

**A Comparative Study of Didactic Themes in Children’s
Poetry of Ibrahim Abu Talib and Naser Keshavarz**

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Introduction

Children’s and young adults’ literature, a subset of didactic literature, plays a crucial role in helping young audiences understand the world around them and educating those with less life experiences. This genre is vital for character building and preparing children for the future, as it supports their spiritual, psychological, and intellectual development during their formative years. Researchers trace the roots of children’s literature to the stories told by mothers and grandmothers. In Arabic literature, the first contemporary works for children emerged during the translation movement led by Rafa Tahtawi in Egypt. In Iran, significant literary developments occurred after the constitutional decree in 1324 A.H., which also saw a rise in children’s literature alongside social,

political, and cultural changes. This research offers a comparative and interdisciplinary analysis of didactic themes in the works of Ebrahim Aboutaleb, a notable children’s poet from Yemen, and Nasser Keshavarz, a renowned contemporary Iranian children’s poet.

Methodology, Literature Review and Purpose

This study employs a descriptive-analytical approach and draws on the American school of comparative literature to examine the educational themes in the works of Ibrahim Abu Talib from Yemen and Nasser Keshavarz from Iran.

Research on Ebrahim Abutaleb’s poetry is limited. Azizipour and Wadigaran (2015) in their article “The Basics of Resistance Literature in Ibrahim Abu Talib’s Poetry,” published in the first issue of the third year of the *Holy Defense Literature Quarterly*, explore fundamental themes of resistance literature such as patriotism, the Yemeni revolution, and Islamic awakening, as discussed in the Diwan “Heine Yahab Nasimoha”. Qaid and Mehyoub (2018) in their article “The Legacy of Ibrahim Abu Talib’s Poetry,” published in the second issue of *Al-Jazeera University Magazine*, examine the literary and historical heritage, including the use of ancient literary texts and religious texts such as Qur’anic verses, the personalities of prophets, and Hadiths, as discussed in the Diwan “Malhamti and Al Haruf Al Aola.”

In contrast, Nasser Keshavarz, a prominent figure in Iranian children’s literature, has been the subject of numerous studies, though no specific research has focused solely on his work.

The aim of this research is to identify and analyze the poems of Ibrahim Abu Taliband Nasser Keshavarz, focusing on their didactic and practical themes.

Discussion

This study examined the poems of two poets, focusing on religious concepts and teachings.

Meanings and Religious Instruction: Both poets, being Muslim, naturally incorporate Islamic teachings into their works. Ibrahim Abutaleb uses familiar religious concepts from children’s everyday environments, like the family setting, to educate them. Nasser Keshavarz, on the other hand, has written numerous poems and collections about understanding God, praying, praising the Lord, and recognizing divine blessings. His work aims to make children aware of the variety and abundance of blessings and to foster gratitude towards God Almighty.

Respect for Parents: Abutaleb emphasizes the importance of appreciating and respecting parents by highlighting their love and hard work. Similarly, Nasser Keshavarz’s poems, such as “My Dad’s Poems,” “Daddy’s Lullabies,” “The Best Mom in the World,” and “My Mother’s Good Feeling,” underscore the significance of parents and the need to respect them.

Good Manners and Politeness: Both Ibrahim Abutaleb and Nasser Keshavarz convey moral messages in their poems, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly. Their goal is to help children distinguish between good and bad behavior and to encourage them to develop good morals.

Various Jobs: To help children learn about different professions, Ibrahim Abu Talib has created a poetry booklet titled “Ana Ahb Amari,” written in clear and simple language. In his allegorical poetry collection “Vagi Verjah 7,” Nasser Keshavarz describes the process of building a wooden house on a tree for a frog protagonist in the poem “Vagi built a good house with nails, saw, and wood.” Both poets aim to acquaint children with various jobs through their poems, helping parents understand their child’s future career interests.

Health Tips: Emphasizing the importance of health education, both poets address personal hygiene, nutrition, exercise, and more. In the poem “Al-Asnan al-Bayda,” Abutaleb encourages children to maintain dental hygiene. Similarly, Keshavarz’s book *I Am Clean Now* uses a playful tone to teach children about hygiene practices, including keeping the park clean.

Conclusion

Nasser Keshavarz and Ibrahim Abu Talib are notable contemporary poets in children’s literature. They ensure that their poetry is not only entertaining but also educational, incorporating lessons through allegory and vivid imagery. They convey religious beliefs and teachings through stories and narratives, believing that indirect education is the most effective way to teach children. By using storytelling techniques, they highlight educational and training points. Their work often reflects the concrete realities of their time, sometimes using repetitive and cliché descriptions to emphasize moral messages. Both poets stress the importance of family ties, respect for parents, and the role of parents in shaping a child’s personality. They also highlight the value of hard

work and earning a halal livelihood by introducing various official and native jobs. Additionally, they focus on the importance of health tips, addressing both the physical and spiritual well-being of children.

Keywords: didactic themes, children’s literature, Ibrahim Abu Talib, Naser Keshavarz, Yemen

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