

# Determination of Migration Perspective among Children's Literature Researchers

Gökçe DEMİRYÜREK<sup>1\*</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Necmettin Erbakan University, Ahmet Kelesoglu Faculty of Education, Department of Turkish Education, Konya, Türkiye

## Article Info

**Received:** 08.03.2024  
**Accepted:** 04.06.2024  
**Published:** 30.06.2024

### Keywords:

Children's Literature,  
Immigrant,  
Immigration,  
Migration Phenomenon.

## ABSTRACT

Although migration is as old as the history of the world, it is still an important issue that affects a large part of the world. This study aims to determine the perspective of Turkish children's literature researchers on the issue of migration. The density of the child population among the migrant population and the increase in the number of school-age children, including asylum-seeking children born in Turkey over a period of about ten years, places the issue of migration at the focal point of education in general and children's literature in particular. How do children's literati approach the phenomenon of migration? The answer to this question has been sought in research conducted in the field for the past ten years. After conducting a methodological examination through document analysis of articles obtained from field surveys, perspectives on the phenomenon of migration have been identified. It has been noted that the articles are methodologically similar to each other and also have many deficiencies from a methodological perspective. It is observed that the empathic stance is dominant in the perspective on migration. These studies agree that host communities/children need to understand migrants, feel their difficulties and accept them into their communities. However, very few studies talk about mutual adaptation rather than empathy. These studies emphasized that the process of integration cannot be one-sided, that migrant children should also take responsibility, and that children's books should therefore be written in a more inclusive way.

## Çocuk Edebiyatı Araştırmacılarının Göç Perspektifinin Belirlenmesi

### Makale Bilgisi

**Geliş Tarihi:** 08.03.2024  
**Kabul Tarihi:** 04.06.2024  
**Yayın Tarihi:** 30.06.2024

### Anahtar Kelimeler:

Çocuk Edebiyatı,  
Göçmen, Göçmenlik,  
Göç Olgusu.

### ÖZET

Göç, dünya tarihi kadar eski olmasına rağmen halen daha önemini koruyan ve dünyanın büyük bir bölümünü etkileyen bir mesele olarak karşımızda durmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı da göç meselesine Türk çocuk edebiyatı araştırmacılarının bakışını belirlemektir. Göçmen kitlesi içindeki çocuk nüfusunun yoğunluğu, yaklaşık on yıllık bir zaman diliminde Türkiye'de doğan sığınmacı çocuklarla beraber okul çağı çocuklarının sayısının artması, göç meselesini genelde eğitimin özelde de çocuk edebiyatının odak noktasına koymaktadır. Çocuk edebiyatçıları göç olgusuna nasıl yaklaşmaktadır? Bu sorunun cevabı son on yıldır alanda yapılan araştırmalarda aranmıştır. Alan taraması sonucu elde edilen makaleler doküman analizi yöntemiyle metodolojik olarak incelendikten sonra göç olgusuna bakış açıları belirlenmiştir. Makalelerin metodolojik olarak birbirine benzediği ve yine metodolojik açıdan birçok eksiği olduğu dikkat çekmiştir. Göçe bakış açısında ise empatik duruşun ağırlıklı olduğu görülmüştür. Bu çalışmalar, ev sahibi toplumun/çocukların göçmenleri anlaması, onların yaşadığı zorlukları duyumsaması, onları kendi toplumlarına kabul etmesi konusunda hemfikirdirler. Ancak incelenen çalışmaların çok az bir kısmında empatiden çok karşılıklı uyumdan söz edilmiştir. Bu çalışmalar uyum sürecinin tek taraflı olamayacağını, göçmen çocukların da sorumluluk alması gerektiğini bu nedenle çocuk kitaplarının da daha kapsayıcı yazılması gerektiğini vurgulamıştır.

### To cite this article:

Demiryürek, G. (2024). Determination of migration perspective among children's literature researchers. *Edutech Research*, 2(1), 54-69. -

\*Sorumlu Yazar: Gökçe DEMİRYÜREK, [gokcedy@hotmail.com](mailto:gokcedy@hotmail.com)



This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0)

## INTRODUCTION

The concepts of migration and migrants have been preoccupying human beings perhaps since the beginning of the world. These concepts are much more important in today's world where the borders of countries are strictly demarcated and these borders also separate cultures. Although migration and immigration is a worldwide problem, Turkey is at the focal point of the migration phenomenon. Due to Turkey's geographical location and some recent political events, the country has been forced to host both immigrants and refugees (Yel & Çetin, 2023, p. 596). In the last decade, Turkey has been affected by a huge wave of migration, first due to the civil war in Syria and then due to civil unrest and living conditions in countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. Although these people in Turkey are called by different names such as "refugees, guests, brothers and sisters in religion, temporary asylum seekers, those under temporary protection, irregular migrants, invaders" depending on the perspective, whether official or unofficial, it is seen that their number is expressed in millions. To Turkey from abroad in 2022 alone was 494,52 (TÜİK, 2023). This number does not include unregistered migrants. According to the official figures of the Ministry of Interior, the number of registered migrants is around 3 million 312 thousand people as of August 2023 (Göç İdaresi Başkanlığı, 2023). These people are officially referred to as "Syrians under temporary protection" and do not include other nationals. When irregular migrants, those with international protection status, non-Syrian nationals and unregistered migrants are added to these numbers, the number will increase considerably. The numbers that appear only in official data confirm that there is a considerable number of migrants in the country's population.

It is of course not correct to reduce the concepts of migration and immigration to numbers and statistics. These concepts leave deep traces in people's lives beyond numbers. Immigrants are forced to leave not only the geography they belong to but also the culture they grew up in. The fact that the religious, political and cultural structure in the country of settlement is different from their own country brings with it problems of adaptation. Adapting to the new country or rejecting it becomes a matter not only of politics but also of all systems from education to health. Education in particular is even more important due to the high number of children in the migrant population. According to the data of the Migration Administration, as of August 10, 2023, the number of registered Syrian children of school age (5-18 years old) in our country is 1 million 136 thousand 427. According to the figures announced by the Ministry of National Education (MEB), the total number of students in preschool, primary and secondary education in 2022 is 19 million 155 thousand 571 (MEB, 2023). This means that the ratio of Syrian students to the total number of students in education and training is 5.93%, which is not to be underestimated. The number of children among the migrant mass, which has a great impact on the social, political, economic and demographic structure of Turkey, reveals the necessity of taking the phenomenon of migrants and migration seriously in the field of education. Even if temporary protection status is granted, considering the fact that this migrant population has been living in the same country for ten years, it would not be wrong to state that it is essential for this population to learn the Turkish language and culture. This is necessary both for the migrant population to get to know the society and live in accordance with the general rules of that society, and for them to establish healthy communication with the society. At least this is what social peace requires. Moreover, it is necessary not to overlook the fact that these immigrant children will continue to live in Turkey and become members of this society (Arslan and Uslu, 2020, p. 205).

The concept of social peace should not be understood one-sidedly. It will not be enough for migrants to learn the language and culture and adapt. Because the experiences of immigrant families in the society they have newly arrived in vary greatly. Due to differences in cultural contexts and the social behaviors of the dominant culture, immigrant families and their descendants face varying degrees of constraints on social progress within the host community (Paat, 2013). In order to resolve this issue, individuals in the host position also need to get to know these people, establish empathy with them, and

adapt to living together. So where is children's literature in this process? It can be said that children's literature is generally attributed a culture transmission function (Flanagan, 2010, p. 26). Children's literature is a field that can enter and shape the world of children from an early age with its instructive, educational, shaping and even entertaining dimensions. Kuciapiński (2014, p. 77) characterizes this strength of fictional products under the umbrella of children's literature as highly relevant in addressing a desirable topic, important from both pedagogical and psychological perspectives, a good mediator in solving personal dilemmas, an important supporter in the process of achieving trust, and a way to meet children's needs. Therefore, it would be a good way to get help from children's literature in the process of children's mutual adaptation. Because children's literature reproduces fictional situations that overlap with children's real problems, allowing them to feel more comfortable and safer in difficult situations, to provide emotional security and to cope with internal struggles, life difficulties and stressors in a healthier way (Rozalski et al., 2010).

It is possible to see that researchers and children's literature writers who realize this importance have focused on the field (Özen, 2022; Temur & Ertem, 2019; Yakar, 2017; Bulut, 2018). In this study, it will be tried to reveal how the issue of migration in Turkey is viewed from the perspective of children's literature. The scope of the study is limited to the last ten years, as the years when Turkey started to be exposed to intense waves of migration are considered as the beginning. Research in the literature reveals that the field is still very untouched and there are very few scientific publications. Yakar (2017; p. 344) states in his study that Turkey has been exposed to an intense wave of migration in recent years, but there has not yet been a study on this issue in the field of children's literature. Although there have been some publications on the intersection of children's literature and migration, the number is quite small.

When we look at the international studies conducted in this field, it is noteworthy that the studies in which children's literature and migration issues intersect are quantitatively more than national studies. In the study conducted by Tomsic and Zbaracki (2022), which is one of the examples of these studies, 30 illustrated children's books based on personal narrative on refugees were analysed. The researchers, who tried to determine how the subject of immigration is handled in these books, stated that these books can be useful for understanding the concept of immigration. However, the researchers noted that the books perpetuate simplistic and stereotypical understandings of forced displacement. Hope (2022), in his doctoral thesis, characterised the concept of "children's literature about refugees" as a new genre of writing. In her study, she analysed Mary Hoffman's *The Colour of Home* (2002) and Beverley Naidoo's *The Other Side of Truth* (2000), which are refugee-themed books. The researcher traced the motivations and goals of the two authors by conducting a vertical case study for each book. The researcher tried to find out how the books were mediated by teachers in primary school and how refugee and non-refugee children read the books. Scirba et al. (2021) examined how the experiences of migrants trying to cross the US-Mexico border are portrayed in children's picture books and how Latin as an immigrant language is humanised in these books. The researchers emphasised that the analysed books can help to raise young readers' critical perspectives on migration and help young people to have an idea about their own world. Ramos (2014), in her study on migration in Portuguese contemporary children's literature, emphasised that in recent years Portugal has become a stopover point for immigrants seeking better living conditions. In her study, she analyzed children's books on the subject of migration and revealed how migration and liberation from colonialism were included in the books. Golmohammadi (2023), in her study, emphasized that children's literature is an effective genre in alleviating the feeling of 'placelessness' in children and in establishing the concepts of culture and belonging. She also demonstrated how place-based narratives can help students develop their identities and voices. In her study, Strekalova-Hughes (2019) conducted a critical analysis of 45 picture books featuring refugee protagonists and aimed to reveal how the escape processes of refugees are represented in early childhood picture books. As a result

of her study, she stated that there is a lack of diversity in representation in the books she examined, empathy is overly prioritized, and trauma is portrayed as an essential element in the migration process. When we look at the international studies where children's literature and migration intersect, it is seen that children's books on refugee/migration are generally analysed in terms of different qualities and the approach to the concepts of migration and refugees is revealed. The most important characteristic of these studies is that they go beyond merely determining the status quo, and they also express the deficiencies in the field and what needs to be done.

The reflections of the concepts of migration and immigration, which are emphasized in the international arena, in children's literature are also a matter to be considered in Turkey, where migration is a significant agenda item. For this reason, determining the approaches of children's literature researchers in our country to the subject of migration in detail will fill an important gap in the field. Determining researchers' approaches on this subject will help develop necessary strategies to support the adaptation process of migrant children, understand how cultural transition processes can be managed more effectively, find important clues on how to develop societal empathy and understanding, identify gaps and needs in the field, and lead to more effective and comprehensive research. In addition, the findings of the researchers can guide the preparation of programmes and materials to support the integration of migrant children into educational processes. This can contribute to a more inclusive and equitable education system. In line with these objectives, this study examines migration-themed scientific articles written by Turkish children's literature researchers. The studies were first evaluated methodologically, and then an attempt was made to reveal their perspectives on the phenomenon of migration. A methodological examination of the articles can make important contributions to improving the quality of research in this field by revealing the diversity and effectiveness of existing research methods, data collection tools and data analysis methods in the literature. Furthermore, identifying which topics are more researched in the literature and where there are gaps allows new and original areas of research to be explored. In this context, methodological reviews facilitate the integration of Turkish research into the global literature by revealing trends and gaps in both local and international literature, thereby enhancing scientific contributions in this field. For all these reasons, answers to the following questions were sought in order to reach a comprehensive conclusion in this study to determine the migration perspective of children's literature researchers:

1. What is the distribution of articles written on children's literature and migration/migrants in Turkey according to years?
2. What are the research methods used in these articles?
3. Which data collection tools were used in the articles?
4. What are the data analysis methods used in the articles?
5. What is the general approach to migration/migrant phenomenon in these articles?

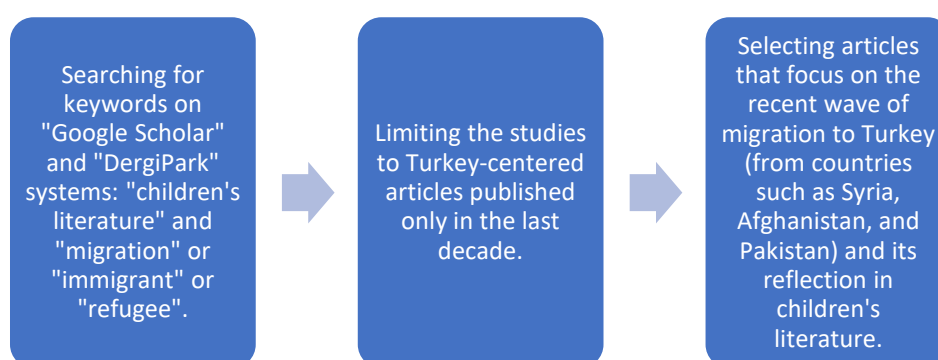
## **METHOD**

This study is qualitative research. Qualitative research was preferred in this study because it examines the problem in its own context, with an interpretive approach, and focuses on the meanings people attribute to events and phenomena while interpreting them (Baltacı, 2019; p.370). In this study, the data obtained through document analysis were analyzed using the descriptive analysis method, and attempts were made to elucidate the perspectives of children's literature researchers on the phenomenon of migration.

### **Data Collection Process**

The study covers the examination of scientific publications on children's literature and migration (immigrant, refugee). For this purpose, searches were conducted through Dergipark and Google Scholar systems with the keywords "children's literature", "migration", "immigrant", "refugee". Scientific publications were limited to articles and the last 10 years were included in the analysis. Attention was paid to ensure that the articles were Turkey-centered and focused on the recent migration issue. Because the focus of this study is how the intense wave of migration from countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, especially from Syria, has been handled by children's literature researchers in recent years. As a result of the searches and limitations made with the relevant keywords, a total of 22 articles were identified. The full texts of the articles were accessed through the Dergipark system.

**Figure 1**  
*Flowchart of the Data Collection Process*



### **Data Analysis**

A descriptive analysis approach was adopted to analyze the data. Descriptive analysis involves summarizing and interpreting the data according to previously determined themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011, p. 224). In this study, a framework for descriptive analysis was first created and themes were identified. These themes are the type of the article, the year of publication, the subject and title of the article, the methods used in the article, the units of analysis and the perspective of the articles on the phenomenon of migration. According to this thematic framework, the articles were entered into Excel files and then analyzed. At this stage, five randomly selected articles were analyzed by another field expert within the same thematic framework and the results were compared with the researcher's data. As a result of the comparison, the similarity was found to be 0.86 using the formula  $\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Consensus}}{\text{Consensus} + \text{Disagreement}}$  (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Thus, the researcher continued the analysis. The data obtained as a result of the analysis were interpreted and visualized with various graphs, tables and figures. The articles were numbered from 1 to 22 and named as "Article 1, Article 2, .....Article 22, etc." in order to provide ease of examination and to facilitate the quotations made in the study.

### **Ethic**

This study does not involve qualitative or quantitative approaches that require the collection of data from participants using survey, interview, focus group study, observation, experiment, or interview techniques; and does not involve the experimental or other scientific use of humans and animals (including materials/data), hence it does not require ethics committee approval.

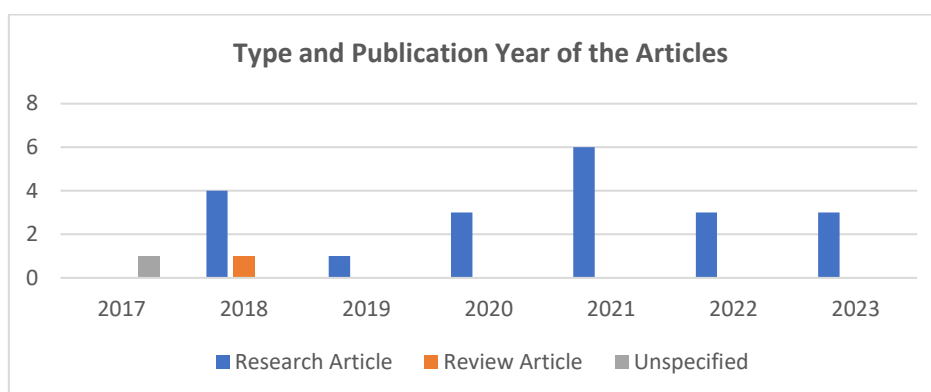
## FINDINGS

### Distribution of Articles by Type and Year of Publication

Within the scope of the research, a total of 22 articles written on the issue of "children's literature" and "migration" in the last ten years were reached. The distribution of articles according to genres and year of publication is shown in the graph below.

**Figure 2**

*Distribution of Articles by Type and Year of Publication*



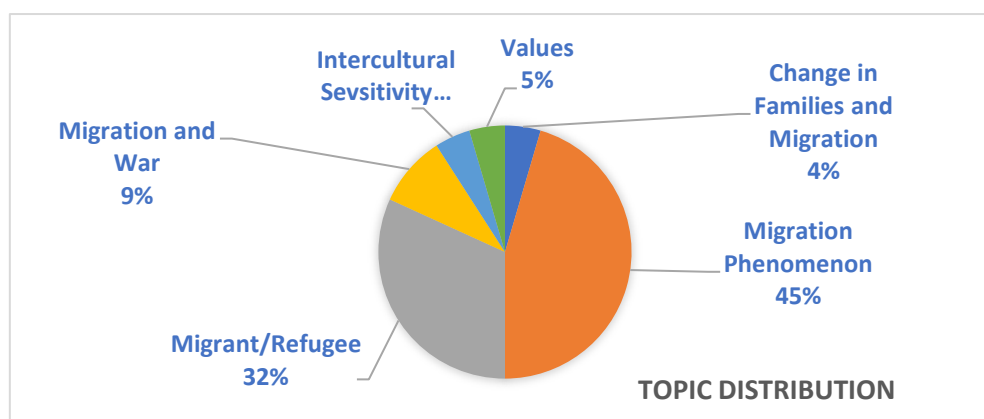
As can be seen in the graph, the majority of the articles are research articles. While the type of one article is registered in the system as a review article, the type of one article is not specified. It is seen that the most articles were written in 2021, followed by 2018 with four articles. It is understood that the first article was written in 2017. In 2023, although the data flow is still ongoing, it is seen that three articles were published as of August 2023.

### Distribution of Articles According to Topics

While determining the subjects of the articles, firstly their names and then their contents were analysed. Keywords were also taken into consideration while classifying the topics. Accordingly, although children's literature is a common subject in the articles analysed, it was seen that different subjects such as migration phenomenon, refugee, war, interculturalism, values were discussed. The following figure shows the distribution of the topics.

**Figure 3**

*Topic Distribution of the Articles*



When the contents of the articles are analysed, it is seen that the most common topic is "the way children's books deal with the phenomenon of migration". It is seen that the approach to the issue of

migration in refugee or migration-themed children's books, conflicts of refugee heroes in books, empathy elements in books, values, implicit meanings, acculturation strategies are examined from different angles. One of the analysed articles (Article 22) aimed to draw a pedagogical framework on how refugee-themed books should be used in lessons, while another article (Article 21) examined the only migration-themed children's magazine "Muyu" in Turkey. All of the remaining articles preferred to evaluate migration and refugee-themed children's books from different perspectives. The keywords, which give information about the content and focus of the articles, also show that there is a focus on "children's literature, children's books, illustrated children's books, migration, refugee/immigration". A word cloud study on the analysis of keywords is given below.

**Figure 4**  
*Featured Keywords in the Articles (wordart.com)*



### **Methods Used in the Articles**

The analysed articles are generally qualitative studies. Mixed method was used in one of the articles. It was determined that four of the articles did not include the method section at all, and there was no statement about the method used in the content of the articles. In the majority of the articles, it was seen that data collection techniques were mentioned without specifying which research model/pattern was used. In thirteen of the analysed articles, it was stated which research model was used. In two of the qualitative studies, it was stated that a case study model was used, one was a survey model and one was a descriptive model. In the article prepared with mixed method, semi-experimental model and case study model were used together.

"In this study, which aims to reveal the status of the concepts of divorce, death, migration-movement and remarriage-adoption in illustrated children's books covering the changes in the family, a descriptive model was used. The descriptive model is to present the existing situation as it is." (Article 2, p. 5)

Document analysis was generally preferred as the data collection method in the articles. In thirteen of the qualitative studies, it was stated that document analysis was used, while in four articles, no information was given about the data collection technique. In the mixed method study, it was stated that

attitude scales, interview forms, pre-test and post-tests were used. In the data analysis methods of the analysed articles, content analysis was found to be prominent. It was stated that content analysis was used in eight articles, descriptive analysis method was used in three articles, while no information was given in five articles. In the mixed study, it was stated that content analysis was used for qualitative data and a statistical data analysis package programme was used for quantitative data. The figure below shows the distribution of articles according to type, model, data collection and analysis method.

**Table 1**

*Distribution of Articles According to Types, Models and Methods*

	Category	Frequency
<b>Research Type</b>	Qualitative	17
	No Method Section	4
	Mixed	1
<b>Research Model</b>	Unspecified	13
	Case Study	2
	Descriptive Model	1
	Surway	1
	Semi-experimental Model + Case Study	1
<b>Data Collection Method</b>	Document Review	16
	Unspecified	1
	Attitude Scale + Observation Form + Pre-test +	1
	Post-test	
<b>Data Analysis Method</b>	Descriptive Analysis	3
	Content Analysis	8
	Unspecified	6
	Content Analysis + Statistical Analysis	1

### Data Sets of Articles/Books Analysed in Articles

It was observed that all but one of the articles analysed children's books on "refugee" and "migration". Fifty-eight different books constitute the data set in the analysed articles. One of these is a migration-themed children's magazine published once a year by the Directorate of Migration Management. The graph below shows the top fifteen books most frequently analysed in the articles and their examination rates.

**Table 2**

*Books Analysed in the Articles*

Books analysed in the articles	Number of articles in which it takes place
Taştan Adımlar [Stepping Stones]	9
Yolculuk [The Journey]	9
Tarık ve Beyaz Karga [Tarik and the White Crow]	6
Benim Adım Mülteci Değil [My Name is not Refugee]	6
Kayıktaki Çocuk [The Boy in the Boat]	6
Kuş Olsam Evime Uçsam	5
Evinden Uzakta [On the Run/On de Vlucht]	5
Hoş Geldiniz! [Wellcome!]	5
Juju Beni Unutma	4
Umut Sokağı Çocukları	4



---

Arkadaşım Korku [Me and My Fear]	4
Bot Hikâyesi [Story Boat]	4
Dönme Dolap	4
Halepli Zeynep	3

---

When the graph is analyzed, it is seen that the books "Stepping Stones" and "The Journey" are included in the data set in nine different articles. "Tarik and the White Crow", "My Name is Not Refugee" and "The Boy in the Boat" were followed by six articles each. Twenty-eight of the books analyzed in the articles were analyzed in only one article, while ten of them were analyzed in two articles each. Five of the books were included in the data set in three articles each.

### **The Perspective of the Analyzed Articles on the Concepts of Migration and Immigration**

In order to determine the perspective of the articles or to make a generalization, it would be correct to first look at the way in which they address the subject. In general, the articles analyzed children's books with the themes of migration and refugees and aimed to determine how the phenomenon of migration was covered and how and to what extent concepts such as empathy, culture, sensitivity and conflicts were included in the books. This shows us that the articles actually make a situation assessment. In order to understand how migration and refugee phenomena are viewed from the perspective of children's literature, it is necessary to evaluate and interpret the articles holistically with the introduction, findings, conclusion, discussion and recommendations sections. When the articles are analyzed, it is seen that the prominent perspective is focused on "empathy". The authors of the articles emphasize that children who are called migrants or asylum seekers are victims and that such books are necessary or an important tool for host children to empathize with them.

"It can be said that the analyzed book can make individuals who have experienced migration feel that they are not alone in overcoming their traumas, as well as meeting the needs of child readers who have not experienced migration, but who are curious about what migration is like and who are interested in the lives of individuals who have migrated." (Article 11)

"One of the best steps to eliminate racism, marginalization, xenophobia and segregation in societies is the quality children's books produced in this field. These books should be handled with an approach that encourages respect, equality, sharing and solidarity. In this way, negative feelings, thoughts and behaviors about migration and refugees will be eliminated." (Article 18)

Similarly, in a significant number of articles, it is stated that these books can develop sensitivity in children and foster positive emotions such as respect for differences, a culture of coexistence and avoidance of othering (Article 2, Article 3, Article 8, Article 14, Article 16, Article 17). It can be said that although the articles are generally neutral in their analysis, they develop a positive view of the phenomenon of migration with concepts such as empathy, sensitivity, respect for differences and coexistence. However, it is also seen that some articles emphasize that children's books should be more realistic and inclusive by getting rid of romantic approaches. It is pointed out that the books should not only aim to develop empathy in the host children but should also be used to familiarize migrant children with their new culture and people.

"In this context, future studies should be carried out in a way to address migration from a holistic perspective, taking into account gender equality, and in accordance with an inclusive perspective away from romantic approaches." (Article 13).

"Considering the supportive effects of books on migration and refugees on children, these books should be included in educational processes where migrant children have the opportunity to socialize and get to know their peers." (Article 20).

In the article on how migration-themed children's books can be used in educational settings, our perspective on the concepts of "migration" and "migrant" as a society and education system is questioned, and it is stated that the solution to the problem is to change our perception that defines refugees as "deficient" or "different".

"The use of discussion questions based on a norm-critical pedagogical framework when discussing storybooks, keeping the lens on the norms that create exclusion rather than on refugees, will provide educators with a solid basis for mutual integration." (Article 22).

In addition to articles focusing on empathy and sensitivity, there are also studies that look at the issue from both the migrant and host perspectives. What these articles have in common is that they emphasize that efforts for integration cannot be one-sided. It is emphasized that host children should not only develop empathy with migrant children but also take responsibility for solving the problems experienced by migrant children.

"Language-based acculturation can never be considered one-sided. Skills related to intercultural interaction such as sensing the influence of culture in behaviors based on the interaction of the target and source cultures in daily life, getting a general impression of the target and source cultures, and developing empathy skills should be developed." (Article 10)

"Based on the books analyzed, it is predicted that the heroes in children's books will contribute positively to the child's "dream and thinking processes" by structuring them effectively and taking responsibility for solving the conflicts they face." (Article 9)

## **CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION**

The aim of this study is to determine how Turkish children's literature researchers approach the phenomenon of migration, which has been one of the biggest agendas of the world and especially of Turkey in recent years. For this purpose, the articles in which children's literature and migration intersect in the last decade were analyzed and the general methodological approaches of the articles and their perspectives on the issue of migration were tried to be determined. As a result of the research, 22 articles written on children's literature and migration in the last ten years were found. The scope of the migration phenomenon in the study is the intense wave of migration that started after the civil unrest in Syria in 2011 and the waves of migration from countries such as Afghanistan. In statements made by official sources, the number of migrants in Turkey is expressed in millions. Regardless of the status given to migrants (migrants under temporary protection status, etc.), the meaning attributed to this group by the settled population, their social acceptance or rejection may not coincide with the official policies of the countries. Researchers who draw attention to this difference emphasize that policies that focus on "permanence" instead of "temporariness" should be developed (Çayır & İşler, 2023; 198). The fact that the phenomenon of migration, which is one of the most important agenda items of a country, is covered by many fields from education to health, from politics to literature, attracts the attention of academics working in that field and they carry out studies on the reflections of the migration issue on their fields (Gültaş and Balçık, 2018; Tuncel and Ekici, 2019; Şahin, 2020; Özenç and Kara, 2021; Karahan Yüksel and Yüksel, 2022). Considering that a large proportion of the migrant population is school-age children, again based on official data, it has been inevitable for children's literature to address the issue of migration. However, as can be seen from the findings of this study, this interest has been delayed. It was observed that the first article on the subject was published in 2017. This study, conducted six years after

the beginning of the migration wave, investigated how the phenomenon of migration was reflected in children's books (with the theme of migration). In a publication examining the issues faced by Syrian students in their educational life, despite being a more inclusive topic, it was determined that the first study was conducted in 2016 (Kara and Özenç, 2021, p. 267). This finding also supports the conclusion that research focusing on migration and its associated problems has been delayed. However, it is observed that research focusing on this issue began as early as 2011 worldwide (Dromgold, 2011; Carswell et al., 2011). As of August 2023, twenty-two articles on the subject were found, and it is not possible to talk about a remarkable and regular increase or decrease between the years in which these articles were published.

When the subject distribution of the analyzed articles is examined, it is seen that the majority of them (95%) investigate the existence of migration and migration-related concepts in migration-themed children's books. In the articles, topics such as "what are the elements of empathy in these books, what are the elements of conflict, is there text and picture harmony, what are the acculturation strategies, what values do they contain, what are the narrative elements, what are the implicit meanings" come to the fore. This can be interpreted as that academics working in the field prioritize situation determination. Similarly, Çayır and İşler (2023) criticize that academic studies on migration in the field of children's literature generally focus on story analysis. They also add that academics working in the field are only contented with examining migration-themed books from various angles and that no studies have been conducted on how to benefit from these books in education. Similarly, in the study conducted by Sevim (2020), it was concluded that children's literature studies are generally conducted in the form of analyzing a work (children's story or novel, etc.) regardless of the theme of migration. In this study, similar to the results of Çayır and İşler (2023) and Sevim (2020), it was determined that the studies on migration in the field were mostly based on book/story analysis.

It was observed that almost all of the analyzed articles were qualitative studies and one of them preferred mixed method. It was observed that some of the studies did not have a method section at all (18%), and in some studies, the research model was not specified or was expressed as document analysis (59%). It was seen that there were different definitions or nomenclature in the method section of the articles in question. It was determined that 77% of the articles used document analysis as a data collection technique. It was stated that 40% of the articles used content analysis and 13.63% used descriptive analysis as data analysis method. In 27.27% of the articles, it was seen that the data analysis method was not specified. This strengthens the thesis that there are some deficiencies in the methodology of the related studies. Another study that supports this view is the study conducted by Atalay Yakar (2019), which examines graduate theses in the field of children's literature in terms of methodology. Similar to our study, Atalay Yakar (2019) found that the majority of the theses either did not have a method section at all or there was incomplete information on the method, and stated that document analysis and content analysis were mostly used in the theses. In other studies (Demircan, 2007; Balcı, 2012; Yazıcı, 2013; Balta, 2019), the same problems were identified, which strengthened the impression that children's literature researchers in Turkey walk in the same corridors with each other. In this study, similar findings were found with the previous ones.

Within the scope of the study, it was observed that the majority of the articles examined to determine the view of children's literature researchers on the phenomenon of migration examined children's books with the theme of migration. The prominent books among these books, which constitute the data set of the articles, and how many different articles examined these books are given in Table 1 in the findings section. The common feature of the prominent books is that they focus on the experiences of refugee children before, during and after migration. In *Stepping Stones*, Syrian writer Nizar Ali Badr tells the story of a family's migration journey with their children. In the book *The Journey*, author

Francesca Sanna tells the story of a little girl's migration from an unsafe country to a safe country through the eyes of a little girl. Similarly, *Tarik and the White Crow* is about a boy's migration journey with his father. The book *My Name is Not Refugee* also tells the migration journey of a mother and her child. In *The Boy in the Boat*, there is a child who embarks on a migration journey alone and is looking for a warm home. Although a total of fifty-eight different books were analyzed in the articles, it was observed that the most frequently discussed books were the books about the difficulties experienced by refugee children and their families on the migration journey. Migration is not a one-sided phenomenon. Since this process concerns the settled society as well as immigrants, diversity of representation is a necessity in children's books dealing with this issue. However, in the articles analysed, it was observed that the researchers did not focus on the issue of diversity of representation in children's literature. Strelakova-Hughes (2019) also focuses on this issue in her study and emphasises the need for the voices of all actors and counter-narratives in children's books.

The word that summarizes the perspective of the analyzed articles on the phenomenon of migration is "empathy". The focus of the books analyzed in the articles is to create a sense of empathy in readers by describing the difficulties experienced by migrants. In the study conducted by Pereira et al. (2023), the key emotion that the wordless picturebook analyzed in the study wanted to reach throughout the narrative was characterized as "empathy". Likewise, although the subjects of the books examined in the analyzed articles differ, it is seen that the common theme is empathy. Many of the researchers focus on the consequences of migration rather than its causes and point to children's books as a way for the host society to accept and empathize with the migrant community and thus help migrant children overcome their trauma. Balta (2018) emphasizes that the purpose of writing children's books on migration and refugees is to understand refugee individuals. In his study, Savur (2019) states that children's books focus on the difficulties faced by individuals who migrate, while Bulut (2018) states that books should include the perspectives of not only migrant children but also host children. The researchers' perspectives on the phenomenon of migration in the analyzed articles can be interpreted as that there is a problem that needs to be accepted and that this problem can be solved when the children of the host society develop empathy towards refugee children. This interpretation is based on reading all the articles, their conclusions and recommendations and is open to criticism. Similarly, Strelakova-Hughes (2019, s. 37) states that the refugee-themed books she analysed in her study prioritise empathy and that trauma is presented as an inevitable part of refugee processes. The researcher emphasises that character traits such as knowledge, culture and resilience should be prioritised rather than the "trauma" attributed to refugees. Additionally, the researcher notes that while empathy may offer a short-term solution, it may be insufficient in the long run for educating critical-thinking citizens capable of preventing conflict.

However, many researchers emphasize that the main and biggest problem of immigrant children is not being excluded, but being excluded as a result of their inability to communicate because they do not speak Turkish (Buz, 2002; Yiğit, 2015; Çelik & Göre, 2021; Bakioğlu and Karamustafaoğlu, 2023). Similarly, Kara and Özenç (2020), in their research, examined the problems experienced by classroom teachers with migrant (Syrian) students and found that many problems stemmed from not knowing the language. The researchers stated that students who enroll in schools without learning Turkish experience many adaptation problems such as inability to communicate, low academic achievement, non-compliance with class rules, absenteeism, and disruption of classroom discipline. It is not coincidental that the majority of the books analyzed in the articles were written for host children. The problem of not knowing the language is one of the important elements of the refugee problem in Turkey (Hubing, 2011; Moralı, 2018; Yurdakul & Tok, 2018; Crul et al., 2019; Abohalaka & Yeşil, 2021). However, it was observed that this language problem was not addressed much in the articles examined, and how children's literature products can be used in solving the problem was not sufficiently emphasized.

Based on the results of this study, it can be said that children's literature researchers in Turkey should be more courageous in breaking their shells, and their only concern should be children in expressing problems and proposing solutions. At the very least, this space should be opened for them to have their say. In addition to examining children's literature products in terms of their relevance to children and their content, studies should also be carried out on the use of these products at the educational stage. Children's books can be useful in a wide range of areas, from cultural transmission to language development. This power of children's literature should be accessible to all children, migrant or not. One of the people who will answer the question of what kind of books should be designed for immigrant children to read is certainly the academics working on children's literature. They will support this process with their findings in the field and new proposals. Children's books written for refugee children can introduce the host culture to them. The process should be supported by children's literature products that bring refugee and host children together on a common ground and practical studies carried out for this purpose in order for both parties to take responsibility by getting rid of the effort to carry out the adaptation process unilaterally.

### **Ethics Committee Approval**

This study does not involve qualitative or quantitative approaches that require the collection of data from participants using survey, interview, focus group study, observation, experiment, or interview techniques; and does not involve the experimental or other scientific use of humans and animals (including materials/data), hence it does not require ethics committee approval.

### **Author Contributions**

Research Design (CRediT 1) Gökçe DEMİRYÜREK (%100)

Data Collection (CRediT 2) Gökçe DEMİRYÜREK (%100)

Research - Data Analysis - Validation (CRediT 3-4-6-11) Gökçe DEMİRYÜREK (%100)

Writing the Article (CRediT 12-13) Gökçe DEMİRYÜREK (%100)

Revision and Improvement of the Text (CRediT 14) Gökçe DEMİRYÜREK (%100)

### **Funding**

This study did not receive any financial support.

### **Conflict of Interest**

There is no conflict of interest.

### **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**

This paper supports the following items from the "Sustainable Development Goals":

Sustainable Development Goals: 4 Quality Education

Sustainable Development Goals: 10 Reducing Inequalities

Sustainable Development Goals: 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

## REFERENCES

- Abohalaka, R., & Yeşil, S. T. (2021). Determination of perceived language barriers according to Syrian refugees visiting two hospitals in Ankara. *Turkish Journal of Public Health*, 19(2), 92-105.
- Arslan, Ü. G., & Uslu, F. (2020). The difficulties of immigrant students who studying in high school in Turkey. *Journal of Necmettin Erbakan University Ereğli Faculty of Education*, 2(2), 203-216.19(2), 92-105.
- Atalay Yakar, F. (2019). "Examination of postgraduate theses in the field of children's literature in Turkey in terms of content and method." Doctoral Thesis, University of Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy.
- Bakioğlu, B., & Karamustafaoğlu, O. (2023). Difficulties encountered by science teachers with refugee students and proposed solutions. *Journal of Ahmet Keleşoğlu Education Faculty*, 5(2), 454-473.
- Balcı, A. (2012). A meta-analysis study on postgraduate theses prepared on children's literature in Turkey. *Mustafa Kemal University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, 9(17), 195- 206.
- Balta, E. E. (2019). A content analysis post-graduate studies in Turkey about children's literature (2011-2018 period) *OPUS-International Journal of Society Researches*, 10(17), 464-489.
- Baltacı, A. (2019). The qualitative research process: How to conduct a qualitative research? *Ahi Evran University Social Sciences Institute Journal*, 5(2), 368-388.
- Bulut, S. (2018). Çocuk edebiyatına sığınanlar: zorunlu göç öyküleri. *OPUS International Journal of Society Researches*, 8(14), 383-410.
- Buz, S. (2002). "The Problems Faced by the Asylum Seekers in Turkey in The Process of Waiting Period to Go to a Third Country." M. A. Thesis, Hacettepe University.
- Carswell, K., Blackburn, P., & Barker, C. (2011). The relationship between trauma, post-migration problems and the psychological well-being of refugees and asylum seekers. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 57(2), 107-119.
- Crul, M., Lelie, F., Biner, Ö., Bunar, N., Keskiner, E., Kokkali, İ., Shneider, J. & Shuayb, M. (2019). How the different policies and school systems affect the inclusion of Syrian refugee children in Sweden, Germany, Greece, Lebanon and Turkey. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7 (1), 1-20.
- Çavuşoğlu, H. (2007). Migrations from the lands of "Yugoslavia-Macedonia" to Turkey and their reasons. *Bilig* 41, 123-154.
- Çayır, K., & İşler, M. (2023). How can we use children's books about refugees in education: A proposal for a pedagogical framework. *REFLEKTİF Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(1), 197-213.
- Çelik, H. & Göre, Z. (2021). A review on children's literature works on the issues of migration and immigration. *International Journal of Languages' Education and Teaching*, 9(4), 64-75.
- Demircan, C. (2007). A case study about postgraduate studies on children's literature. *Sakarya University Journal of Education Faculty*, 13, 23-35.
- Dromgold, M. (2011). Understanding migration management and its impacts on Syrian refugees in Turkey. In *International Conference 'Guests and Aliens. Re-configuring New Mobilities After*.
- Flanagan, V. (2012). Gender studies. In David Rudd (Ed.), *Children Literature* (pp. 26-38). London:

Routledge.

Golmohammadi, Z. (2023). "Placelessness through children's literature". Doctoral Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Göç İdaresi Başkanlığı (2023). *Temporary Protection*. Accessed [August 16, 2023 form <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>

Gültaç, A., & Balçık, P. Y. (2018). Health policy for Syrian asylum seekers. *Sakarya Medical Journal*, 8(2), 193-204.

Hope, J. (2015). "A Well-Founded fear": Children's literature about refugees and its role in the primary classroom". Doctoral Thesis, Goldsmiths, University of London.

Hubing, G. (2011). "Language learning and transit refugees in Turkey: A case study on Afghans in Sivas." Doctoral Thesis, Bilkent University.

Kara, M., & Özenç, M. (2020). A multidimensional approach to the problems experienced by the classroom teachers with Syrian students in their classes. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 16(6), 184-201.

Kara, M., & Özenç, M. (2021). Trends of studies focusing on problems encountered in the education of Syrian immigrant students: A descriptive content analysis. *Journal of National Education*, 50(1), 249-279.

Kayahan Yüksel, D., & Yüksel, A. (2022). Migration and language acquisition: A review on current situation and education policies in Turkey. *RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies*, (30), 158-168.

Kuciapiński, M. J. (2014). The therapeutic and educational properties of fairytale therapy in the early stages of children's development. *Pedagogika Rodziny*, 4(2), 77-93.

MEB (2023). *National Education Statistics*. Accessed [August 16, 2023 from <https://www.meb.gov.tr/2022-2023-orgun-egitim-istatistikleri-aciklandi/haber/27552/tr#:~:text=%C3%96%C4%9Frencilerden%2015%20milyon%20839%20bin,801'i%20k%C4%B1z%20%C3%B6%C4%9Frencilerden%20olu%C5%9Ftu>

Moralı, G. (2018). The problems faced in teaching Turkish as a foreign language to Syrian refugee children. *OPUS International Journal of Society Researches*, 8(15), 1426-1449.

Özen, B. (2022). Illustrated books for children on traumatic topics such as war and migration. *İmgelem*, 6(11), 517-538.

Özenç, M., & Kara, M. (2021). Problems faced in the education of Syrian immigrant students and recommendations: The Turkey case. *Psycho-Educational Research Reviews*, 10(2), 142-162.

Paat, Y. F. (2013). Understanding motives for migration in working with immigrant families. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 23(4), 403-412.

Pereira, Í. S. P., Gil, M., & Bunzen, C. (2023). Wordless picturebooks as resources for the construction of the pedagogy of multiliteracies. The case of migrants, by Issa Watanabe. *Children's Literature in Education*, 54(2), 1-21.

Ramos, A. M. (2014). Crossing Borders: Migrations in Portuguese Contemporary Children's Literature. *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*, 20(1), 26-39.

Rozalski, M., Stewart, A., & Miller, J. (2010). *Bibliotherapy: Helping children cope with life's*

- challenges. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 47(1), 33-37.
- Savur, S. (2019). "The Refugee Problem Among Contemporary Turkish Children's and Youth Literature." M. A. Thesis, İstanbul 29 Mayıs University.
- Sciurba, K., Hernandez, S. J., & Barton, R. C. (2021). Humanizing the journey across the Mexico–US border: Multimodal analysis of children’s picture books and the restorying of Latinx (im) migration. *Children's Literature in Education*, 52, 411-429.
- Sevim, O. (2020). Trends in postgraduate studies on children's literature: A content analysis. *Türkiye Education Journal*, 5 (1), 124-144.
- Strekalova-Hughes, E. (2019). Unpacking refugee flight: Critical content analysis of picturebooks featuring refugee protagonists. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 21(2), 23-44.
- Şahin, H. (2020). The migration phenomenon, the education of refugee children and the integration process of Syrian refugee children to the Turkish education system. *International Journal of Turkish Literature Culture Education (TEKE)*, 9(1), 377-394.
- Temur, M., & Ertem, İ. S. (2019). Migration and immigration in children’s literature. *Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University Journal of ISS*, 9(2), 451-466.
- Tomsic, M., & Zbaracki, M. D. (2022). It’s all about the story: Personal narratives in children’s literature about refugees. *British Educational Research Journal*, 48(5), 859-877.
- Tuncel, G., & Ekici, S. (2019). Political impact of migration: The impact of Syrian immigrants to Turkey’s political life. *Individual and Society Journal of Social Science*, 9(2), 48-72.
- TÜİK (2023). *Statistical Data*. Accessed [August 8, 2023 from <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Kategori/GetKategori?p=Egitim,-Kultur,-Spor-ve-Turizm-105>
- Yakar, Y. M. (2017). Migration phenomenon in Turkish children’s literature. *Journal of Turkology Research*, (58), 339-353.
- Yazıcı, N. (2013). An analysis on the graduate studies on children’s literature in universities. *H. U. Journal of Education*, 28(1), 441-452.
- Yel, Ü. & Çetin, T. (2023). Investigation of mental structures of secondary school students regarding refugee concept. *Journal of Ahmet Keleşoğlu Education Faculty*, 5(3), 595-608.
- Yiğit, T. (2015). "The Education of Refugee Children in Turkey in the Context of Applications and Issues: The Sample of Kırşehir and Nevşehir." M. A. Thesis, Ahi Evran University.
- Yurdakul, A., & Tok, T. N. (2018). Migrant/refugee student from the view of teachers. *Adnan Menderes University Journal of Educational Sciences*, 9(2), 46-58.