

THE ANALYSIS OF THEATRE PLAYS FOR CHILDREN
STAGED BY THE STATE THEATRE AND PRIVATE THEATRES
IN 2008-2009 THEATRE SEASON IN BURSA

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this study is to investigate theatre plays for children staged by the State Theatres and private theatre companies in one specific theatre season in Bursa in terms of their essential language, physical, educational, entertainment and social characteristics. More specifically, the present study examines appropriateness of theatre plays for children in term of these essential characteristics stated by the experts and also opinions of audiences, parents, teachers, and professionals gained by interviews.

Twelve preschool children between the ages of 5 and 6, ten parents who had 5 or 6-year-old children, and two preschool drama teachers were asked about their opinions after attending one or more of the theatre plays which were chosen for the study. The theatre plays which were chosen for the study were also scored according to the five different essential characteristics by two coders by using the “theatre for young audiences evaluation rubric” which was developed by the researcher based on the literature.

The study presented the composition of the information gained from the interviews and the characteristics scores of each theatre play. The results revealed that

As an outcome, this study documented general information about the existing, required and desired characteristics of theatre plays for children; specific information about the current status of theatre plays for children in Bursa; and also implications and suggestions for parents, educators, playwrights, theatre directors and further studies.

Keywords: Theatre for children, Theatre for young audiences, Characteristics of theatre plays for children.

ÖZ

BURSA İLİNDE DEVLET TİYATROLARI VE ÖZEL TİYATROLAR TARAFINDAN 2008-2009 TİYATRO SEZONU İÇİNDE SAHNELENEN ÇOCUK OYUNLARININ İNCELENMESİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı Bursa ilinde, bir tiyatro sezonu içerisinde devlet tiyatroları ve özel tiyatrolar tarafından sahneye konan çocuk oyunlarının dil, fiziksel, eğitimsel, eğlence ve sosyal karakteristiklerine göre incelenmesidir. Daha belirli bir biçimde, bu çalışma uzmanların belirlediği ilkelere, izleyici olan çocukların, velilerin, öğretmenlerin ve profesyonellerin görüşlerine dayanarak çocuklar için sahneye konan tiyatro oyunlarının uygunluğunu incelemektedir.

Beş ve altı yaşlarında oniki anaokulu öğrencisi, beş ve altı yaşlarında çocuğu olan on adet ebeveyn, iki okul öncesi drama öğretmeni incelenecek tiyatro oyunlarını izledikten sonra görüşleri konusunda mülakata tabi tutulmuşlardır. Çalışma için seçilen tiyatro oyunları ayrıca araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen ölçek dahilinde belirlenmiş olan beş temel karakteristik açısından puanlanmıştır.

Çalışma, mülakatlardan ve puanlamalardan elde edilen bilgilerin bir derlemesini sunmaktadır.

Çalışmanın sonucunda çocuklar için sahneye konan tiyatro oyunlarının var olan ve olması gereken karakteristik özellikleri, Bursa ilinde sahnelenen çocuk oyunlarının güncel durumuyla ilgili ayrıntılı bilgi, ve bunların yanında aileler, eğitimciler, oyun yazarları, yönetmenler ve ileride yapılacak arařtırmalar için arařtırmacılara öneriler ortaya konulmuřtur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çocuklar için tiyatro, genç izleyici kitlesi için tiyatro, çocuklar için tiyatro oyunlarının karakteristikleri.

TO MY PARENTS & THE ART OF THEATRE
My eternal passion...

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The society in which people are responsible and respectful to each other is a civilized society. A group of people who has not got solidarity and who do not know responsibility to each other, are not a meaningful society. There are types of rules in order to have a well structured society, and to attain a sound, secure, trustworthy and reliable society construct. These rules are various from economical aspects to psychological aspects. However, in the origin of all these rules, lay ways and aspects, that they are all founded on a generally accepted cultural structure and strong bases. Spreading the cultural life to all parts of a country in an equal way makes people far from the cultural gasps. As a mediator between society and culture, theatre is one of the best and most common ways to transmit the meaning of art to the people. If the future is wanted to be guaranteed, it must be the children with whom will be started. It would be necessary to engage young generations of the society with theatre (Nutku, 2002).

First and foremost, theatre is a kind of art which is formed with contributions of literature, fine arts, visual arts and music. This specialty makes theatre the concurrence aspect of all kinds of art. Furthermore, all these art kinds represent messages on special materials, such as marble, paint, notes etc while theatre uses basically human beings and delivers its own messages via real life experiences. Thus, theatre is the closest art kind to life (Dökmen, 1983).

On the other hand, theatre is very important for education of children in the means of teaching them; developing their sympathies and their characters;

giving them the best possible sort of good time, and; introducing them to social life. It is also important to engage children with theatre for spreading the modern culture, and for making children understand and use it in their lives. For the development, learning and the potential to become desirable citizens of children.

The beginnings of theatre and drama are natural in children. First attempts of drama begins with play, and than role play and plays with rules. As time passes, these plays turn into self expression, which is one of the most important bases of theatre. Thus, it is always easier for children to identify themselves with characters, and learn more permanently (Nutku, 2002).

Many educators, critics, theoriticians have a common belief that the most important function of theatre for children is education. Without forgetting its art characteristics, it must be discussed how theatre for children is approached as an educational material. According to Şener (1982), theatre educates while emotionally affecting. In here, the word 'educate' is used in the mean of intention to make the audience be aware of new things. Yetkin (1966), claims that only theatre can develop the esthetical intelligence of the society, and thus theatre must be seen as an educational foundation. On the other hand, Özgü (1966) stated that theatre teaches people how to ripen their emotions and ideas, and how to assort good from bad, and beneficial from useless.

According to Samurçay (1979), there are four basic functions of theatre, that is especially theatre for children. These functions are entertaining, educational-effective, instructional, and critical-judgemental functions. As commonly accepted, children are interested in concepts they like and which entertain them. Theatre for children is also based on this concept. Before explaining and bringing some ideas to the children, experts must focus on attracting their attention to the theatre play. Thus, children participate voluntarily in the process. Theatre plays must take over an educational and effective role on children besides their role of entertainment. Yet, besides contributing the personality development of children, some experts belive that theatre can be used

for forming an intended personality. In a common point of view, theatre plays for children cause the development of imagination, sensitivity, expression ability, creativity and critical thinking (Samurçay, 1979). On the other hand theatre plays for children also have an intention to form a conscious theatre audience of the future. Theatre for children can also be used for teaching some educational and daily concepts to children. Theatre plays for children can also cause children think and have an idea about the ideologies in the world, of course when they are adapted appropriately for their developments, and expressed in a interesting and attractive way (Nutku, 2002).

Besides the educational contributions of theatre for children, it is also important for imagination. Artistic perception is a part of every human being, from young to old. Nevertheless, this special perception, which also can be called as 'imagination', is much more advanced in children; because they are endeavoring to learn and to cooperate with the outside world. Without any apprehension or fear, they are to expose their unlimited imaginations. They learn much more meaningful when they are engaged and exposed to the action (Bruner, 1961).

Piaget stated that (1999) play contains a form of discovery and learning. Conceptually, theatre and play are very close to eachother. There are playing human beings in the base of theatre. According to Piaget, play is a way of understanding and interpreting the world, and it comes from very early childhood. Children grow up with play, learn with play, and express with play (Rubin, Fein, & Vandenberg, 1983). Play is one of the most important aspects in people's lives, and there is play in the bases of theatre.

Moreover, learning occurs as a result of meaningful life experiences. Theatre plays for children can be very beneficial providing such experiences. Children can comprehend various concepts and themes by witnessing them as they are performed on the theatre stage. According to Ülkü (1979), children can learn much more easily, and carry out much more successfully when they observed and personally experienced. Theatre can provide such an environment.

Seeing theatre as a direct educational material would be improper. Instead, theatre must be approached as an indirect, constructive medium in education. For instance, according to Ülkü (1979), especially in theatre for children, the audience learns by observing and modelling. Also Kavcar (1982) claims that children can learn how to behave in today's order of complex relationship from theatre plays, written and performed in an appropriate way. And also Bandura's **Social Learning Theory** could be mentioned while introducing **observational learning** and **modelling** (Bee, 1995). Observing a behavior, and whether it was reinforced or weakened can teach other people about that behavior and its outcomes (Bandura, 1986). People learn by modelling the other people around them and observing their behaviors and consequences of these behaviors. Observational learning ensures acquiring new qualifications, skills and characteristics. Besides learning by observation brings new behaviors, it also consolidates frequency of desired behaviors. If the behaviors observed end up with positive and beneficial consequences, it is more likely these behaviors will arise. (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001).

In the light of all these informations above, the necessity of presenting artistically, emotionally, esthetically and logically appropriate theatre plays to young audiences is evident. Theatre for children, that aims to improve both cognitive and emotional/esthetical development helps children to build and shape their own personalities on solid grounds. It is necessary to provide our children esthetical criterions in the means of their psychological and physical developments. These esthetical criterions are important for them to approach problems in different ways and different points of views, also cause them to stay distant from structured and traditional points of view (Nutku, 2002).

There are many benefits and advantages of theatre applications for children. Some of these advantages are as follows. Theatre, (1) teaches how to cooperate, (2) improves responsibility, (3) develops the ability of translating the idea to action, (4) provides self-esteem and self-efficacy, (5) improves language abilities, (6) develops eye-hand coordination and motor skills, and (7) enriches

art intelligence and imagination (Nutku, 2002).

Development and investigation of theatre is necessary, but not only for children to enjoy their childhood by experiencing qualified artistic events; but also for the future of mankind, and for maintaining the peace and justice which are desired for the whole world. There are so many different theatre companies all around the world and also in Turkey, which present theatre plays for young audiences. In Turkey the State Theatres and also many other private theatre companies schedule childplays in their seasonal programs. But unfortunately, although it is a very common idea that theatre is very important for children's development, the number of research and studies on this subject is limited. Thus, there is not any academical study which questions and declares the desired and appropriate characteristics of theatre plays for children.

For all these reasons, the characteristics of theatre plays for children need to be studied, because theatre can be very powerful when appropriately used as an educational instrument.

1.1. The Aim Of The Study

This study aims to reflect the characteristics, associations, congruity and appropriateness of theatre plays for children according to the developmental stages and social perception levels of children by examining the theatre plays for children scheduled by the State Theatre and other private theatre companies in Bursa throughout one theatre season.

In the light of various data collection instruments and interviews, describing the differences between the State Theatre and the other private theatre companies is also intended. The study also aims to draw attention to the importance of theatre for children and the essential desired characteristics of theatre plays for children.

Another important aim of this study is to make implications for further research and also for play writers and dramaturgs, so that they may write and

schedule the appropriate theatre plays for the development of children. Besides, forming a theatre for children bulletin for parents and educators to provide reliable information about the characteristics of theatre for children is also intended as a result of this study.

1.2. Research Questions Of The Study

As every kind of art, theatre must also have some specific qualifications in order to be categorized as 'art'. In addition to this, theatre plays for young audiences must have some other important specialities since they address a much more tender and responsive audience. Gathered information from various sources (Nutku, 2002 & Kuyumcu, 2000 & Samurçay, 1979) show that theatre plays for young audiences must be studied under some specific headlines.

These headlines are:

- Language characteristics of the theatre play
- Physical characteristics of the theatre play
- Educational characteristics of the theatre play
- Entertainment characteristics of the theatre play
- Social characteristics of the theatre play

Each theatre play was analysed, evaluated and interpreted in the light of these headlines; and at the same time also three more open ended questions were chosen to analyse the characteristics of the theatre plays. The questions which will be examined comprehensively in the Discussion chapter are as follows:

1. Generally, is the theatre play suitable and appropriate for five and six-year-old children? Why or why not?
2. What is the target age group of the theatre play?
3. What is the message of the theatre play; and is the message understandable for the target audience?

This study will attempt to address the following research questions:

1.2.1. Research Question 1: Do theatre plays for children staged by the State Theatres and private theatre companies in one specific theatre season in Bursa meet the requirements in terms of their essential language, physical, educational, entertainment and social characteristics of theatre plays for children?

1.2.2. Research Question 2: What are the opinions of the participants about the theatre plays which were chosen for the study in terms of the essential language, physical, educational, entertainment and social characteristics of theatre plays for children?

1.3. Significance Of The Study

The first theatre for children was founded 59 years ago in Turkey. Children theatre has developed dramatically until today. But appropriate plays for children are very seldom. This is because of the number of the systematic and scientific studies about children theatre is almost none in Turkey. In this aspect, this study can cover an important point in Early Childhood Education.

Theatre is a powerful vehicle for exploring and understanding human experience through drama and related art forms. The aim of theatre for children is to provide young people with the opportunity to explore events and experiences that are important in their lives. Theatre projects are designed to engage young people's imaginations and to introduce them to the means to express their views, dreams and feelings in artistic form. Theatre for young people should have the same high standards as theatre for adults.

Much of the earlier work emphasized that a more advanced and sophisticated theatre brings much more varied attributes for children development and learning. Children theatre provides many opportunities and educational skills such as fresh insights, valuable information, and new challenging perspectives (Gustafson, 1951). Along with its impacts to the concept-learning ability of children, children's theatre stimulates creative and imaginative qualities and produces valuable emotional experiences (Masters, 1940).

Theatre for children has a potential power in the improvement of

education. It is defined as ‘a stimulation to learning, and an asset of great value in the growth and development of the individual child’ (Hostler, 1961). There is a strong communication between the actors and the children which has a power to teach children to learn about themselves and the others in a exciting, fun and valuable way (Atkeson, 1982).

Theatre for children is a real meaningful and usable aspect of education in order to creating, spreading, understanding and explaining the modern culture. It plays an important part in bringing up the new and solid generations, who will be the future of the world. In our day, like many other kinds of art, theatre also cannot receive the respect that it deserves. There are some limited studies about theatre for children which are not enough to state any contribution to the field.

1.4. Definitions Of The Terms

The following terms need to be defined for the purpose of this study:

Theatre for Children: Refers to the theatre plays those are especially written and played for young audiences. The term indicates theatrical events specifically designed to be performed for young persons typically of elementary school age, five to twelve.

Preschool Children: Refers to the children who are (1) below the age and grade level of primary education, (2) continuously attending an early childhood education center, and (3) between five and seven years of age.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter Two includes five main parts. In the first part, definitions and some characteristics of theatre, and theatre for children will be presented. The second part contains history and application of theatre and theatre for children in the world. After presenting a comprehensive review of the history of theatre and theatre for children in the world and in Turkey, several examples of theatre practices for children from different countries will be given. The third part explains the desired characteristics of theatre plays for children in the lights of all these articles, theories, studies and practices. The fourth part includes developmental theories which support the necessity of theatre for children. Several theories which are appropriate for association with theatre for children will be presented. Finally, the fifth part contains a brief summary of this chapter.

2.1. Definitions And Characteristics Of Theatre and Theatre For Children

2.1.1. Theatre and Theatre For Children

Theatre is a form of a literary work which is created by a playwright to be performed by actors in front of an audience. Generally a theatre play is consisted of dialogues between characters. Theatre is only about sharing. There are not any distinction between the performers and the audience. Theatre is an atmosphere in which writers, players, dancers, directors, designers and audience come together and share common and collective emotions and thoughts (Arıkan, 2006).

Theatre for children is a concept of theatre which is specially designed and staged for children from the ages of early childhood to puberty.

2.1.2. The Formation And Content Of Theatre

The origin of theatre comes from religious ceremonies and dances. From Middle Ages until present day theatre has been restricted and even inhibited in different European countries. The essence of theatre is to make people become conscious about any topic. That is why the theatre has always been a war of intellectual freedom in a meaning. As the other branches of art, theatre also requires creativity and honesty in it. There is always a need for theatre, because it brings people together under the same frame; whatever its topic is, such as religious, cultural, social, recreational and so on. The audience needs to come together in an accepted cultural atmosphere with peace and joy. Theatre brings the audience an imaginary world and carries the audience to another reasoning level. The audience finds their own life in so many different ways on stage; shares another lives. These lives make them think about their of lives. Every emotion, every thought is a new way of connection and sharing in theatre (Keskin, 2008).

In order to determine the place of theatre in our lives, first of all, the function of this branch in the society must be revealed; because theatre is a vehicle of expression in which people living together join as a group. According to And (1979) and Şener (1993), in the source of theatre, there is the manner that primitive people adopted against the facts, ideas and feelings. Against the nature's effects on human life, primitive people wanted to be superior by changing the natural. The narration of this superiority is met in simple and uncultivated plays that primitive men organized together. These primitive plays have gradually turned into clear and regular rituals. In this way, in the relationship between the men and the nature, theatre occurs as magic. Kinds of masks, costumes, actions come into being esthetic scene and styling.

According to Nutku (2002), daily life problems, conflicts, discoveries, anything experimentes encompass current relationships between people. To this way, current issues are evaluated into the possibilities of man's own organism. Primitive men tried to explain these issues with the help of reflection.

According to Nutku (2002), historical and universal essences coming from the source of theatre contain an artistic completion interrelated to each other from the beginning of theatre. When one of these is missing, it is impossible to mention the artistic completeness of theatre.

The content of theatre becomes by the interrelation of these and their effecting each other. Universal essence and historical essence, which create theatre's content, can become real through taking the current thought reflected in the audience of theatre in terms of art.

2.1.3. The Rules Peculiar To The Theatre

The first condition in order to understand theatre is to know that theatre has its own rules. In old times, science of theatre was considered to be integrated in the science of literature; this belief has had a very misleading role for a long time. However, the production of theatre is made by works of art which are totally different from the literary rules. In the essence of theatre, there occurs idolatry rituals and plays; in other words, before writing and texts theatre occurred in the form of play organizations (Şener, 1993). That is why one of the features of theatre is that it can be available without any text. Theatre is not based on the text; text is just a part in the fact of theatre. One has to be first aware of this to understand the power and creativity of theatre. Theatre introduces some creative elements by both over the text and also being connected to the text; it brings life to the words; it turns words into the scene, and turns the idea into the action. Finally the element of literature is only a part of theatre.

The work of theatre differs from the work of literature by birth; because literature determined by words and types of books, is created by only one person. This person creates the characters by himself with whom he explains his own point of view, his style and form. However, theatre is linked to the success of a group. The work of art is born with the harmonic study of the playwright, director, decor and costume artists, actors and actresses, dancers, composers, musicians, prompter, etc together (Nutku, 2002).

On the other hand, these are not enough, the work of theatre needs audience for its effect and contribution. The life of theatre becomes through circulation of blood from the stage to the audience, and vice-versa. That is why the structure of the audience, features of players and the style of staging a play are effective.

In addition to these, there is a differentiation between the work of theatre which changes in every era and the literary work that stables the same in spite of being interpreted in another way in every era. An important differentiation between the evaluation rules of literature and the evaluation rules of theatre is that literature generally uses the time limit as a criterion when it decides on the value of literary work. In this place, the art's power of effectiveness which has come from eras gained importance. This is not available for theatre; text is only a linking point for theatre. For theatre, there need a creative decor, costumes, props, light, order of play. The principles to evaluate these are all different (Nutku, 2002). Theatre plays must be evaluated by considering all these contributions and elements. A work of stage might not be considered valuable from the point of view of a literary historian's esthetic understanding; but the same work of art might be so valuable in the science of theatre, in this improvement, in the technique of performing a play since it gives an opportunity to an important structural difference.

One of the most important sides of theatre is that it is open to new. With the helps of this flexibility, theatre acquires its power which connects nationalities and life styles. A wide, comprehensible and general point of view is vital when theater is in a relationship with the language and the culture.

On the other hand, there are some rules which are essential for a dramatic play to be accepted as a theatre play in our day. According to (Özakman, 2007) a theatre play must be:

- Written by a professional playwright,
- Staged by a professional and official foundation or group,

- Performed on a proper stage, which is covered by curtains; elevated from the audience area; ornamented by decors and light suitable to the theme of the play, in a proper theatre building,
- Performed by professional actors and actresses.

2.2. History And Application Of Theatre For Children

2.2.1. Brief History Of Theatre

As mentioned above, theatre was born as a religious ritual and differed from this religious kind in course of time. Primitive people tried to characterize their gods and supernatural powers in order to understand and control natural circumstances. According to various resources and authorities, the origin of theatre comes from Ancient Greek (And, 1979). These kinds of theatre plays and rituals are referred as Primitive or Ancient Theatre today.

Affected from the Ancient Greek Theatre, the Romanian playwrights were especially interested in Tragedy and Comedy, which actually must be called as Tragedia and Comedia. The intent of their theatre plays, which were in the form of choral songs, was please and aggrandize their gods Dionysus (Şener, 1993).

In Medieval Times, with the popularity of Christianity the church tried to forbid theatre performances; and the reason was that those performances were not appropriate according to religious rules. But after that, priests and other clerks in holy orders started to perform little theatre performances about Resurrection. Thus, *Mystery Plays*, which dramatized biblical history, began to be performed in Christian societies (Brockett & Franklin 2007).

In the 16th century with the cultural movement of Renaissance, the religious plays of Medieval Times began to decrease. The popular theatre plays of Renaissance period were much more specific and temporal plays and performances. In fact, these plays were performed in different places such as hotels, halls and so on. Eventually, in 1576, the first theatre salon was built in London.

In 17th century, Italians made complex and structured stages and theatre buildings. In some European countries, theatre plays were only performed by men in those times. On the other hand, the American theatre was under the effect of English theatre.

After the Industrial Revolution and the collapse of caste system, people's perceptions of theatre changed. Besides the tragedia and comedia, new romantic forms of theatre such as Vaudeville and Melodrama were born. In the 19th century, theatre plays of some famous playwrights such as William Shakespeare were performed on much more modern and generic stages. And eventually today, the perceptions of theatre are still changing depending on trends in the world. Technology and other special contributions of theatre keep enriching theatre plays. New styles of theatre has been tried by playwrights and directors (Tekerek, 2006).

As for Turkey, although its origins, such as minstrels, public storytellers and *ortaoyunu*, came from centuries before in Anatolia, the beginning of Turkish theatre as a western and modern meaning was in 1860, with the foundation of Gedikpaşa Theatre by Güllü Agop in Ottoman Empire. In 1839 with the Rescript of Gülhane, the Turkish community faced with various modern principles and this also affected the perception of theatre. After these positive influences of the Rescript of Gülhane, a reform movement of Turkish theatre had been started. Besides the theatre plays which were translated from different languages, Turkish playwrights has started to write new plays and eventually a Turkish form of drama had begun to form (Kurtuluş, 1987).

After the declaration of Republic of Turkey, in 1927 Muhsin Ertuğrul was appointed as the administrator of Istanbul City Theatres, the name was Darülbedayi in those days. His modern intelligence of art formed the keystones of Turkish theatre. Ertuğrul staged various plays from various countries, educated new playwrights and emboldened them to create new forms, and educated many actors and actresses. In 1936 Ankara State Conservatory was founded. The rehearsal stage of the conservatory was also founded with the graduation of first

student group of the conservatory in 1941. The State Theatre was officially founded in 1946 (And, 1994).

After 1950's the state theatres of different cities such as İzmir, Bursa, Ankara were established and this movement had an important contribution to the evolution of theatre in Turkey. In 1960's private theatre groups and companies begun to be founded in various cities (Kurtuluş, 1987). Since those years the theatre culture continues to change and develop; different techniques has been tried and new performers, playwrights, directors and so on continue to work in the field.

2.2.2. History Of Theatre For Children

When we look at the history of theatre for children in the world, we see that first attempts of such kind of action were in England. In Medieval Times when the church used theatre plays for religious reasons, short theatre plays for children's religious education were played in churches. With the movement of Renaissance, theatre for children began to improve. Special plays for children were written and puppets and such elements were used in these plays.

After 1920's in America, studies of theatre for children were arranged by universities. The most successful works of theatre for children were in the Soviet Union in those times. After these actions in the course of time the importance of theatre for children had been known by other countries and governments; and finally experts started doing researches about the topic.

On the other hand, in the light of information gained from the Archives of the State Theatres, in Turkey, first theatre plays for children were written in the late years of 19th century. These plays were performed in school by students and teachers. With the second constitutionalism revolution, the benefits of theatre for children were slightly realized and there had been some attempts for basic theatre shows at schools.

In 1935, the first subsidised theatre for children was founded as a subdepartment of Istanbul City Theatre, under the heel of Muhsin Ertuğrul.

Since 1937, the Turkish Theatre Magazine has started to specially prepare a page for theatre for children. During the first ten years the department of theatre for children only preformed local plays which were accompanied by music and dances and also by a little orchestra. In 1945 it was decided to confirm the applications of talented children to the theatre for children department. In the same year Theatre for Children had been divided in two subdepartments as Theatre for Elementary School Children and Theatre for Secondary School Children.

Ankara State Conservatory was founded in 1936 and since the year of 1941, the students of the conservatory performed different plays for children in rehearsal stage of the conservatory and also in different cities such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. These performances of conservatory students came to an end with the foundation of the Turkish State Theatres in 1949. And since 1954, the Turkish State Theatres implicate theatre plays for children in every theatre season.

And finally with the foundations of many private theatre companies, the theatre for children has been considered important by these theatre companies and also by the State Theatres in several cities of Turkey.

2.2.3. Applications Of Theatre For Children In Different Countries

Although it is a common idea that theatre for children has positive effects on children's development, this matter seems to have less considerable attention in recent years. Studies have focused on different aspects about creative drama, theatre for children and education. Childplays receive the intended interest only when they are adapted the themes and roles to the world of children (Atkeson, 1982).

In this part, different points of views from different countries will be given for the purpose of displaying and explaining how Theatre For Children is considered in different countries and different educational systems.

2.2.3.1. Theatre for Children in The United States of America

There are many diversities in the educational system of the United States. But when we look at the common contributions of theatre for children in this varied educational system, we can say that the benefits of theatre for children and also of dramatic studies at schools are: (1) experiencing a rich combination of realism and fantasy, (2) awareness of a wide range of characterization and different types of human characteristics, (3) learning about types of theatre such as comedy, tragedy; and also being aware of comedy and dramatic situations, (4) learning an educational theme in an interesting way, (5) language development, (6) receiving rich educational materials and actively experiencing educational concepts, (7) appreciation of artistry, (8) development of imagination, (9) producing valuable emotional experiences, (10) developing self-confidence and using of voice and own body. (Masters, 1940).

With integrated music; movement and pantomime skills, and also musical abilities can be supported. Theatre plays for children intently choose the subject of problems young people face today while using the richness of fairy tales but updating and adapting the themes to our day. With presence of professional players, the resulting impact on children/the audience can be long term. (Atkeson, 1982).

For integrated drama education, it is accepted that drama skills are educational skills such as concentration, focusing on imaginary ideas, oral language development, discussion, explaining, self-expression, problem-solving, critical thinking and logical skills. On the other hand, social-emotional benefits of drama and theatre for children are cooperating in groups, sharing, socializing, paying attention and contributing. (Atkeson, 1982).

2.2.3.2. Theatre for Children in England

According to Spencer (1951), training and experience in drama and theatre begins at an earlier age level with the integrated programs such as creative play in the elementary schools. Training and experience in drama is a part of the education of each British school child.

The National Theatre works as a mediator and there are so many theatre festivals and performances for children across the country. The National Theatre selects ten theatre plays for children each year and performers put these plays on stage at secondary schools and highschools. (Deeney, 2007).

2.2.3.3. Theatre for Children in Russia

According to van de Water (2004), Russian theatre for children has strict traditions and specific educational goals. The theatre plays are carefully selected by the state and performed. The most common and most important goal of Russian theatre for young audiences is to contribute to the ideological and aesthetic education for the future citizens of Russia.

In each state, the educational departments of state theatres are headed by an expert, generally by a pedagogue. These departments work very carefully and intensively on the theatre plays and also, knowing the importance of the theatre for children, they prepare questionnaires for children, parents and educators, and make interviews about each play. (van de Water, 2004).

2.2.3.4. An Example From Brazil

According to the study of Nogueira (2006), theatre practice as a group has its positive effects on the community. A “Community Theatre Project” was implemented by Nogueira in a city called Ratores which was known as very conservative and difficult community. The aim of the study was to evaluate the benefits of theatre practices in such a difficult community. At the end of the study the attribution of people was higher than the expectations; and some themes could clearly be observed on children behaviors.

The study continued with increasing participation of community members each day. They began to realize their responsibilities and importance of their works in the community. These aspects increased their commitment to the community.

According to the researcher the personal development of group members was also clearly evident. And also for the local school, children were observed in much more interaction with each other and their developed abilities of self-expression was evident. (Nogueria, 2006).

2.3. Characteristics Of Theatre For Children

There are many different and important characteristics of theatre plays for children. One of the most important ones is the that condition that children/the audience must share the play and must feel themselves in the play. In the light of this aspect, the theatre plays must be suitable for sharing and interacting with the audience. To ensure this necessity, the people who schedule, present, write and perform the plays must be honestly passionate and also of course educated about the field. Only when these requirements are provided, the theatre plays begin to mean something, contribute and help development, reflect new ideas and acquisitions, and be liked and preferred by the children.

When defined by the contributions and features of theatre plays for children, it is possible to generalize some expected characteristics. According to many previous reports and researches (Kuyumcu, 2000; Nutku, 1979; Samurçay, 1979), theatre plays for children must be:

- Written and performed by professionals, in a proper theatre area,
- Appropriate and interesting, (but not diverting), fun and suitable for children's imaginations,
- Appropriate for the level of perception of the audience,
- Positively written; and praise and justify good characters and positive behaviors,
- Suitable for interaction and participation,
- Appropriate for the developmental levels of target audience,
- Clearly understandable and far from slang and bad language,
- Supported by different elements such as music, light, puppets, dances, etc.,

- Interesting by the means of scene setting and costumes,
- Well organized and must include an interesting story that children can gain some different points of view at the end, and can make interpretations and conclusions.

2.3.1. Theatre For Young Audiences

Children like to play in various environments when they feel themselves comfortable and serene. Sometimes they characterize their family members as they act in real life. Children interpret facts as they happen or as the way they want them to happen by playing (Gander & Garidner, 1995). These plays provide children the opportunity to experience the real world. Play is essential for children.

For instance, in a kindergarten class when the kindergarten teacher reads a story to children, they try to imagine the events in the story. When the teacher animates the characters in the story with little changes and toning in her voice, students would be much more interested and amused. Because children see and experience the actions in themselves while they are listening (Kuyumcu, 2000).

The importance of this subject is the fact that children learn by seeing, watching, observing and experiencing. Knowledge comes via senses (San, 1983).

It is the fact that we could infer from these information and according to some important experts of theatre for children, such as Nutku, Şener and Kuyumcu, children need theatre. But on the other hand, according to Kuyumcu (2000), the theatre also needs children in order to create the audience of modern theatre and moreover the followers of every kind of art. In order to ensure these facts to happen theatre plays for children must be handled by professionals; and the ingredients of theatre such as the topic, performers, entertainment elements, the message of the play and so on must be created and directed by people who know the characteristics of specific age groups (Kuyumcu, 2000).

2.3.1.1. Determining The Audience

According to Piaget, until the age of seven children explain the world using sensory and physical aspects. The reasoning ability of the child is limited

with sensory elements. That is why it is important to see concretely for the child in this age group. On the other hand, as the child grows up the ability of abstract thinking develops. After twelve years old, children can use their formal and discrete thinking abilities (Bee, 1995). In the light of these informations, theatre plays for children must be designed and sorted according to these ages and stages (Kuyumcu, 2000). A playwright has to consider the characteristics of age groups and before designing the theatre play he has to decide which age group he wants to address.

2.3.1.2. A Child's Point Of View

A child's point of view is quite different from an adult's. When the target audience of a theatre play is children, then the theatre play must have the point of view of a child rather than an adult's. Children have different ideas, worries, fears, hopes and expectations from adults. An appropriate theatre play has to address these ideas, thoughts, expectations and so on. A theatre play for children must see the world through children's eyes (Nutku, 2006).

2.3.1.3. Theme And Arguments Of Theatre Play

No matter of what is the main subject of the theatre play, as long as it belongs to children's world and has educational, entertaining and appropriate elements, a theatre play for children must address to the relationship between reasons and results. Children need to observe the reasons of an behavior and also the consequences of it. Moreover, while following the theatre play, children may come up with new solutions and ways. That is why theatre plays must include realistic conflicts and at the and new solutions must be found. On the other hand, the topic of a theatre play is either realistic or fantastic it has to be consistent, logical and complete in itself. Every changing and development in the theatre play must be suitable and reasonable in the course of the topic (Kuyumcu, 2000).

2.3.1.4. Language And Dialogues

The language characteristics and dialogues of theatre plays for children must be simple, plain, easily understandable, and away from the bad language and

slang. *“A theatre play could be much more functional if aimed to address younger children by using simple events and active, alive and short dialogues; and to older children by using more than one message and complex language structure”* (Kuyumcu, 2000, p. 52).

2.3.1.5. Characters

The characters of a theatre play for children must be clearly good or bad. Shallow characters of whom one specific speciality, good or bad, is enhanced are not realistic and suitable for the course of the play. Children need to observe complete and rich characters to identify with (Nutku, 2006). On the other hand, the characters of the play who are identical with people whom children are used to see around themselves in real world helps children much more easily include themselves in the play and identify with the characters (Kuyumcu, 2000). As an addition, always good characters must win at the end of the theatre play. Actually, it would be much more appropriate if the bad characters repent and choose to be good at the end (Tekerek, 2006).

2.3.1.6. Entertainment Elements And Physical Conditions

Entertainment elements cause children follow the play easily. For instant, children find little wordplays entertaining; at the same time these plays can teach them some new concepts about their language (Kuyumcu, 2000).

Entertaining elements such as masks, different costumes, attractive decor elements, puppets, different lights and sounds and different techniques, such as pantomim, enrich the theatre play. On the other hand, a theatre play for children must not be boringly long.

The decor of the theatre play is also very important from the children's point of view. *“The decor needs to create a kind of magic which makes children love the atmosphere of the theatre. But at the same time, the decor must be simple and related to the topic of the play. Otherwise, an overloaded decor and a stage will divert all interest of the child and draw him away from the theatre play”* (Kuyumcu, 2000, p.64).

2.3.1.7. Contribution Of The Audience

For theatre for children, the contribution of the audience is one of the basic essences. Children need to identify with and contribute to the play, otherwise it becomes boring and meaningless for them. The most common way to provide contribution of the audience is asking them questions or help during the play (Kuyumcu, 2000). On the otherhand older children can contribute to the play in a passive way by thinking and commenting. One of the best examples of this situation is the mentality of Augusto Boal theatre. According to Boal (1996) approaching the problems of childhood and children's world as the subject of the theatre play gives children the opportunity of observe their own conflicts and find ways of solution to these conflicts and problems.

2.3.2. Subtitles And Functions Of Theatre For Children

The beginnings of theatre and drama are natural in children. First attempts of drama begins with play, and than role play and plays with rules. As time passes, these plays turn into self expression, which is one of the most important bases of theatre. Thus, it is always easier for children to identify themselves with characters, and learn more permanently. As a result, theatre plays for children, which have many contributions and advantages for children, must be appropriately written and suitable for the target age group.

According to Nutku (2002), children theatre can be studied in three subtitles. These are;

- I. Age Group (5-7) Preschool Children
- II. Age Group (7-12) Elementary School Children
- III. Age Group (12-15) Middle School Children

Preschool Children: For this age group, it is convenient to include the audience into the theatre play. In this way children's natural drives of sharing,

attending, joining, rising their voices and contributing could be supported. It would be inappropriate and improper to expect this age group of children to fully understand and internalize the play.

The most important purpose of the First Age Group Theatre for Children is to make children gain some common ideas and the ability of thinking and commenting. In these theatre plays generally imitations, mimicry and personifications take part. It would be appropriate the usage of less accessories and furniture because children can easily miss the sound, voices, words and the story. For this age group the most powerful contribution of theatre plays is to provide children the opportunity of understanding their places, gaining self confidence and realizing their ability of creating, making something of their own.

Elementary School Children: At the age of seven, children begin to share their lives with the others in a more conscious and ambitious way. Their trust towards the adults is a significant factor.

Children desire to be a part of a group at this age and creating and sharing something with a group is the most satisfying factor. When creating, children head both towards their inside and the outside. They use their life experiences to give much more meaning to the world around them. They have a wonderful desire to learn more and explore more.

Theatre plays for this group must contain the utmost instruction and explanation. They also need to provide children the opportunity to research, think, share and react, and learn more on their own.

During the theatre play, the contribution of the audience is important. Self play is a powerful contribution of this age group and children would like to attend instead of watching. When this participation is actualized, it means the needed theatre atmosphere for this age group is provided.

Middle School Children: For this age group, theatre plays are like mediators between children and adults. Theatre plays are more enriched and

comprehensive. Middle school children like to try and experience new things and examine the facts and events of everyday life. Observation is a powerful tool for these children.

The theatre plays for middle school children must be structured, realistic and attractive; and also these plays must contribute children's self effort of getting prepared for their adult roles.

2.4. Developmental Theories Which Support The Necessity Of Theatre For Children

Experiencing concepts visually has an effect on children's memory, suggestibility, and recognition processes; and also on learnign and artistic mediums, artistic sensitivity, awareness of self, dramatic imagination, sharing, learning, exploring, understanding, group development, communication, language development, and learning behaviors.

Various theories and allegations of authorities refers to the necessity of Theatre in children's life. In the following part, these theories and allegations will be explained and their links to the topic will be emphasized.

2.4.1. Piaget's Adaptation And Play

As Bee stated, according to Paiget, the child actively occupied in the process of exploration. "*..the child is an active participant in the development to knowledge, constructing his own understanding*" (Bee, 1995, p.191).

The process which was named as *adaptation* by Jean Piaget is about the child's attempts to understand, iterpret and find meanings of new situations which occured around himself. To understand and absorb these new situations the child first uses *schemes*. A scheme is a category or a way of acting children use to understand and profitably use new concepts and subjects. The more schemes the child has, the healthier he adapts and adjusts to extenar conditions (Bee, 1995). Certainly, this would be an easier way to accommodate with external world.

As the child grows up, just like these schemes, he would neet to engage

with new social and cultural situations to understand and learn new complex concepts. Again according to Piaget, children cannot learn passively. In the light of this information, it could be stated that theatre plays for children have a contribution to active learning process and additionally to adaptation.

Besides this, according to statements of Piaget, play is one of the most important elements in a child's life. Children understand and learn through play. When the child is about 12 months old, pretend play begins to appear (Bee, 1995). In such plays the child primarily imitates and in time finally begins to create and come close to theatre with his symbolic and pretending plays.

Since the symbolic play which we can consider as a basic version of theatre action is such important in a child's life; this life could be enriched by exposing the child to theatre plays.

2.4.2. Bandura's Social Learning Theory

As a result of an action, according to the consequences, the action could be reinforced or weakened. Bandura argued that by witnessing this process children can learn about the specific behavior and the consequences of it. He called this vicarious learning (Bandura, 1986). Bandura states (1977) "Most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action." Thus, it would be fair to state that children can learn by observing and watching someone performing some action. In the light of this information, the concept of observational learning of Bandura's could be associated with theatre for children. Because, observing theatre performers in action may cause the audience learn about that very behavior by witnessing it and its consequences.

2.4.3. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Approach

Bronfenbrenner's theory of the ecology of development explains the social system as related circles. The most central circle, microsystem, includes

settings in which the child has direct personal experience, such as the family, school, and so on. The next circle, exosystem, includes a whole range of system elements that the child does not experience directly, but that influence the child because they effect one of the microsystems. The final circle, macrosystem, describes the larger culturel or subcultural setting in which both the microsystems and exosystems are embedded. These circles, systems, influence the child's live directly or indirectly (Bee, 2005, p. 375).

2.5. Summary

In this part, the literature related to theatre and theatre of children was riviewed. In order to understand and interpret the research questions of the study and the instruments created for the study, the concept and contributions and also charactersictics of theatre and espacially theatre for children were introduced and defined.

Experiencing concepts visually has an effect on children's memory, suggestibility, and recognition processes (Roebbers, 2003); and also on learning and artistic mediums, artistic sensitivity, awareness of self, dramatic imagination, sharing, learning, exploring, understanding, grouop development, communication, language development, and learning behaviors. Theatre for children unleashes the creative energy of children, and give them opportunity to learn in an enjoyable way and the world of excitement.

In our country today, although the importance of theatre for children seems to be realized by the dramaturgs, theatre producers, educators and parents; the required attention does not seem to be paid to the field. Theatre for children is a very important issue for the development and future of our children. Children can gain so much more from a regular school subjects if learning comes alive using dramatic plays.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This chapter includes the general description of the overall design, participants and examined theatre plays, data collection procedures, data collection instruments, data analysis procedures, assumptions and limitations of the study.

This study was constructed as a qualitative study; besides the information about the contents of theatre plays for children, it gives information about children's, parents', and educators' opinions about theatre plays for children.

In this study perceptions and preferences of preschool children and parents about theatre plays for children, information and evaluation about the required characteristics of theatre plays for children, information and evaluation about the criterias which were used by the professionals who staged theatre plays, and also further implications and discussion about theatre plays for children and young audiences are given.

In the following section, detailed information about the overall research design of the study are given.

3.1. Overall Research Design Of The Study

This study is a basic qualitative study (Merriam, 1998) of theatre plays which were staged by the State Theatre of Bursa and also some other theatre plays which were staged by private theatre companies in Bursa. The main aim of this study is to investigate whether these theatre plays are appropriate for the age

groups that they address in terms of language, physical, educational, entertainment and social aspects and rules of theatre. Theatre plays for children which were staged by the state theatre were studied to see whether these plays were appropriate; and also some other private theatre plays for children were studied for determining whether state theatre plays or private theatres were more appropriate for the age groups which they were addressed.

The descriptive analyses were used to describe the characteristics of theatre plays. An evaluation rubric and scoring system for these theatre plays was used to determine the total scores of each theatre plays; and these scores were descriptively given, evaluated and discussed at the end of the study.

After the data were obtained using theatre plays characteristics rubric and interviews with preschool children, parents, drama teachers and also some responsible people such as directors, playwrights or performers of these theatre plays, descriptive statistics were defined and the interviews were reported and interpreted. Indications were made in the light of the interviews which were made with children, parents, teachers and professionals of the theatre plays.

It is clear that the most appropriate way to study the characteristics and contributions of theatre plays is to conduct a qualitative study. A qualitative research refers to investigate and discover how situations are related while the quantitative research aims to test hypotheses (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). In the light of these specific characteristics of Qualitative Research, the contents of state and private theatre plays for children are examined by using an evaluation instrument. But on the other way also since the study is intended to be powered with interviews, the Basic Qualitative Study (Merriam, 1998) is chosen as the overall research design of this study. According to Merriam, this form of qualitative research allows the usage of various styles of data collection such as interviews, observations and so on and also usage of basic descriptive statistics. While the form and intentions of this study are considered, the Basic Qualitative Study design is quite suitable and valuable for the research.

3.2. Participants And Examined Elements

The following section gives information and explanations about the participants of the study, and also the theatre plays which were examined and evaluated for this study.

3.2.1. Participants Of The Study

All theatre plays were examined by the researcher and another preschool teacher who had a theatre knowledge using the rubric which were designed for the study. Before observing the theatre plays, a consensus about the usage of the instrument was provided between two coders. Two preschool teachers who had drama backgrounds, and parents who had brought their children to these theatre plays were interviewed. And also a professional employee of the State Theatre, the director of one of the theatre plays which were chosen for the study, and preschool children were interviewed.

There is not a target population of this study since its aim is to evaluate theatre plays in Bursa. Although as to suggest an extra interpretation, all of the preschool children, 5 and 6 age groups, also all of the preschool parents were targeted to examine their perceptions and preferences. As to define their perceptions and preferences a small sample of preschool children were chosen to represent of the target population.

The participants of this study involved 12 preschool children, 6 from 5-year-olds and 6 from 6-year-olds, who had seen all of the theatre plays which were chosen for the study. The sample was not a random sample. Children, who were suggested by their teachers and also whose parents had signed the consent forms for the study (Appendix A), were conveniently chosen from the private preschool in which the researcher works. Three of the 5-year-old students were the researcher's own students. All of the children were personally interviewed about the theatre plays in classrooms during a normal school day.

Two preschool drama teachers who voluntarily asked for contributing to

the study were asked to be interviewed about the state and private theatre plays for children. The ages of these teachers are between 25 and 35; and they had bachelor degree of arts in preschool teaching. An interview form was prepared to obtain opinions of these two drama teachers. These two teachers were asked to answer the questions about the theatre plays. The answers were then examined and inferences were made. These inferences provided from the interviews will be given in the Results and the Discussion chapters.

Ten parents who had 5 or 6-year-old children were also interviewed after they had seen at least one of these theatre plays with their children while they were going out from the theatre houses. These parents were randomly selected from theatre play audiences. Their educational or social statuses of these parents were not considered since the interviews were only made with the intention of gathering information about their personal opinions on theatre plays.

The director of one of the three theatre plays for children staged by Bursa state theatre was also interviewed about all six plays which were included in the study; and also about the characteristics of theatre plays for young audiences.

3.2.2. Examined Elements Of The Study

Three theatre plays for children which were staged by Bursa State Theatres, that the Bursa State Theatre only staged three plays for children in the selected season, and also three other private theatre plays for children were chosen for the study. The intent of choosing these plays was to define the differences between state theatre plays and private theatre plays.

Only three theatre plays for young audiences were staged by the state theatre in 2008-2009 theatre season in Bursa. These three plays from Bursa state theatre and also three plays from several private theatres were chosen. As an addition, this study can contribute the topic whether the number of theatre plays were enough for the children.

Besides the scoring system and scores which were given to each play by using the evaluation rubric, the physical constructions of theatre building were

also observed and examined by the researcher, for further implications and discussions.

The detailed specialities and contributions of examined theatre plays will be given in Results and Discussion sections. For providing brief information, a few main aspects about these theatre plays are as follows:

3.2.2.1. The State Theatre Plays

3.2.2.1.1. Dans Eden Eşek

The play is written by a foreign playwright and translated to Turkish by a professional Turkish actor. The subject of the play is built on the idea of friendship, honesty, integrity and animal sympathy. The whole play and events in the play occurs in the same place which was a little pleasant corner of a forest. Interesting dialogues take place between the characters, who are a traveller, his donkey, two little girls and two little boys, during the play and the audience witnesses the interactions, events and the progress. The play has six performers; it also includes musics and dances.

3.2.2.1.2. Akıllı Soytarı

The play is written by a Turkish playwright. The subject of this play is much more specific and complex. The play takes place on planet of happiness. The citizens of this planet do not know what fight, weapons, injustice, harm, selfishness and so many other bad words meant. While they are living in happiness, three bad people try to get hold of the planet. The clever clown of the king makes plans to stop these bad people. The play emphasizes on equality, freedom, democracy and honesty.

3.2.2.1.3. Kara Kedi Geçti

This play is also written by a Turkish playwright. The theme of the play is cooperation and friendship. When a wealthy woman is annoyed with a mouse in her mansion, she hires a cat to catch the mouse. As time passes a friendship

between the cat and the mouse takes shape. When the dog of the house supports the cat and the mouse, the wealthy woman finds no way out but to let these animals to stay as friends.

3.2.2.2. The Private Theatre Plays

3.2.2.2.1. Sözümlü Tutacağım

The play which emphasizes on honesty and friendship is written by a Turkish playwright. It has two main performers. The characters are two good friends and one of the friends works as a clown; but he has to go out of town for a while. He asks his friend to take his place in the work. The other friend does not know anything about being a clown. He does not know what to do, where to go and how to act. But for his friend's sake he tries to get help from the audience, and get ready for being a clown.

3.2.2.2.2. Harikalar Sirki

Adapted by a Turkish playwright from the original Turkish text, the play takes place in a circus company. The owner of the company has a lion which is very old and does not have enough energy to perform. The play tells the story about young employees of the circus who help the old lion to gain energy and self confidence. Underlining team work and trust, the play intends to give children the importance of friendship and love.

3.2.2.2.3. Tembel Teneke

The play is written by a Turkish playwright for the purpose of emphasizing the importance of hardworking and the value of time. The lazy main character of the play surprisingly finds himself in the duty of hardwork to make the sun rise and shine again for the mankind's sake. With the help of his two good friends, he finally finds the courage and energy to put laziness away and work for a living.

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

The study began with a detailed review of the literature. Different

educational resources and studies and books from different countries and also from Turkey were read. Unfortunately a specific instrument for evaluating a theatre play let alone the theatre plays for young audiences could not be found. Starting from the qualifications and characteristics of theatre plays for young audiences, an evaluation rubric was designed to evaluate the theatre plays which were chosen for the study. And the theatre plays were evaluated using this instrument by the researcher and also by an other preschool teacher who had knowledge about theatre.

To define the required and preferred characteristics of theatre plays, five and six-year-old preschool children, preschool parents, preschool drama teachers and the director of one of the theatre plays for children which were staged by the Bursa state theatre in 2008-2009 theatre season were interviewed. The interview forms were also designed for this study.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

The Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric was developed in order to evaluate Language, Physical, Educational, Entertainmental and Social characteristics of each theatre play (Appendix B). As it was referred, the rubric consisted of five aspects, which were important and desired characteristics of theatre plays for children, the required characteristics of theatre plays for children or young audiences, which are language characteristics of the play, physical characteristics of the play, educational characteristics of the play, entertainmental characteristics of the play and social characteristics of the play (Kuyumcu, 2000). Each aspect was located in a row and each one has three columns pointing the stages of the specific characteristic. For the validity of the instrument, the evaluation rubric was affirmed by two different experts of theatre for young audiences to be appropriate to evaluate the characteristics of theatre plays for children. Using this rubric, each theatre play was evaluated and at the end of the evaluation each play had scores from these five aspects and also a total score. These scores were described and interpreted as descriptive statistics in the results chapter.

One interview form was developed for gaining information about children's interests, perceptions and liking (Appendix C). The questions in this interview form were used while talking with preschool children about theatre plays which they had seen. The answers of children were noted for further interpretation. The interviews made with children were more like enjoyable little conversations.

One interview form was developed for gaining information about parents who had 5 or 6-year-old children (Appendix D). In order to have information and data about their interests, preferences and liking, their answers were noted while interviewing.

One interview form was developed for two preschool drama teachers (Appendix E). More complicated questions were asked in order to have answers about the characteristics of theatre plays which are staged in Bursa in 2008-2009 theatre season and also the required characteristics of theatre plays for young audiences in general meaning. The answers were noted while interviewing.

One other interview form was developed for the director of one of the theatre plays for children staged by Bursa State Theatre in the season, who professionally had been involved in each theatre play which were staged by the Bursa State Theatres in 2008-2009 theatre season and also had seen other private theatre plays which were chosen for this study (Appendix F). The answers were noted for the further implication and discussion.

During and after all of the interviews, the answers of the participants were summarized verbally to each participant by the researcher in order to certify the validity of the answers. This procedures were performed for increasing the credibility and accuracy of the study.

3.5. Data Analysis Prosedures

In this study both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. For the quantitative data, descriptive statistics were used to describe the data which were gained from the theatre for young audiences evaluation rubric.

In order to analyse the qualitative data gathered from open-ended interview questions and answers, some categories both for the participants and examined theatre plays were defined. These categories were determined according to general impact of a theatre play on the participants. This impact could be positive or negative. Positive and negative statements of the participants were analyzed separately for conclusions. The researcher followed a procedure in order to define these categories. For each theatre play all the answers of children, parents, teachers and the director were read by the researcher. Then for each participant, it was decided whether the participant had a positive or negative attitude towards the specific theatre play. After deciding the category for the positive or negative attitudes, each related answer was read again in order to make comments and interpretations about the reasons of the positive or negative attitude; and also for generalization of liked and disliked characteristics of each theatre play. This procedure was followed participant by participant for defining categories as children, parents, teachers and the director.

3.6. Assumptions And Limitations

Each research study may have some assumptions and limitations. The assumptions and limitations of this study were explained below.

3.6.1. Assumptions

The assumptions of this study which were listed below:

1. The participants of this study responded to the questions of the data collection instruments sincerely.
2. The quantitative data collection instrument of this study, which was Theatre Plays for Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric, was assumed to measure the characteristics of theatre plays for children.
3. The qualitative data collection instruments of this study, which were interview forms, were assumed to provide an account of the attitudes, interests and preferences of the participants about the selected theatre play.

3.6.2. Limitations

In this study there are some limitations which should be considered. First limitation is that the instruments were only applied to theatre plays which were staged in the borders of one specific city in one theatre season; and also to twelve private preschool children who were suggested by their teachers; to ten parents who were randomly selected from the audiences of theatre plays; two preschool drama teachers who were available for the study and; one theatre director who had been professionally involved in all three of the state theatre plays and seen the other private plays recruited for the study. For that reason, the number of the participants and examined elements may limit the generalizability of this study.

The second limitation of this study is gender. A large percent of the participants of the study were female. For that reason, the relation of the results with gender was not tested for every participant group; that is, only the results gained from the preschool children were explained using the gender variable.

On the other hand, although all of the participated children were interviewed in their classroom settings, it may be considered as the third limitation of the study that three of the 5-year-olds participants were the researcher's own student. This situation might have affected their answers to the questions which were asked by their own teacher.

The fourth limitation of the study is the bias of the director of one of three theatre plays for children which were staged by the state theatres. Her answers to the questions may be considered as in favor of the state theatre plays.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter represents the results of the study which were gained by analyzing the data and the information in the way described in the prior chapter. The findings concerning the aim and the research questions of the study about the characteristics, conditions and perceptions of theatre plays for children staged by Bursa State Theatres and private theatre companies in 2008-2009 theatre season in Bursa city are represented in two sections in terms of two related research questions. The first section gives detailed information about the results of the conditions, characteristics and appropriateness exploratory of these theatre play. The second section presents the observations, results and comments about the qualitative contributions and characteristics of the examined theatre plays and also gives information about the opinions and perceptions of separately preschool children, parents, teachers and professionals.

According to the aims of this study, to reach information about the characteristics of theatre plays which were staged by the Bursa State Theatre and other private theatre companies, the desired characteristics of theatre plays for children were discovered by reviewing the related literature. The primary and latent aim of this study was to gain attention on how affective the theatre for children is on children and also which characteristics a theatre play had to include in order to turn to a good purpose on children. The results of this study basically rely on comments and implications. In this study there is no intention to compare or make certain declarations. This research intends to reflect on the desired characteristics of theatre plays for children and make implications and discussions

for further research; and also discover how children and parents define and perceive theatre plays for children; and if they aware of which characteristics of a theatre play for children requires. In the ligh of these intentions, observations and interpretations about these theatre plays for children are given.

4.1. The Results Of The Study

Six theatre plays in Bursa city were examined for this study. Three of these theatre plays were staged by the Bursa State Theatre; and other three of them were randomly selected from the private theatre plays for children staged in Bursa in 2008-2009 theatre season.

In the first part of the results, the statistical outputs of the study are given in terms of the first research question. The second part of the results includes the outputs which were drawn as predicated on the responses of the participants of the study to the verbal questions of the interviews in terms of the second research question.

4.1.1. Research Question 1

Do theatre plays for children staged by the State Theatres and private theatre companies in one specific theatre season in Bursa meet the requirements in terms of their essential language, physical, educational, entertainment and social characteristics of theatre plays for children?

In order to answer this research question, all of these six theatre plays were examined by two preschool teachers by using the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric which was designed by the researcher in the light of the developmental and perceptual stages of children between the ages of five and seven.

According to the evaluating rubric used, each theatre play could have a maximum overall score of 15. Each column on the table represents different aspects as language characteristics, physical characteristics, educational

characteristics, entertainment characteristics and social characteristics of the theatre play for children. Each of these characteristics include three different determinative items. The theatre play which includes all these three items has the score of three for that specific characteristic. The overall score is the sum of total characteristic scores.

Comparing the scoring of two coders, there was a consistence level of 83 % between the scores which were given by two different coders. In the light of this information and the scorings of the coders, the percentages of consisting the desired characteristics level for each examined theatre plays are as follows:

Table 4.1. represents descriptive results of the evaluation of the first coder using the mentioned rubric.

Table 4.1. Total Scores of Examined Theatre Plays (Coder 1)

name of the play	total language score	total physical score	total educational score	total entertainment score	total social score	overall score
Dans Eden Eşek	3	3	2	2	1	11
Akıllı Soytarı	2	3	2	2	3	12
Kara Kedi Geçti	-	3	2	2	2	9
Sözümü Tutacağım	2	2	1	2	1	8
Harikalar Sirki	2	2	1	1	0	6
Tembel Teneke	1	1	2	1	1	6

According to the first coder;

The theatre play “Dans Eden Eşek” includes the 73 % of the desired characteristics with the overall score of 11 out of 15.

The theatre play “Akıllı Soyтары” includes the 80 % of the desired characteristics with the overall score of 12 out of 15.

The theatre play “Kara Kedi Geçti” includes the 60 % of the desired characteristics with the overall score of 9 out of 15.

The theatre play “Sözümü Tutacağım” includes the 53 % of the desired characteristics with the overall score of 8 out of 15.

The theatre play “Harikalar Sirki” includes the 40 % of the desired characteristics with the overall score of 6 out of 15.

The theatre play “Tembel Teneke” includes the 40 % of the desired characteristics with the overall score of 6 out of 15.

Table 4.2. represents descriptive results of the evaluation of the second coder using the mentioned rubric.

Table 4.2. Total Scores of Examined Theatre Plays (Coder 2)

name of the play	total language score	total physical score	total educational score	total entertainment score	total social score	overall score
Dans Eden Eşek	3	3	3	3	2	14
Akıllı Soyтары	2	3	2	2	3	12
Kara Kedi Geçti	-	3	2	2	2	9
Sözümü Tutacağım	2	3	2	2	1	10
Harikalar Sirki	2	2	1	1	0	6
Tembel Teneke	1	1	2	1	1	6

According to the second coder;

The theatre play “Dans Eden Eşek” includes the 93 % of the desired characteristics with the overall score of 14 out of 15.

The theatre play “Akıllı Soyтары” includes the 80 % of the desired characteristics with the overall score of 12 out of 15.

The theatre play “Kara Kedi Geçti” includes the 60 % of the desired characteristics with the overall score of 9 out of 15.

The theatre play “Sözümü Tutacağım” includes the 67 % of the desired characteristics with the overall score of 10 out of 15.

The theatre play “Harikalar Sirki” includes the 40 % of the desired characteristics with the overall score of 6 out of 15.

The theatre play “Tembel Teneke” includes the 40 % of the desired characteristics with the overall score of 6 out of 15.

According to the scorings of two different coders, these theatre plays do include some of the required characteristics of theatre plays for children; these characteristics were defined as Language characteristics, Physical Characteristics, Educational characteristics, Entertainment characteristics and Social characteristics. Each of these characteristics had three subtitles which were required in the means of that very characteristical contributions. The coders scored each theatre play by the means of these five characteristics. Theatre plays were expected to got three points from each characteristics. Thus the play would gained the complete score of fifteen as the overall score. Two coders scored these theatre plays using the evaluation instrument which were explained in the Method chapter. According to these scores, it was seen that all of the examined theatre plays included at least 40 per cent of the required characteristics.

When looked at the percentages of each theatre play’s characteristics as a result of a seperately evaluation of each of these characteristic elements, the results are as follows. As the coders could reach the 83% consistence level to eachother, only the results drawn from the first coders scoring will be presented in this part.

4.1.1.1. The Results For The State Theatre Play *Dans Eden Eşek*

The story of this theatre play for children is that a traveler and his donkey get lost in a jungle. Two little girls find the donkey and play with him. Soon they discover the extraordinary speciality of the donkey. The donkey can dance. Two young boys see the girls with the dancing donkey and decide to steal the donkey from them. But when they figure the owner of the dancing donkey was the traveler, they come with a plan to trick the traveler. One of the boys gets close to the traveler and tells him that too many years ago when he did something wrong, a fairy punished him and turned him to a donkey for many years. He tells the traveler that his punishment was over now and he came back to the reality again. He thanks to the traveler for everything he has done for him when he thought he was a real donkey, says goodbye and walks away. Thus, the traveler would no more try to find his donkey and the young boys could sell the donkey and get a lot of money. The traveler believes the boy and continues to his way. By the time, the donkey escapes from the other young boy and gets lost in the jungle again. When the traveler sees the dancing donkey one more time, he thinks that he did another thing wrong and the fairy punished him again. For this reason he does not let the donkey go with him. When the traveler and the donkey understand the trick of the young boys, they decide to teach them a lesson. Two little girls also help the traveler and the donkey. At the end of the theatre play, two young boys repent for everything they have done and decide to be good anymore.

When looked at the featured characteristics of the theatre play, by the means of language characteristics, this theatre play provided one hundred percent of the required language characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The dialogues and expressions were easy and clearly understandable for the young children. Usage of the words and sentences, simplicity and understandability of the dialogues and easiness of the subject embraced the audience and the play easily could deliver its messages. Contributions of some new words and also the absence of slang, bad or inappropriate words were other appropriate contributions of the play.

By the means of physical characteristics, this theatre play provided one hundred percent of the required physical characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. Decorations and the order of the stage was proper, attractive and away from being complicated. The costumes of the performers, especially the little girls and the donkey, were liked and appreciated by the children. The general atmosphere of the theatre building, and the theatre saloon which was in the biggest state theatre building in Bursa were clear, away from noises, and found appropriate.

By the means of educational characteristics of the theatre play, this theatre play provided sixty six percent of the required educational characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The scenario gave good messages like being honest, cooperating with friends and so on, which were clearly understandable. On the other hand, although these features were very successful and the scenario was very appropriate for the subject of the play, the play did not give the audience opportunity to actively discover and learn. Children watched a theatre play which was very well written and performed but the play could have given more opportunities to investigate and discover.

By the means of entertainment characteristics of the theatre play, this theatre play provided sixty six percent of the required entertainment characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The length and the timing of the play were appropriate, the play was 40-45 minutes long; that children did not get bored to the end of the play. Interesting elements such as music, songs, dances and light were frequently used and that gave children too much opportunity to enjoy. On the other hand the play did not include different visual techniques such as pantomim or puppets.

By the means of social characteristics of the play, this theatre play provided thirty three percent of the required social characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. Some of the characters of this play, such as two young boys, include good and bad behaviors in the same time. This may seem normal but for the young children, the good and bad characters must be described in strict lines. If one bad character chooses to be good, this must happen at the end of the play. From the beginning to the end of

the play the complicated situations of these characters influenced the audience and children could not decide if these characters were good or bad. On the other hand, the participation contributions of the theatre play were properly used and the audience could contribute to the play by dancing, clapping and so on.

Considering all of these contributions, it could be stated that this theatre play, with a seventy three percentage of overall score, was one of the most appropriate theatre plays among all the theatre plays chosen for this study.

4.1.1.2. The Results For The State Theatre Play *Akıllı Soyтары*

The story takes place on the Happiness Planet. All of the children live happily with their lovely king and his buffoon until the day the king decided that he was old enough to hand over the planet. Three bad citizens apply and impress the king with lies. When they take over the planet, bad days start. All of the children on the planet become very sad because the bad trio have forbidden everything like playing, laughing, singing and so on. When the buffoon sees the situation she takes the action and works hard to take the planet back to the good days. At the end, the bad trio loses and children do not let these three bad men mess their happiness planet. The story of the theatre play goes around equality, justice, democracy and order concepts.

When looked at the featured characteristics of the theatre play, by the means of language characteristics, this theatre play provided sixty six percent of the required language characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The theatre play was very convincing especially with its contributions for teaching new words and concepts. But on the other hand, the language of the play was complex for five and six-year-old children.

By the means of physical characteristics, this theatre play provided one hundred percent of the required physical characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The play included all of the three required aspects. Background of the stage, decorations and the costumes of the players were very colorful, interesting and meaningful. The play was staged in

the state theatre building and the atmosphere was quite proper.

By the means of educational characteristics, this theatre play provided sixty six percent of the required educational characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. About the educational message of the theatre play it could be stated that the message was very positive and desirable but the concepts of justice and democracy were very complex concepts and the message was not completely understood by the younger children. On the other hand, the play completely supported good intentions and positive behaviors and gave children the opportunity to discover and contribute to the play.

By the means of entertainment characteristics of the play, this theatre play provided sixty six percent of the required entertainment characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. It could be stated that interesting and enjoyable elements such as dances, songs, little plays and colorful lights were frequently used and these contributions draw children's attention very much. On the other hand the scenerio was not found easy to understand for younger children.

By the means of social characteristics, this theatre play provided one hundred percent of the required social characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The characters were distinctly described as good and bad, and that caused the children know the characters from the very beginning. At the end, the good characters won and this was a good contribution for canalizing the audience to the good behaviors. Also participation and contribution of the audience were included in the theatre play.

Considering all of these contributions, it could be stated that this theatre play, with a eighty percentage of overall score, was the most appropriate theatre play among all the theatre plays chosen for this study.

4.1.1.3. The Results For The State Theatre Play *Kara Kedi Geçti*

The theatre play tells the story of a mouse, a cat and a dog. When an old lady finds a mouse in her house, she take a street cat in her house to deal with the

mouse. But as time passes the mouse and the cat become friends. The owner of the house does not seem to be happy because of this friendship, but when the dog also becomes friends with the mouse and the cat, it is understood that no matter how different characters are they still can be friends. The play drew attention to the racial differentiations, friendship and cooperation.

When looked at the featured characteristics of the theatre play, this theatre play was not evaluated in terms of essential language characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric, since the theatre play used the body language as a replacement of verbal language. Due to the absence of lingual features, any conclusion about the language characteristics could not be drawn.

By the means of physical characteristics of the play, this theatre play provided one hundred percent of the required physical characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. Background of the stage, decorations, costumes of the characters and other physical contributions were appropriate and meaningful. The general atmosphere of the theatre building was also designed properly. The ambient was away from being noisy and disturbing.

By the means of educational characteristics of the play, this theatre play provided sixty six percent of the required educational characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The message of the play was positive and proper. But due to the majority of usage of tacit expressions and body language, the level of understandability of the message could be stated as hard for young children. On the other hand, the theatre play gave opportunity to observe, discover and learn.

By the means of entertainment characteristics, this theatre play provided sixty six percent of the required entertainment characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. Interesting elements such as music, songs and dances were used in order to draw attention and entertain. Also the play includes different techniques such as body language and figures. On the other hand, the scenario could not be stated as easy according to the understanding levels of the audience.

By the means of social characteristics, this theatre play provided sixty six percent of the required social characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The play did not include such characters strictly described as good and bad. As of participation and actively contribution of the audience, the play had parts which were designed for the contribution of the audience, but still the active participation of the audience was not completely provided.

Considering all of these contributions, it could be stated that this theatre play, with a sixty percentage of overall score, was the third appropriate theatre play among all the theatre plays chosen for this study. However the play was not evaluated in terms of essential language characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric, it still had a higher overall score than the other three private theatre plays which were also chosen for the study.

4.1.1.4. The Results For The Private Theatre Play *Sözümü Tutacağım*

The theatre play tells the story of two good friends. One of these friends works as a clown in an organization company. When he decides to have a trip to an another city one day, he leaves his friend in a difficult situation to pretend as a clown as a replacement for him. But the important issue is that the other friend does not have any information or idea about how to be a clown. After his friend is gone, the other friend asks the audience to help him being a clown. He takes opinions from the audience about how to speak, how to move and how to act. He also invites some children from the audience and asks them to do his clown make up. When he is ready, he goes to do the job. When his friend comes back he thanks him for everything he has done for him. The play draws attention to the importance of friendship and promises.

When looked at the featured characteristics of the theatre play, by the means of language characteristics, this theatre play provided sixty six percent of the required language characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The sentences of the dialogues were very short and easily understandable. The language contributions were away from any

slang or bad words. On the other hand the play did not include any contribution addressing to teach new words or concepts.

By the means of physical characteristics, this theatre play provided sixty six percent of the required physical characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The costumes of the performers were colorful, interesting and meaningful. Also the general atmosphere of theatre saloon was appropriate. On the other hand, the background and the decorations of the stage could be much more expressive and meaningful. The decors of the play were away from drawing audience's attention to the play and they were not appropriate for the subject and the story of the theatre play.

By the means of educational characteristics, this theatre play provided thirty three percent of the required educational characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. Any positive educational message could not be obtained from the theatre play. The subject of the play may be positive and educational but the play did not include any specific educational message which could be delivered to the audience during or at the end of the play. Besides, again the subject of the play was very positive and understandable but at the same time the play did not include any concrete ingredient to provide the supporting of good behaviors. On the other hand, the play gave so much opportunity to observe and discover the concepts of the theatre play from the beginning to the end of the story.

By the means of entertainment characteristics of the play, this theatre play provided sixty six percent of the required entertainment characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The scenario was easy to understand and the play was not inappropriately long. In addition, the play included different techniques such as dance, buffoonery and pantomim. But on the other hand, interesting elements such as music, songs or special effects were not included in the theatre play.

By the means of social characteristics of the theatre play, this theatre play provided thirty three percent of the required social characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. During the

whole theatre play, only two characters were seen by the audience. One of these characters left the stage at the beginning of the play. Thus, this theatre play was consisted of only one main character; and also both of these two play characters were good. According to this information, any idea about good or bad characters and their being described in strict lines could not be drawn from the theatre play. On the other hand, participation and actively contribution of the audience was provided frequently.

Considering all of these contributions, it could be stated that this theatre play, with a fifty three percentage of overall score, was the fourth appropriate theatre play among all the theatre plays chosen for this study.

4.1.1.5. The Results For The Private Theatre Play *Harikalar Sirki*

The story of the theatre play is about a circus company. When the lion of the circus gets old, the owener of the company wants to sell him. But the other employees of the cicrcus decide to help the lion gain his energy back again. With help and support with his friends, the lion gains his energy and self conficence back again; and shows the owner of the circus how important his show was for the circus. The owner decides not to sell the lion at the end, and he thanks to all of the employees for showing him the truth. The theatre play draws attention to the concepts of friendship, trust, cooperation and helpfulness.

When looked at the featured characteristics of the theatre play, by the means of language characteristics, this theatre play provided sixty six percent of the required language characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The scenario of the play was consisted of short and easily understandable sentences for children between ages five and seven. The scenario was also away from any slang and bad words. But on the other hand, the theatre play did not contain any contributions of teaching new words and concepts.

By the means of physical characteristics, this theatre play provided sixty six percent of the required physical characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The background and the

decoration of the play were highly appropriated and away from being complicated. Also costumes of the performers were proper, interesting and colorful. On the other hand the general atmosphere of the theatre building and the theatre saloon were not away from the noise and any other disturbing elements.

By the means of educational characteristics, this theatre play provided thirty three percent of the required educational characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The scenario of the theatre play was supporting the good behaviors; but on the other hand, the message which was given by the theatre play could not be easily understood by the audience; and the play did not provide any opportunity to observe and actively discover to the audience.

By the means of entertainment characteristics, this theatre play provided thirty three percent of the required entertainment characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The theatre play was consisted of interesting elements such as music, dances, songs, and colorful lights and so on; and this was an appropriate contribution in terms of entertainment. On the other hand, different visual techniques such as puppets or pantomim were not used during the theatre play.

By the means of social characteristics, this theatre play provided thirty three percent of the required social characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The theatre could not provide any social contributions. The characters were not defined as good characters and bad characters. In fact, the play was consisted of only good characters, but some bad behaviors and habits of these good characters caused the audience to get confused about the characters. On the other hand, participation and actively contribution of the audience was not provided by this theatre play.

Considering all of these contributions, it could be stated that this theatre play, with a fourty percentage of overall score, was one of the lowest scored theatre plays among all the theatre plays chosen for this study.

4.1.1.6. The Results For The Private Theatre Play *Tembel Teneke*

The story of the theatre play is about a lazy little boy who has to make the sun shine again and save the world. With the help of his two good friends, the lazy boy finally understands the importance of hardworking. The theatre play was intended to draw attention to the importance of friendship and the disadvantages of laziness.

When looked at the featured characteristics of the theatre play, by the means of language characteristics, this theatre play provided thirty three percent of the required language characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The sentences of the scenario were not short and easily understandable for the audience. The long sentences sometimes confused the children and the usage of different unknown words made the theatre play harder to understand. On the other hand, it was a positive contribution that the scenario did not contain any bad or slang words. Although the contributions for teaching new words and concepts were intended, the scenario was unsuccessful on delivering these messages to the audience.

By the means of physical characteristics, this theatre play provided thirty three percent of the required physical characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. Background of the stage and decorations were away from being interesting and meaningful. This situation caused the audience to become estranged from the subject. On the other hand costumes of the performers were colorful and meaningful for the audience. The proper costumes were appreciated by the audience, especially by younger children. General atmosphere of the theatre saloon was inappropriate because the noises and sounds from the outside could be heard from the inside; this situation caused abstraction.

By the means of educational characteristics, this theatre play provided sixty six percent of the required educational characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The play gave a positive educational message which was meaningful and easy to remember for the audience. The scenario and the theatre play which supported good

behaviours. On the other hand, the theatre play was away from giving audience the opportunity to observe and actively discover.

By the means of entertainment characteristics, this theatre play provided thirty three percent of the required entertainment characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. The scenario was not easy to understand although the timing of the theatre play was appropriate. Interesting elements such as music, dances, songs were used in the play, this situation drew attention to the story. On the other hand, the usage of different techniques, such as puppets or pantomim were not provided in the theatre play.

By the means of social characteristics, this theatre play provided thirty three percent of the required social characteristics which were determined in the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric. Only the participation and contribution of the audience requirement was met. The good and the bad characters could not be reflected and imagined properly by the theatre play.

Considering all of these contributions, it could be stated that this theatre play, with a forty percentage of overall score, was the other one of the lowest scored theatre plays among all the theatre plays chosen for this study.

As a result of the observations of all of these six theatre plays for children, it could be stated that, according to the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric which was designed by the researcher, all six of these examined theatre plays included appropriate essential characteristics to some extent. The lowest percentage gained from the rubric was forty percent, when the highest percentage also gained from the rubric was eighty percent. On the other hand, as an additional result, it could also be stated that the theatre plays for children which were staged by the state theatres were much more appropriate for the children in ages five to seven in terms of essential language, physical, educational, entertainment and social characteristics of theatre plays for children; and also these theatre plays were consisted of essential characteristics of theatre plays for children to a large extent rather than the theatre plays for children which were staged by private theatres.

4.1.2. Research Question 2

What are the opinions of the participants about the theatre plays which were chosen for the study in terms of the essential language, physical, educational, entertainment and social characteristics of theatre plays for children?

In order to answer this research question, the responses of the participants were organized and examined. The results of these examinations are as follows.

4.1.2.1. According To The Participating Children

The results which were drawn from the verbal responses of five and six-year-old kindergarten children to the interview questions indicated that most of the children liked theatre plays because they were entertaining and colorful. One of the participating children stated about this issue as follows:

I like going to the theatre because it is dark there but there are so many interesting people on the stage and they do so many funny things (Participant #11).

Another one of the participants stated :

I like the colorful costumes of the animals and children on the stage. That is why I always ask my mother to take me to the theatre (Participant #7).

Participating kindergarten children did not state any preferences between the theatre plays which were staged by the state theatre and the theatre plays which were staged by the private theatres. All of them reported that they liked going to the theatre.

I think theatre is people doing various movements and dances. By doing this they tell us a story about children and animals. I like the stories they tell because those are good and happy stories, and most of them are funny (Participant #3).

Most of the participating children stated that they liked the theatre play they had watched very much. Only three of them (25 %) stated that they got bored because the play was too long and dark.

According to the children, the most liked contributions of theatre plays were their songs, their characters and the costumes of the performers:

The song we learned at the theatre was beautiful. I will sing it to my mother and my father when I get home. Do you want me to sing it right now? (Participant #5).

The messages which the theatre plays intended to give were generally understood by the children. Only one of the theatre plays which was staged by the state theatre did not have an effect on children in the means of difficulty of its subject and message.

The characters of the examined theatre plays were appreciated by participating children as long as they reflected the truth. Especially exaggerated bad characters were not preferred while the ones who had chosen to be good at the end of the play were regarded.

One of the girls was so noisy, I did not like her. I think no one could shout as loud as she did (Participant #12).

I have decided not to like the bad man who wore the big hat since he told that he wanted to be a good man anymore. I liked him then (Participant #4).

According to their answers and responses to the questions, it could be stated that children do not have prejudgements towards the characteristics of theatre plays. They precisely focused on the entertainment and physical characteristics of theatre plays for children. The language characteristics of the theatre plays were also important for them, since they only stated opinions about the theatre plays which they could understand properly. On the other hand,

educational and social characteristics of the theatre plays did not draw their attention as much as the other concrete contributions of the theatre plays.

4.1.2.2. According To The Participating Parents

All of the parents who were interviewed bring their children to theatre plays at least three times in a year. Thirty percent of these parents stated that they brought their children in every available time since there was a new theatre play for children in the city.

When the intention of bringing their children to theatre plays was asked, three parents stated that it was to provide their children a proper cultural development; while five parents stated that it was because to spend much more qualified time with their children and the other two parents stated that it was essential for the language development of their children.

All of the interviewed parents stated that theatre effected children's development in a positive way; in addition, two parents also belived that attending to the art activities such as theatre plays supported children's education and cultural development. On the other hand, four parents belived that these kinds of art activities such as theatre supports children's social development.

Eight parents stated that the number of theatre plays which are staged by the state theatres and private theatres must be increased; while two parents stated the number was not important as long as the theate plays were qualified.

When the responses of the parents were examined for each theatre play, the results are as follows:

The theatre play named *Dans Eden Eşek*, which was staged by the state theatres, was approved and appreciated for its message and its features of animal symphaty and honesty. The parents stated that their children could understand the messages and the subject of the theatre play and also they had enjoyable time during the whole play; while only one parent stated that her child was afraid of animals. The musical and visual contributions, such as songs, dances, costumes and decor, were also appreciated by the parents.

The theatre play named *Akıllı Soyтары*, which was staged by the state

theatres, was found complicated for the ages of five and six. Although the messages and the subject of the theatre were appreciated, the play was stated as appropriate for older children. Two parents stated that their children enjoyed at the beginning of the theatre play, but they got bored within the process. The visual contributions, such as decorations and costumes of the theatre play were regarded by the participating parents.

The theatre play named *Kara Kedi Geçti*, which was staged by the state theatres, was approved for the way the theatre play delivered its messages. The usage of animal figures appreciated by the parents. The play was found suitable and proper for older children because its usage of body language. But since the subject was easy to understand, all three parents stated that their children had enjoyable and qualified time during the theatre play. The usage of visual materials and costumes were considered to increase the success of the theatre play.

The theatre play named *Sözümü Tutacağım*, which was staged by a private theatre company, was found slow by parents. Two parents stated that the way of delivering the importance of friendship was complex and impractical for their children. Another parent, who stated the subject of the theatre plays was positive and profitable, did not deny that her child could not understand the message of the play completely. The visual contributions were found disqualified by the parents; while the attendance and participation contribution of the play were appreciated.

About the theatre play named *Harikalar Sirki*, which was staged by a private theatre company, parents stated that visual and musical contributions of the theatre play were quite attractive and entertaining; while the educational contributions of the play were found less prominent. The theatre play were found appropriate for the ages of five and six.

The theatre play named *Tembel Teneke*, which was staged by a private theatre company, was appreciated by the means of its subject, messages, decorations and costumes and entertaining contributions; but the performers of the theatre play were found disqualified by the parents. They also stated that their children enjoyed the theatre play, while one parent mentioned the need of more attractive visual elements to provide the interests of younger children.

4.1.2.3. According To The Participating Drama Teachers

The interpretation of results drawn from the verbal responses of kindergarten drama teachers to the questions of the interviews are as follows:

According to the participating drama teachers, the essential contributions of theatre plays for children are their particular features of education and teaching of new concepts to the children; and also the characteristics of language which could cause children to accept lingual concepts and meanings. The two teachers, who believe that by means of theatre children could observe, discover, and learn, both stated that theatre for children could contribute to the various aspects of real life and cause children to socialize.

By the means of language characteristics, drama teachers found the play named Akıllı Soyтары much more comprehensive from the other theatre plays which were examined; on the other hand, the most disqualified theatre plays were the plays named Tembel Teneke and Harikalar Sirki. By the means of physical characteristics, drama teachers stated the plays named Dans Eden Eşek and Akıllı Soyтары were the most appropriate; and the most disqualified theatre play was the play named Tembel Teneke. By the means of educational characteristics, according to the drama teachers, the plays named Dans Eden Eşek and Sözüümü Tutacağım were referred as the most successful ones; while the play named Kara Kedi Geçti was the most ineffective theatre plays. By the means of entertainment characteristics, the drama teachers found all of the six examined theatre plays quite successful, since all of these plays included interesting and colorful entertaining elements and their stories and subjects were quiet interesting. Finally by the means of social characteristics, the drama teachers found all of the examined theatre plays appropriate.

As to speak about the differences between the state theatre plays for children and private theatre plays for children, both teachers stated that, in general meaning, it was a common sentiment that theatre plays staged by the state theatres positively differed from any other private theatre companies; but for the exact examined theatre season, teachers stataed that it was impossible to speak about

such dramatic difference and all of the examined theatre plays for children were mostly appropriate although they had some little incomplete or missing parts.

4.1.2.4. According To The Participating Theatre Director

The director of the one of three theatre plays for children which were staged by the Bursa State Theatres stated that there always have been some nuence differences between state theatre plays and private theatre plays. These differences are based on the number of the employees who works in the state theatres and private theatre companies, that is the number of employees of the state theatres are always more than the number of employees of private theatre companies; the amount of the funds which the government provides; the diversity of the sources and archives the state theatre could reach; and the long time successes and experiences of the state theatres.

The director stated that she found the number of the theatre plays for children which were staged by the Bursa State Theatre was enough for the children and parents for a theatre season.

According to the director, parents and educators mostly prefer to bring their children and students to the theatre plays of the state theatre rather than the plays of the private theatres. The reason of this was that parents and educators were generally not informed about the activities of the private theatre companies.

For the contents of examined theatre plays, the director stated:

“...all of the six examined theatre plays include most of the required language, educational, physical, social and entertainment characteristics. But when we look at the characteristics and capacities of the performers of these theatre plays we see that state theatre plays include professional actors and actresses when the private theatre companies are consisted of amateurs and students. Certainly, that does not mean the theatre plays staged by the state theatres are much more successulf; but stil this is an essential characteristic of theatre that the play must consist of professionals”.

About the preferences of children and parents, the director stated:

“Parents prefer theatre plays for children of which the educational characteristics are prominent. On the other hand, for children the most desired characteristic of a theatre play is its entertainment capacity. The way to please both children and parents is to stage educational and entertaining theatre plays. But is this enough? Certainly not! What we need to do is to provide children and parents, and other people in the audience, theatre plays which are complete in the means of all essential characteristics of theatre plays for children.”

The prior headlines and paragraphs reflected the opinions of the participating children, parents, and drama teachers about the theatre plays which were chosen for the study in terms of the essential language, physical, educational, entertainment and social characteristics of theatre plays for children. Also the opinions of drama teachers and the theatre director about the differences between state theatre plays and private theatre plays were included as additional outcomes of the interviews.

In the following part, the similarities and differences between the results of two related research questions will be presented.

4.1.3. Comparison Of The Results Of The Research Questions

In the light of the results gained from the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric and the responses of participations to the interview questions, it could be stated that the results of two research questions bear resemblance to each other. Especially the preferences of the participating parents and drama teachers had resemblance to the outcomes of the exploratories.

On the other hand, as an unintended outcome of the study, in terms of essential characteristics which were determined by the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric, the theatre plays for children which were staged by

the state theatre could be accepted much more appropriate in comparison with the examined theatre plays for children which were staged by private theatre companies in Bursa.

When looked from the participating children's point of view there are not such distinction as state theatre plays and private theatre plays. Children only love theatre plays which are appropriate, entertaining, interesting, colorful and meaningful to them.

According to the parents, as stated above, the most important characteristics of theatre plays were their educational and entertainment contributions. But when looked at their responses, it can be seen that the effectiveness of the theatre plays which were staged by the state theatres are above the effectiveness of the theatre plays which were staged by the private theatres. As an instance, it could be proper to quote one of the parents:

“I prefer to take my child to the theatre plays staged by the state theatres. Because I find them qualified. When we see all of the plays of the state theatres, I start looking for appropriate private theatre plays. I always need to choose the right ones from all of the private plays; while I find qualified all of the theatre plays staged by the state theatres” Participant #18).

According to the responses, it cannot be stated that parents significantly prefer state theatre plays. But some opinions indicate that there can be such preference among the participating parents.

According to the responses of two interviewed drama teachers it can be stated that by the means of language characteristics of the examined theatre plays drama teacher found the theatre plays which were staged by the state theatres more successful and appropriate while they reported that the language contributions of the theatre plays which were staged by the private theatres needed to be improved. By the means of physical characteristics also state theatre plays were found more successful than the private theatre plays. By the means of educational, entertainment and social characteristics of the theatre plays, the

drama teachers did not stated that there were dramatic differences between the theatre plays which were staged by the state theatres and the theatre plays which were staged by the private theatres.

According to the director of the one of three theatre plays for children which were staged by the Bursa State Theatres, the state theatre plays for children were much more preferable because the state theatres were more professional and experienced when compared to the private theatre companies. And she did not state any preferation of her own.

4.2. Summary

This part summarized the results of the study in terms of essential language, physical, educational, entertainment, and social characteristics of theatre plays for children which were staged by the state theatre and private theatres in one specific theatre season in Bursa, and also the outcomes of statistical informations, two research questions and the interpretations of the interviews which were made with five and six-year-old kindergarten students, parents, drama teachers and a professional theatre director during the study. The characteristics of theatre plays for children were examined.

The results revealed that the theatre plays for children which were chosen for the study included at least the fourty percent of the required essential characteristics of theatre plays for children. Opinions, comments and preferences of the participants were also reflected in the study. According to the exploratory conclusions and the opinions of the participants, some differences between the theatre plays which were staged by the state theatres and the theatre plays for children which were staged by the private theatres were found as an outcome of the study.

This study is important because it refers and draws attention to the important features of theatre on children; and the required characteristics of theatre plays for children which is unfortunately an unvalued field in our country. One of the aims of this study was to provide attention to the very field and make implications and recommentations for further studies.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to reflect the required and existing characteristics and the congruity of theatre plays for children which were staged by the state theatres and theatre plays for children which were staged by private theatres in one theatre season in Bursa. Also another purpose of this study was to draw attention to this very field by exploring the opinions and preferations of children, parents, educators, and professionals.

In addition to these purposes, forming of a theatre bulletin for parents and educators was also purposed; besides the intention to make recommendations for further studies and also for formation of new trends and theatre plays for children.

5.1. Discussion On The Results Of The Study

In this section the research questions of this study and their results will be discussed comprehensively.

5.1.1. Research Question 1

Do theatre plays for children staged by the State Theatres and private theatre companies in one specific theatre season in Bursa meet the requirements in terms of their essential language, physical, educational, entertainment and social characteristics of theatre plays for children?

For this research question all of the theatre plays for children which were chosen for the study were found to be covering at least the forty percent of the

essential language, physical, educational, entertainment, and social characteristics of theatre plays for children which were determined by the Theatre For Young Audiences Evaluation Rubric for this study. The considered characteristics of these five different aspects of this study were as follows:

In terms of language characteristics, the examined theatre plays were expected to include short and easily understandable words and sentences; absence of slang, bad and inappropriate words; and contributions for teaching new words, meanings and concepts. There are some statements about the language characteristics of theatre plays for children in the literature. For instance, Kuyumcu (2000) stated that it was a complication that although some theatre plays for children included easy and understandable stories, the complex contributions of their language structures caused those theatre plays become complex and hard to be understood for younger children. Also Samurçay (1979) claimed that it was an important contribution of a theatre play for children to cause children to meet new cases and concepts.

In terms of physical characteristics, the examined theatre plays were expected to provide colorful, interesting, and meaningful decorations and costumes which were appropriate for the study, and easy to watch; and also provide a general theatre atmosphere which was away from the noise and other disturbing elements. When compared to the literature, it could be seen that, according to Nutku (2006), it was an important aspect that the theatre play for children was performed on a proper stage, surrounded by audience in a theatre building which was away from the noises of outside world. Also Kuyumcu (2000) stated that the interesting physical elements such as decorations and costumes were essential for theatre plays for children in order to draw the attention of the audience to the stage and to the story.

In terms of educational characteristics, the examined theatre plays were expected to give positive educational messages which were meaningful and easy to remember; provide a scenario which supported good behaviors; and give the

audience opportunity to actively observe, discover and learn. As Bandura (1977) stated the importance of observational learning, children could learn concepts and behaviors by simply observing other people and actions. On the other hand, according to Samurçay (1979), the positive messages which were given to the children with visual materials such as theatre plays, story books, and pictures caused children to assimilate properly.

In terms of entertainment characteristics, the examined theatre plays were expected to be shorter than fifty minutes; include interesting elements such as music, dances, songs, and colorful lights; and also include some different techniques such as puppets and pantomim. As Kuyumcu (2000) stated, the presence of interesting elements, especially music and dances, was one of the most important essential aspects of theatre plays for children. Because according to her, children only kept paying attention to a specific situation, such as a theatre play, only when it was interesting to them; and by using music, dances, songs and such elements, various concepts could be given to the children during the theatre play. She also stated that the length of the theatre plays for children was very important; and short-length theatre plays were essential for especially younger children.

In terms of social characteristics, the examined theatre plays were expected to include play characters who were described as good characters and bad characters; have an ending in which the good characters won; and also include the participation and contribution of the audience. As Günçe (1979) stated, since younger children could not apprehend the complex emotional changes of human beings; and could perceive the good and bad characteristics when they were given separately, it would be proper to represent these emotional differences in different theatre characters. About the contribution and participation of the audience, Kuyumcu (2000) claimed that the intellectual and physical participation to the story was one of the basic structures of theatre plays for children. According to her, it could be possible that children easily got bored if they did not contribute to the story during a theatre play.

All these characteristics, which were given above, were determined as the essential characteristics which would be searched in the examined theatre plays for children. As the results of the exploration revealed that there were differences in the levels of examined theatre plays' of providing these characteristics. As an unintended outcome, the results represented that, according to the evaluation rubric, theatre plays which were staged by the state theatres had higher percentages, comparing with the theatre plays which were staged by the private theatres. The possible reasons of these differences are discussed in following sections.

5.1.2. Research Question 2

What are the opinions of the participants about the theatre plays which were chosen for the study in terms of the essential language, physical, educational, entertainment and social characteristics of theatre plays for children?

Any conception or preferation of specific characteristics could not be gained from children by the means of this research question. Since children liked what was entertaining, colorful, and meaningful for them, the result stated as children were much more interested in the entertainment characteristics of theatre plays for children. Since it was accepted that all of the examined theatre plays included at least fourty percent of the required characteristics, it could be understandable that all of these examined theatre plays were entertaining, colorful, interesting and meaningful for them. The most appreciated characteristics of theatre plays by children were their songs, costumes, decors, characters and entertainment contributions. Children who were interviewed within this study did not state such differenciation between the state theatre plays and the private theatre plays.

The participating parents seemed to be interested mostly in the educational and entertainment characteristics of theatre plays for children. In terms of the participating parents, as it was stated in the results chapter, they seemed to prefer theatre plays for children which were staged by the state theatres. This situation

could be because of the trust they have towards the state theatres. Since any of these parents who stated that they prefer the state theatres did not claim any reasons. These reasons could be explained with the statement of the director of the one of three theatre plays for children which were staged by the Bursa State Theatres above which were given in the results chapter.

The participating drama teachers did not state any important difference between the examined state theatre plays and the private theatre plays, although they found some characteristics of the state theatre plays much more appropriate. The drama teachers were mostly focused on the desired characteristics of theatre plays for children; and according to their statements these essential characteristics were educational, language and social elements of the theatre plays for children.

As for essential contributions of theatre plays for children, besides from the characteristics which were considered in this study, various other important aspects could be stated. According to Kuyumcu (2000), some of these aspects are as follows: (1) A theatre play for children should have a target audience which was determined by the age of the audience. (2) The theatre play should be composed appropriately for a child's point of view. (3) The topics and subjects of the play should be represented in a logical cause and effect relationship. (4) The theatre plays should be performed by the professionals.

On the other hand, as an addition to the opinions of the participations about the theatre plays for children which were chosen for the study, when specifically looked at the responses gained from the participating parents, it could be seen that parents did not have adequate knowledge about the characteristics and benefits of theatre plays for children. In this aspect, the bulletin about the theatre plays for children which was formed as a result of this study could cover this considerable lack of knowledge.

5.1.3. On Differences Between State and Private Theatre Plays

As it was stated above, finding a meaningful difference between theatre plays which were staged by the state theatres and theatre plays which were staged by the private theatres was not intended as a result of the study. But when looked

at the scores of the examined theatre plays and also at the responses of especially participating parents and the theatre director, it was revealed that the difference between the theatre plays could be a considerable outcome of this study.

When looked at the possible reasons of these differences, according to the director of the one of three theatre plays for children which were staged by the Bursa State Theatres, these differences are based on various situations, such as:

“...the number of the employees who works in the state theatres and private theatre companies, that is the number of employees of the state theatres are always more than the number of employees of private theatre companies; the amount of the funds which the government provides; the diversity of the sources and archives the state theatre could reach; and the long time successes and experiences of the state theatres”.

On the other hand, parents who stated that they prefer theatre plays for children which were staged by the state theatre also claim that, state theatre plays are much more successful and reassuring than the private theatre plays. Nevertheless, any parents who argued this way could not point any acceptable reason for their statements.

5.2. Target Audience Of A Theatre Play For Children

During the observation and exploration processes of this study, it was expected that each of the examined theatre plays would have a target age group and an age interval, given to the publicity. But it was seen that any of the examined theatre plays did not include such information. In a general meaning, the director of the one of three theatre plays for children which were staged by the Bursa State Theatres stated that the theatre plays for children which were staged by the state theatres in 2008-2009 theatre season had addressed children between the ages of four and ten. But such an age interval could not be accepted as informative. According to the experts such as Kuyumcu (2000), the theatre plays

for children must be categorized as theatre plays for children on ages five to seven; seven to twelve; and twelve to fifteen. Designing a theatre play, or any other concept actually, addressing to children between the ages of four and ten could be impossible as the children dramatically develop by the means of every developmental areas in these ages.

On the other hand except from only one theatre play, named *Akıllı Soyтары* which was staged by the state theatres, all of the examined theatre plays were found appropriate for children five to seven years old by the parents and educators. For only the extent of this study, it can be said that most of the theatre plays which were staged by the state theatres and private theatres actually addressed to children on ages between five and seven. But as long as such informations were not given officially, this statement can not go any further from being only a suggestion.

But when looked at other countries, it was seen that the application of this issue could not go far from only being a suggestion for parents and educators. As the information officer of the London National Theatre personally stated to the researcher:

“...Here at the National Theatre we do not have a formal age categorisation system for our plays. Our only rule is that all members of the audience must be over four years old for most shows. When we talk about ages, these are purely recommendations however and we rely on the parent/guardian/teacher to make the final decision.”

On the other hand, in our country, Nutku (2002) had categorized the theatre plays for children according to ages. This categorization was as follows: The first group was consisted of preschool children between the ages of five and seven; the secon group was consisted of elementary school children between the ages of seven and twelve; and the third group was cocsisted of secondary school children between the ages of twelve and fifteen.

5.3. Generalizability Of The Study

Generalization is defined as the “extent to which the results of a study can be generalized from a sample to a population” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p.104). The examined sample of the study contains 6 theatre plays for children which were staged by the state theatre and also private theatre companies. The participants of this study involve twelve kindergarten children, ten parents who have children in five or six years old, two drama teachers, and a theatre play director. It would be impossible to generalize such a small study to any population. This study of analysis of theatre plays for children staged by the state theatres and private theatres in 2008-2009 theatre season in Bursa is a study which was conducted to discover the essential and desired characteristics of theatre plays for children. About the generalizability of this research, it can be stated that this study did not aim at such generalization.

5.4. Implications

According to the findings of this study and also the comments and opinions of theatre experts, the essential and desired characteristics of theatre plays for children and, the opinions and perceptions of children, parents and teachers about these characteristics were discovered. In the light of these findings, some implications can be offered to preschool teachers, parents, playwrights and directors of theatre plays for children.

5.4.1. Implications For Playwrights And Directors

For the playwrights and directors of theatre plays for children, this study contains significant information and proposals about the existing and also required characteristics of theatre for children in a large concept of different components of these characteristics such as language, physical, educational, entertainment and social contributions of theatre plays. This study may help playwrights and directors of theatre plays for children be aware of these essential characteristics and the importance of these characteristics to the children. On the other hand, a considerable absence of information about theatre plays for children was

discovered as a result of this study, that was the absence of the target audiences of the theatre plays. This is an important issue for theatre for children field, and the authorities may notice this issue by courtesy of this study.

Besides the information about the essential characteristics of theatre plays for children which were evaluated in this study, one of the most important necessities of staging a theatre play for children is to put the financial concerns aside and focus on producing something purely for children. Some knowledge about the development of children is essential. It could be useful to cooperate with a consultant. Try to see the events from a child's eyes and make everything interesting, but not confusing. It should always be remembered that children need to learn, almost about everything. When proper opportunities are provided, they learn much more easily. Without a doubt, theatre is one of the most important ways of providing these opportunities.

5.4.2. Implications For Parents And Educators

For the parents, this study displays information about the characteristics of theatre plays for children. According to these information parents may assess theatre plays for their children more salutarly. Besides, having detailed information about the characteristics of theatres plays in different aspects may cause parents to understand the importance of theatre and take steps to bring up a much more cultured and social generation. On the other hand, the bulletin (Appendix G) which was designed at the end of this study for parents may be a good resource for them about theatre plays for children.

For the educators, one of the hardest issues of choosing theatre plays for students may be relieved in the light of the informations drawn from this study. On the other hand it may be also helpful to the teachers having these informations in the means of drama sessions at classrooms.

Furthermore, this study provides information about the characteristics of theatre plays for children for everyone who wants to have knowledge. Providing children an appropriate and qualified general intelligence is one of the most

important essences of education. Appropriate and proper theatre plays for children certainly helps this purpose.

5.5. Recommendations For Further Studies

This study can be developed and enriched in the following ways:

- Other additional data collection methods can be added in order to identify kindergarten teachers' beliefs and comments on theatre plays.
- Some other characteristics of theatre plays for children can be added to the evaluation instruments.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Parent Consent Form

Sevgili veli,

Hayatın her döneminde olduğu gibi erken çocukluk çağında da tiyatro izleme zevkinin ve tiyatro kültürünün çocuklarımıza kazandırılmasını vurgulamak amacıyla, Yüksek Lisans öğrenimimi sürdürmekte olduğum Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü bünyesinde bir tiyatro araştırması yapmaktayım. Bu araştırma kapsamında yıl içinde izlediğimiz tüm tiyatro eserlerinin bir değerlendirmesini oluşturmak için öğrencilerimize bir anket uygulamak istiyorum.

Tiyatronun eğitici ve öğretici boyutlarını vurgulamak adına bu araştırmama destek vermenizi; ekte sunmuş olduğum izin formlarını öğrencileriniz adına doldurmanızı rica ediyorum.

Teşekkür ederim.

H.Nihan ÖLMEZ

Anaokulu Öğretmeni

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

ÇOCUK TİYATROSU İÇERİK ARAŞTIRMASI

VELİ İZİN FORMU

Ekim 2008 – Haziran 2009 tarihleri arasında Bursa ilinde Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi H.Nihan Ölmez tarafından yapılan tiyatro oyunlarını değerlendirme anketine velisi olduğum _____'in katılmasına izin veriyorum.

Velinin adı-soyadı

İmza

APPENDIX B

THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES EVALUATION RUBRIC					
NAME OF THE THEATRE PLAY:					TOTAL SCORE
LANGUAGE CHARACTERISTICS	1		2		3
	SHORT AND EASILY UNDERSTANDABLE WORDS AND SENTENCES		ABSENCE OF SLANG, BAD AND INAPPROPRIATE WORDS		CONTRIBUTIONS FOR TEACHING NEW WORDS, MEANINGS AND CONCEPTS
PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS	1		2		3
	BACKGROUND OF THE STAGE AND DECORATIONS ARE COLORFUL, INTERESTING AND MEANINGFUL		COSTUMES ARE APPROPRIATE, INTERESTING AND EASY TO WATCH		THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF THE THEATRE BUILDING IS AWAY FROM NOISE AND OTHER DISTURBING ELEMENTS
EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	1		2		3
	GIVES POSITIVE EDUCATIONAL MESSAGES WHICH ARE MEANINGFUL AND EASY TO REMEMBER		THE SCENARIO SUPPORTS GOOD BEHAVIORS		GIVES OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE, DISCOVER AND LEARN
ENTERTAINMENT CHARACTERISTICS	1		2		3
	THE SCENARIO IS EASY AND THE PLAY IS NOT INAPPROPRIATELY LONG (UNDER 50 MINUTES)		INTERESTING ELEMENTS SUCH AS MUSIC, DANCES, COLORFUL LIGHTS ARE USED		DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES SUCH AS PUPPETS, PANTOMIM ETC ARE USED
SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS	1		2		3
	THE CHARACTERS ARE DESCRIBED IN STRICT LINES (GOOD AND BAD CHARACTERS DIFFER FROM EACHOTHER)		AT THE AND, THE GOOD CHARACTERS WIN		PARTICIPATION AND ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTION OF THE AUDIENCE ARE INCLUDED
OVERALL SCORE					

APPENDIX C

CHILDREN'S INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

5 VE 6 YAŞ ANAOKULU ÖĞRENCİLERİNE TİYATRO OYUNLARI HAKKINDA YAPILAN KONUŞMA SIRASINDA SOLRULACAK SORULAR

1. TİYATROYA GİTMEYİ SEVER MİSİN?
2. TİYATRO SENCE NEDİR?
3. OYUNU İZLEDİĞİNDE BEĞENDİN Mİ? EN ÇOK NESİNİ BEĞENDİN? Neden beğendin /beğenmedin?
4. BU OYUN NE ANLATIYORDU?
5. OYUNDAKİ KARAKTERLER (karakterin ne olduğu konusunda açıklama yapılabilir) NASILDI?
6. KARAKTERLER KENDİ ARALARINDA NELER KONUŞTULAR?
7. SAHNEDE EN ÇOK DİKKATİNİ ÇEKEN NELER OLDU?
8. OYUNUN MÜZİKLERİ NASILDI?
9. OYUNCULARIN GİYDİKLERİ KİYAFETLER VE SAHNEDEKİ DEKORLAR NASILDI?

APPENDIX D

PARENTS' INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

TİYATRO OYUNUNU İZLEMİŞ VELİLERE TİYATRO OYUNLARI HAKKINDA YAPILAN KONUŞMA SIRASINDA SOLRULACAK SORULAR

1. ÇOCUĞUNUZU HANGİ SIKLIKLA TİYATROYA GÖTÜRÜRSÜNÜZ?
2. ÇOCUĞUNUZU TİYATROYA GÖTÜRMEKTEKİ AMACINIZ NEDİR?
3. TİYATRONUN ÇOCUKLARA NE GİBİ YARARLARI OLDUĞUNU DÜŞÜNÜYORSUNUZ?
4. OYUNU GENEL OLARAK NASIL BULDUNUZ?
5. BEĞENDİĞİNİZ VE BEĞENMEDİĞİNİZ YÖNLERİ NELERDİR?
6. ÇOCUĞUNUZ OYUNDAN ZEVK ALDI MI? OYUN ONA BİR ŞEYLER KATTI MI?
7. OYUNUN GÖRSEL VE İŞİTSEL ÖĞELERİ HAKKINDA NELER SÖYLEYEBİLİRSİNİZ?
8. BİR SEZONDA DAHA ÇOK SAYIDA ÇOCUK OYUNU OLMASI SİZİ NASIL ETKİLER?

APPENDIX E

DRAMA TEACHERS' INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

ANAOKULU DRAMA ÖĞRETMENLERİNE TİYATRO OYUNLARI HAKKINDA YAPILAN KONUŞMA SIRASINDA SOLRULACAK SORULAR

1. SİZCE ÇOCUK TİYATROSUNUN TEMEL ÖZELLİKLERİ NELERDİR?
2. BU ÖZELLİKLERDEN HANGİLERİNİ OYUN DAHİLİNDE GÖZLEMLEYEBİLDİNİZ? BU GÖZLEMLEDİKLERİNİZ YETERLİ MİYDİ? NEDEN?
3. TİYATRONUN ÇOCUKLARA NE GİBİ YARARLARI OLDUĞUNU DÜŞÜNÜYORSUNUZ?
4. OYUNLARI DİL ÖZELLİKLERİ BAKIMINDAN DEĞERLENDİRİNİZ.
5. OYUNLARI FİZİKSEL ÖZELLİKLERİ BAKIMINDAN DEĞERLENDİRİNİZ.
6. OYUNLARI EĞİTSEL ÖZELLİKLERİ BAKIMINDAN DEĞERLENDİRİNİZ.
7. OYUNLARI EĞLENDİRİCİ ÖZELLİKLERİ BAKIMINDAN DEĞERLENDİRİNİZ.
8. OYUNLARI SOSYAL ÖZELLİKLERİ BAKIMINDAN DEĞERLENDİRİNİZ.

APPENDIX F
THEATRE DIRECTOR'S INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

ÇOCUK TİYATRO OYUNU YÖNETMENİNE
TİYATRO OYUNLARI HAKKINDA YAPILAN KONUŞMA SIRASINDA
SOLRULACAK SORULAR

1. SİZCE ÇOCUKLAR VE VELİLER TİYATRO OYUNLARININ HANGİ ÖZELLİKLERİNE DAHA ÇOK İLGİ SÖGTERİYORLAR?
2. BU SEZON BURSA DEVLET TİYATROSU ÜÇ ADET ÇOCUK OYUNU SAHNEYE KOYDU. SİZCE BU SAYI YETERLİ Mİ?
3. SİZCE BU OYUNLAR ÇOCUK TİYATROSUNUN GEREKLİ KRİTERLERİNE UYUYOR MU?
4. BU SEZON SAHNEYE KONAN ÇOCUK OYUNLARINI ELE ALDIĞIMIZ ZAMAN, SİZCE DEVLET TİYATROSU İLE DİĞER ÖZEL TİYATROLAR ARASINDA BİR FARKLILIK VAR MI? EĞER FARKLILIKLAR VARSA BUNLARI SEBEPLERİ SİZCE NEDİR?

APPENDIX G

THE CONTENT OF

THEATRE FOR CHILDREN BULLETIN FOR PARENTS

EBEVEYNLERİN DİKKATİNE!

ÇOCUKLAR İÇİN SAHNELENEN TİYATRO OYUNLARINDA

ARANACAK ÖZELLİKLER

KAVRAM TANIMI: “Çocuk Tiyatrosu”: Yalnızca küçük yaş grubu izleyiciler için profesyoneller tarafından tasarlanmış, yazılmış, hazırlanmış; ve bir tiyatro sahnesinde yalnızca bu izleyici grubuna sunulan tiyatro oyunlarının genel ismidir.

Bir çocuk oyunu izleyicisine yalnızca iyi vakit geçirtmeyi amaçlamaz. Çocuk tiyatrosu mutlaka eğitsel içeriğe sahip olmalı; günlük ve genel konseptler hakkında izleyicisine bilgi ve farkındalık kazandırmalı; hayal gücünü, duygusal zekayı, kendini ifade yeteneğini, yaratıcılığı ve eleştirel düşünce kabiliyetini destekler nitelikte olmalı; ve izleyicisini düşünmeye sevk etmelidir.

ÇOCUK TİYATROSUNUN TEMEL KARAKTERİSTİKLERİ

FİZİKSEL KOŞULLAR: Her şeyden önce göze hitap eden, ilgi çekici ancak zihni çok fazla yormayan ve oyunun konusuyla uyumlu dekor ve kostümler kullanılmalıdır.

DİL ÖZELLİKLERİ: Hitap ettiği yaş grubunun dil gelişim özelliklerine uygunluğunun yanı sıra; bir çocuk tiyatrosu oyunu kolay anlaşılabilen, sıkıcı ve kafa karıştırıcı olmayan, argo ve olumsuz sözcüklerden uzak bir dil örgüsüne sahip olmalı; izleyicisinin algı düzeyine hitap etmelidir.

İÇERİK VE KARAKTERLER: Çocukların dünyasına ait olan, onlara yabancı gelmeyecek konulardan seçilmiş bir ana tema üzerinde ilerlemesi gereken oyun, iyi planlanmış ve kurgulanmış, bünyesinde mantık hataları bulundurmayan ve sonunda olumlu davranış ile olumlu karakterleri ödüllendiren, izleyicileri düşünmeye ve çıkarımlar yapmaya sevk eden pozitif, ilginç ve eğlenceli bir hikayeye sahip olmalıdır. İzleyicisinin tüm gelişim düzeylerine ve yaş özelliklerine uygun biçimde tasarlanmalıdır.

GÖRSEL VE İŞİTSEL ELEMANLAR: Bir çocuk tiyatrosu oyunu hikayesinin uygunluğuyla doğru orantılı olarak bünyesinde mutlaka müzik, şarkılar, danslar, kuklalar, ışık oyunları gibi görsel ve işitsel elemanlar bulundurmalıdır.

✚ **OYUNCULARIN (YAZAR VE YÖNETMENİN) ÖZELLİKLERİ:** Bir tiyatro oyunu mutlaka profesyoneller tarafından yazılmalı ve sahneye konmalıdır. Özellikle çocuk tiyatrosu oyunlarında rol alan oyuncuların temel tiyatro eğitimi almış olmalarının yanında yaş grubuna hitap etmeyi de bilmeleri gerekir. Canlandırılan karakterleri sahneye koyan oyuncuların oyunun ve hikayenin şartlarına uygun, rolünü hakkıyla yerine getirebilen kişiler olması gerekir.

✚ **ETKİLEŞİM ÖZELLİKLERİ:** Çocuk tiyatrosunun en önemli özelliklerinden biri de seyirciyle karşılıklı etkileşime ve seyirci katılımına açık olmasıdır. Yaşı itibarıyla kendini oyunun içinde hissedebilen izleyici oyunun vermek istediklerini daha çabuk kavrar. Bir çocuk tiyatrosu oyununun olmazsa olmazı etkileşim ve aktif katılımıdır.

Tüm bunların yanı sıra, çocuk tiyatrosu oyunu ilgi çekici, eğlenceli, aktif ve hızlı hareket eden bir oyun olmalıdır. Süresi hitap edilen yaş grubunun özelliklerine uygun olarak belirlenmelidir. Günümüz olaylarına ve çağın sorunlarına, yine yaş grubunun özelliklerine uygun ölçüde değinebilmelidir. Çocukların ilgisini çekecek, çocukların dünyasına ait konuları ve karakterleri bünyesinde barındırmalıdır. OYUN SONA ERDİĞİNDE İZLEYİCİDE EĞİTİMSEL BİR KAZANIM, AYDINLANMA, ÖĞRENME VE YENİ FİKİRLER OLUŞTURMALIDIR.