used by researchers for their theoretical discussions are *Innocence and Experience*, *The History of Iranian Children's Literature*, *Children's and Adolescents' Literature: Characteristics and Aspects*, and *Methodology of Children's and Adolescents' Literature Criticism*. From among the authors of theoretical works of children's and adolescents' literature in Iran, Morteza Khosrownejad, Mohammad Hadi Mohammadi and Sorayya Qezel-Ayagh have been cited more than others. In the field of children's poetry, most references are to the discussions and works of Parvin Salajeqeh and Ali Asghar Seyed Abadi. Mostafa Rahmandoost and Jafar Ebrahimi are the most studied poets; and Farhad Hasanzadeh and Hooshang Moradi Kermani are the most studied fiction writers.

### **Keywords**

*Journal of Children's Literature Studies*, Shiraz University, research articles, children's and adolescents' literature, methodology, citation

### **References**

- Alizadeh, N., & Nayebi, A. (2018). Content criticism and analysis of articles in the *Journal of Persian Literature* of the University of Tehran from the perspective of scientology. *Persian Literature*, 8(2), 219-235 (in Persian).
- Aqanoori, N., & Gholamhosseinzadeh, G. (2016). Statistical analysis of research approaches in the field of resistance literature.

*Resistance Literature of Kerman University*, 8(15), 1-29 (in Persian).

Fotouhi, M. (2011). *Principles of writing research articles*. Sokhan (in Persian).

Gholaminejad, M. A., & Qaboul, E. (2007). Pathology of theses in Persian language and literature. *Research Journal of Mystical Literature (Gouhar-e Gouya)*, 1(1), 181-191 (in Persian).

Hajvani, M. (2010 a). Analytical study of the development of children's and adolescents' literature with a look at the shortcomings of the critical approaches. *Journal of Children's Literature Studies*, 1(1), 75-99 (in Persian).

Hajvani, M. (2010 b). *Aesthetics of children's literature*. Research Institute for Human Sciences and Cultural Studies (in Persian).

Hejazi, B. (1995). *Children's and adolescents' literature: Characteristics and aspects*. Roshangaran (in Persian).

Iranmanesh, Z. (2020). A survey of shortcomings of children's and adolescents' literature. *Proceedings of the Sixth National Conference of Modern Researches in the Field of Iranian Language and Literature*, pp. 1-19 (in Persian).

Khosrownejad, M. (2008). *Inevitable re-readings: Approaches in criticism and theory of children's literature*. Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents (in Persian).

Khosrownejad, M. (2016). Academization of children's literature: Theoretical principles, objectives and shortcomings (interview with Amin Yazdanpanah). *Research Journal of Children's and Adolescents' Literature*, 69: 5-25 (in Persian).

- Khosrownejad, M. & Atashi, L. (2019). Pathology of the theses conducted by Iranian students majoring in children's literature: A critical examination of the flaws and fhortcomings. *Journal of Children's Literature Studies*, 10(1), 23-56 (in Persian).
- Maktabifard, L. (2016). Academic studies of children's literature: A bridge or a gap? *Research Journal of Children's and Adolescents' Literature*, 69, 26-33 (in Persian).
- Mirzaei, K. (2010). *Scientific method of writing papers*. Jame'e-shenasan (in Persian).
- Nazari, A. A. (2017). *The method of research and scientific writing*. University of Tehran Press (in Persian).
- Pooladi, K. (2008). *Foundations of children's literature*. Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Adolescents (in Persian).
- Qezel-Ayagh, S. (2013). *Children's and adolescents' literature and the promotion of reading: Literary material and services for children and adolescents*. SAMT (in Persian).
- Razavi, A. & Mosanen Farsi, H. (2010). The state of citation in the *Research Journal and Book of the Month of Children and Adolescents*. *Journal of Children's Literature Studies*, 1(2), 71-100 (in Persian).
- Reisi Sarteshnizi, H., Forouzandeh, M. & Mousavi, S. K. (2022). Statistical analysis of articles in Journal of *Poetry Studies (Boostan-e Adab)*. *Journal of Poetry Studies*, unpublished article (in Persian).
- Sedighi, M. (2016). A suggestion for organizing M.A. theses in children's literature: Inside the text and outside the text. *Research*

*Journal of Children's and Adolescents' Literature*, 69, 59-67 (in Persian).

Website for the study of the articles in the *Journal of Poetry Studies*:

<https://jcls.shirazu.ac.ir/>

Website for The Center for Children's Literature Studies, Shiraz University: <https://ccls.shirazu.ac.ir/>

Website for course curricula, Expansion Office, Ministry of Science, Research and Technology <http://gostaresh.msrt.ir>