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# Narrative Structure Specificity In The Stories Included In 3rd Year Primary School Arabic Book In Algeria

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## **Abstract:**

Through this research, we focus on the narrative structure specificity in Arabic book directed to 3rd year primary school pupils in Algeria, since the pupil, at this stage, is 9 years old, which is a stage of childhood that has its literature, specificities and circumstances, for the sake of achieving the full reception of a narrative text, which isn't a normal text, it's rather characterized with special features making it different than adult literature. It's a very important field to work on developing it, since today's child is tomorrow's man. Therefore, we've studied the narrative structure of the stories included within the school book in terms of characters and settings' structure for focusing on the extent that they're conducive to the pupil's perceptive and psychological abilities.

**Keywords:** structure, narration, story, child literature.

## **Introduction:**

The literature directed to children is characterized with certain features, which are appropriate to child and his age stage along with its psychological, mental and physical characteristics for the sake of conveying the idea it deals with to influence this young receptor so that his mind can understand. Thus, this literature is distinct through its artistic and aesthetic components and its far-reaching objectives like earning the child religious values and principles, which supports the child's personality and consolidates his oath and belonging to his nation, its objectives and maintaining them.<sup>1</sup> So, on the basis of the conviction that today's child is tomorrow's man, childhood stage is a very important. If it has been given care and been supported by safe hands, it would achieve the good man. If it has been neglected or received a narrative text that doesn't take into account its specificities, the result would be opposite. Besides, the child has his own world and special way of thinking, which requires forming a careful child literature with a way that feats their abilities, tendencies and needs, which makes the narrative structure in children's stories different than that of general or adult literature. This is what we're going to look on through the following problematic: how is the narrative structure within the narrative texts in Arabic

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<sup>1</sup> Saad Abou Ridha. (1993). Children literary text: objectives, sources and features, according to an Islamic perspective. Albashir publishing and distributing house, ed.1m Amman, p.134

book directed to 3rd year primary school pupils? Is it able to achieve the wanted objectives in this stage? We've followed the method of dividing the research into two sections. In the first one, we identify the theoretical concepts including child literature, the story directed to child, the narrative structure components in this story and its features. In the second section, we've attempted to identify the stories included within the book, and we've studied their narrative structure characteristics. Finally, we've concluded with a set of results including the fact that writing for children is a great challenge, since the stories of this literature have to be subjected to what's required by the receptor's specificity psychologically and perceptively. The stories included within the book are varied, and they cover all the fields forming the pupil's personality. They're so appropriate to the pupils' age and abilities.

### **1. The concept of child literature:**

It's the literary production that feats children, according to their ages and levels and their ability to understand and taste, according to the era nature and to what feats society in which they live.<sup>2</sup> It's also defined as the good speech, which gives children an artistic pleasure, whether it's oral or written poetry or prose like: stories, plays and songs.<sup>3</sup> So, child literature is all what's devoted for children either it's poetry or prose, written or oral taking into account children's linguistic, psychological and mental characteristics. It consists in various literary genres. It's a form of literary expression, which has rules and methods whether they're connected to child's language, dictionary and way of thinking or they're connected to its content that feats childhood needs in relation to taste issues and literary formulation.

Children's literature is characterized by the clarity of the language and its distance from complexity, and relevance to the child's linguistic and cognitive jargon, in addition to the clarity of style and its strength in terms of using thrills that attract the child's attention. Children's literature is considered "one of the most important means that contribute to the process of educational construction and protection from the dangers that destroy education and corrupt common sense" <sup>4</sup>. Hence, it is important to pay attention to this literature, which contains several areas. Some divide it into "poetry circle and prose circle", and some others expand and generalize it and make it "include all human literature and knowledge, because these fields and forms must contain everything that is around the child, such as: etiquette and knowledge, and must include the various aspects of human life that modern people live" <sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Mohammed Hassan Berighash. (1996). Children literature: objectives and features. Errissala Establishment, ed.2, Beirut, Lebanon, p.46

<sup>3</sup> Ahmed Nadjib. (1991). Children literature: a science and artistic studies in childhood literature. Arab Intellectuality publishing house, ed.2, Cairo, Egypt, pp.279-280

<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Hasan Bereghish, *ibid* , p.133.

<sup>5</sup> Ismail Abd al-Fatah. (2000). Children's Literature in Contemporary World: a critical and analytical vision. Al-Arabia for Publishing Books, ed.1, Cairo, p.44

## 2. The Concept of the Child-Oriented Story:

Story is the closest literary art to the child's soul and one of his favorites. It attracts him with its heroes and excites him with its events. "He would take them, enjoy them, and would ask for more many times" 6. Storytelling constitutes a large part in developing the child's personality as a whole. Reading stories is an old tradition that parents have followed for a long time, and it was part of most of our childhood as well. It is "an artistic and literary text that combines pleasure and utility. It carries a set of educational and ethical values and is presented in a narrative form that is consistent with the literary narrative in its basic elements, according to distinctive characteristics for the purpose of entertainment and learning." Therefore, the children's stories are characterized by ease and clarity, in order to convey many of their doctrinal, pedagogical, and entertaining objectives... provided that they succeed in style and content in winning the child's passion and interest, and stimulating his thinking and research" 7, which is characterized by characteristics in terms of its structure that distinguishes it from the story in general literature.

"The impact of the story on children is not limited on telling the story or reading it, but often by imitating what is being said in the story, and its events, behaviors and morals. This story frees the reader from his reality and his boundaries to other vast worlds to see, hear and watch many environments and varieties of people, whom the child sees as ideals and role models"8.

## 3. The Concept of Narrative Structure in Children's Stories and its Components:

Narration is "a modern critical term, which means transferring the event from its realistic image to a linguistic image" 9. The child's story is characterized by its well-known literary concept; as it responds to the narrative components and takes it in building its artistic identity, such as events, characters, place and time. We also witness the presence of narrative techniques, such as storytelling and description, but it is characterized by a number of features that make it unique with an independent identity, which can be summarized as follows:

- The clarity of the idea is suitable for children's perceptions, related to their lives and emotions, and to be free of extreme idealism, so as to not cause trauma to the child if the contradiction is actually discovered, and that it also avoids beautification of evil, the issues of violence and cruelty. 10

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<sup>6</sup> Muhammad El-Sayed Halawa. (2000). Horus International Institution, Alexandria, Egypt, p.17

<sup>7</sup> Muhammad Hasan Bereghish, *ibid* , p.211

<sup>8</sup> Muhammad Hasan Bereghish, *ibid*, p.213

<sup>9</sup> Amina Yusuf. (1997). Narrative Techniques in Theory and Practice. Dialogue publishing and distributing house, ed.1, Syria, p.28

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad El-Sayed Halawa, *ibid* , p.34

- Simplicity of the Plot: the plot of the child's story requires a gradual progression of clarity and simplicity. Complete simplicity suits the early childhood, and then it gradually becomes more complicated as the child grows
- Smoothness of Style: so that it would be clear and gradual in the events, by relying on statement, not insinuation.
- Mastering the language of the recipient child: The storyteller must master the language of the story and command its words. He should also choose smooth vocabulary, and it is preferred to use some -relatively- difficult vocabulary, which enables the child to know their meaning and enrich his language vocabulary.
- Combining between Narration and Dialogue: as the narrative element must be reduced, and dialogues must be given wide opportunity when telling stories to children 11, as experiences have shown that the use of the dialogue method attracts children more than others, due to its shortness, clarity, and functional nature that reveals the characters qualities and their relationship with each other.
- Diversity of Characters: the character is a necessary and indispensable component in the narrative process, because the characters are the ones which carry out the actions and set the events in motion. The children's story has particularity in employing characters and is characterized by special care in selecting them.

If we come to study the narrative structure, we would find that it consists of the structure of character, the structure of place, and the structure of time. These narrative components of children's stories differ from those in adult literature, which we will address later.

#### 4. Studying the Narrative Structure of the Stories included within Arabic Book of Third Year Primary School:

Throughout this stage, child is nine years old, and he belongs to advanced childhood stage, according to researchers. This stage is called by Mohammed Braighash "the stage of reading and writing", which lasts from five years old to nine years old, in which child is passionate about discovering all new, and he's "more able to understand, think and imagine, and his relationship to society becomes stronger." So, the literati perceives the importance of thinking of what he should write for children in this stage and how it should be written. The book consists of twenty-four stories divided into eight sections. Each section includes three short stories (human values, social life, national identity, nature and environment, health and sport, cultural life, innovations and inventions and travels and trips). We observe that these sections covers all religious, cultural, cognitive and social aspects of child's personality and body health. So, in terms of the stories' topics and title, they cover all the wanted objectives from child literature. The first section, as an example, consists of the three following titles: (I am not a selfish, True promise, Butterfly and ant). They contains the values of loving

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<sup>11</sup> Muhammad Hasan Bereghish, *ibid* , p 263

hereafter life, abolish selfishness, arrogance and damaging the others, maintain promise). In the true promise story, father, who promised his daughter to buy her a puppet, when she gets an excellent mark, said: "I have to go, since I promised her ... promise is promise. My father goes out, while it's heavily raining ..., and he come back, after one hour, and the puppet is hidden under his coat .... I kissed him so many times ...."<sup>12</sup> The father has cultivated the value of maintaining promise within the young child through demonstrating its good results and the negative effects of not maintaining it. We find that the ant addresses the arrogant butterfly. It said: "beauty is the beauty of minds and works, not of clothes and body."<sup>13</sup> If child understands all these values, he will be good positive man in his society.

#### **A. The character's structure:**

Critics have various perspectives about the character's concept and its status within a story or a novel and also about its role; some of them neglect it, but they take its role into account. Others consider that it's necessary, and there's no story without characters. Park considers that "there's only one story without characters", and it's known as "the scaffold of each story". It's also "each participant in events, and it isn't necessary to be a human being, as in general stories, where it can be an animal or a thing or even a merely abstract utterance." Most of critics and scholars have agreed that clarity is a main feature in designing the characters within a story devoted for child; starting from the character's name, since it plays a significant role so that child conceives the character. Besides, describing its material features is important so that child imagines it vibrant and full of life as he sees it Infront of him in form, color and features. Child stories don't have to contain more than his ability to remember and understand. The author has to put a main character, which is the events' axe. It may be followed by other characters, which are secondary, to help the main one to reach the wanted objective of the story. All the characters included within the text book contain a main character followed by few of secondary ones (from one to four). The story of 'I am not a selfish' consists of four characters, and the story of 'True promise' consists of two characters. In the story of 'Trader and the virtuous month' consists of the following characters: trader, his wife and the beggar. In the story of 'For Algeria' consists of the mother and the child. So, all the stories included within the textbook are appropriate to child's ability so that his mind wouldn't be distracted with a plethora of characters. The stories don't have to contain secondary events, which is the result of less characters, so that child understands all the events.

Child always looks for things to follow and consider them as his role model, since the character has to consist of features fulfilling the child's needs to influence him. "It's necessary to look after the main and secondary characters, since child is unified with them in most of times. Most of characters in stories are positive. They're varied between humans and animals,

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<sup>12</sup> Arabic book of 3<sup>rd</sup> year primary school. (2022-2023). National Office for School Publications, p.14

<sup>13</sup> Arabic book of 3<sup>rd</sup> year primary school, ibid, p.18

which is required by this kind of stories. Some of them contains human characters like the stories of the feat man liking sport, The infectious disease, The healthy food, how much I love music.” Other stories comes with animal characters like: Butterfly, ant and lobster. Concerning the characters’ reality, all of them are real in term of form and contain like the child Ouassim, Trader and farmer, The child Zohair and the grandmother and mother. All of them go hand in hand with their real positive characteristics, which achieves interaction between child and the story characters. Character’s sayings have to be identical to its deeds, in order not to be boring for child, who reveals its contradiction, since “the good story is the one pushing child to participate with the story heroes’ attitudes and interact with them; either he’s compassionated with this or he hates that, he loves this and hates that.

### **B. The place structure:**

The terms through which this narrative element is defined are varied. “It’s the backbone, which links the parts of a novelistic text”. In children stories, we find that the story’s place and time influence its topic, events and characters; whenever they’re known, the child is convinced with the story’s events and characters, and he loves it, and gets influenced. Time has to be known like today, age or the future, which stimulates the child’s imagination. This is what makes the story consistent and helps child to be convinced with principles and values included within. The authors’ stories use true places known by the pupil like: outdoor.” In the story of The infecting disease, we find “school, field and mosque”. Places are varied; either closed, like: home, mosque, school and theater; and opened ones like: field, streets, schoolyard, cities, garden, mountains and green spaces.

### **C. Time structure:**

Time is the novel mediator as it’s of life, “since most of studies addressed novel. So, this element has to given great importance, while studying the narrative works; understanding a literary works is based on understanding its existence in time.” Time is used in adults literature with techniques characterizing with simplicity and reality, in order not to be difficult for the child to understand its movement, and it influences children understanding events in forward and backward. Time structure, in 3rd year primary school Arabic book’s stories, is simple and real without forward and backward techniques and time paradoxes, which makes stories difficult to be understood and to attain the wanted objective. Stories are in various times like: day and night, seasons or occasions lived by the child pupil in his reality and everyday life. We find, as an example,; “in the evening of party, home is beautified with carpets of high quality”. We find in the text (land serving) like: “before sunshine, Abd Elkader walks towards his field”. All of them follow a temporal horizontal line in one direction. In the story of Infecting disease, as an example, we find words indicating time like: afternoon, next day, fortnight, days and months. All of them indicate simple time used by child in his real life, since he easily understands them. In the text of Four seasons, a broader tense is used, which

the time of seasons known by children. “It’s spring; seeds are woke up. This is autumn; the season of pomegranate and dates.

### **Conclusion:**

At the end, we’ve attained the following points:

- Child literature isn’t an objective per se, it’s rather an effective educational means, if it’s properly used: it’s not only of pleasure, it rather works on achieving the wanted educational objectives, which form the complemented personality of child mentally, psychologically, socially, linguistically and healthily.
- The narrative structure in children stories contains the same one as of adults: characters have been well studied and appropriate to children age; they’re characterized with small number and reality, and they’re identical to their roles either in terms of form or content. Place structure is so conducive to the receptor child; stories contain closed and opened places, but all of them are real, and they’re linked to children life.
- Time structure is appropriate to the pupils’ age; they’re simple real tenses far from excessive imagination, and they’re varied between short times, like night, day, afternoon and evening, middle times, like seasons and months, and long times like years.

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