The aim of the study is to evaluate the story titled: “Falaka” by Ömer Seyfettin (1884-1920) who plays an important role with his stories in Turkish Children’s Literature within the context of the pedagogy of John Locke. John Locke has emphasized that it is necessary to get rid of the pair, reward and punishment which is one of the traditional education methods in order to provide personal discipline in child and to form a good character in his work titled: “Thoughts on Education” (1693). Ömer Seyfettin has criticized the elements of beating and violence in child education in his story titled “Falaka”. In this regard, the purpose of the study is to present how the theme: child and education is discussed in the story of Ömer Seyfettin and to identify the overlapping aspects of the thoughts about child education with the pedagogy of John Locke. The research is a qualitative study which uses text analysis based on literature technique.

**Key words:** Child, childhood, child education, children's literature, John Locke, discipline, character development

**INTRODUCTION**

Ömer Seyfettin is one of the prominent story writers of Turkish literature, who was born in Gönen- Balıkesir in March, 11th, 1884. He was a soldier, poet and a hodja with strong literature ability at the same time. He is the founder of Turkish short story. Even though it has been nearly a century since he died, his works still appeal to readers of all ages in terms of theme, language and genre. By fictionalizing the topics he chose in his stories with humorous elements, he made readers from all strata take a lesson from the text.

When the literature related to the writer’s stories were reviewed, the following stories are of importance: Geçgel and Sarıcan (2011) studied the children and education theme; Sallabaş (2012) examined values and discussed their use in Turkish education while Dilidüzgün (2005) studied the theory of aesthetics of reception in “A pedagogic approach to Seyfettin’s Kaşağı”.

The story titled: “Falaka” was inspired by the childhood memories of the writer. According to many researchers who have studied the writer's stories, Ömer Seyfettin generally uses first person narrator in his children stories and this narrator exactly refers to himself (Enginün 1992; Duymaz, 1998; Andı, 1999).

“Falaka” is one of the stories that gives readers clues about the education system of Turkey, its place in the 19th century and criticizing the imperfect sides of the system at the same time. The school where the story takes place is a single-floor building and there is a large yard around the building. The school is surrounded by dwarf walls. There is the lectern of the hodja (madrasah; moslem theological school teacher) right across the door and a falanga is hung on the wall inside the classroom. The falanga that the story is named after is the most important decorative and functional element shaping the fiction of the story. The lexical meaning of falanga is the punishment instrument consisting of a thick stick and a rope attached to both ends. The stick is used for beating the soles as punishment while the rope is used for tightening the foot in a suitable way. The idiom of bastinado is expressed as the beating punishment applied to falanga.

The subject of punishment in education is one of the most important problems of the era and its mention in “Falaka” emphasized that punishment based on beating and scolding should not take place in an educational environment.

When the educational environment of that era told in the story is examined, it draws attention to the fact that

---

1 “Child in “Falaka” according to the pedagogy of John Locke” was presented at the 22nd Biennial Congress of IRSC by the author.
male and female students have separate education as required by Islamic beliefs. Since the classes are not divided according to the levels of the students, all students learn the alphabets and numbers of the Quran in the same class. When the hodja reads the letters all together in the class, it is clear that individual feedback is not provided.

This study aims to determine the views of Ömer Seyfettin on child education from the story titled “Falaka” based on the book by John Locke titled: “Thoughts on Education” in terms of the pedagogy of John Locke.

The following questions will be answered in the research: 1. How is the theme of child and education discussed in the work of Ömer Seyfettin titled Falaka? 2. Do the elements of child education in the work of Ömer Seyfettin's Falaka coincide with the pedagogy of John Locke? Which points do they unite with each other?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research is a qualitative study in which the technique of text analysis based on literature has been used to find answers to the sub problems. The basis of text analysis method is to direct the attention to literary texts and to investigate the elements composing the text and the relations of these elements with the main idea and with each other (Kaplan, 1986). In this context, the view of John Locke on child education has been evaluated.

RESULTS

The main subject of Falaka is that an old hodja makes himself a laughingstock as a result of his swearing redundantly and he is discharged because he punishes the students with falanga.

The time in the story is the childhood years of the narrator as he goes to school. The place is the school and the plot takes place mostly in the class and the yard of the school mostly.

The protagonist of the story is one of the students in the class and the hero, the narrator at the same time. He is one of the intelligent, smart and naughty students in the class. He manages to make the teacher a laughingstock with his talents. The person who enables a child's soul to develop hard in child education is an art requiring great skill and judgement. The philosopher objects to both as he explains that reward and punishment cannot provide personal discipline:

"Being on the wrong track about being soft on someone or hard in child education is an art requiring great skill and talent. The person who enables a child’s soul to be free and comfortable and hinders his mind and feelings from negative things is the one who empierces the education" (Locke, 2003; Part 50).

Based on this explanation, it is possible to infer that punishment does not provide discipline in educational institutions in “Falaka”. While the students repeat the letters or numbers that the hodja wants in chorus because of the fear of the falanga hung on the wall, they do not use their minds and cannot present their feelings.

Body layer and interpretation

One day, caimacam comes with the judge to inspect the school. When he wants the children to read individually, they fail because they are used to repetition in chorus. Caimacam does not like the situation and he notices the falanga on the wall. He calls the hodja outside and goes. The falanga is removed after this event. Caimacam prohibits the falanga. The children take advantage of the situation and go insane. Interpreting the situation with the thoughts of John Locke, he mentions that this method puts forth an education similar to that of slaves because punishment is applied to slaves in education. He continues;

“A child obeys or seems to as the shadow of the stick is on his head. However, he leans to the natural tendency even more
when the fear goes away and he expects that he will not be punished. Tendencies cannot be changed by oppression and force. On the contrary, it is improved and strengthened even more and it explodes with great strength after such an oppression" (Locke, 2003; Part 50)

The hodja who understands that he cannot deal with the students without beating does not listen to the caimacam rather, he brings the falanga and hides it behind the cushion. He beats the children even more than he used to. Therewith, forty children decide to take joint action against the hodja. They agree in the garden and start to yawn all together in the lesson. The hodja, seeing this yawns and falls asleep. The students taking advantage of the situation take the sniff (dusted tobacco product used as a pleasure-giving substance) on the lectern and sniff it in. All of them start to sneeze. The hodja hearing the voices wakes up and asks who does it. When all students say “we do not know”, he calls his assistant and beats the entire class bastinado.

While John Locke explains the reason why he is opposed to the method of punishing by beating, he expresses that this approach does not develop terminal behavior, on the contrary, it causes an opposite formation. Punishment does not repress the personal desires of the individual; on the contrary, it triggers them. The students in the story collaborate against the hodja because of the falanga punishment. All the class yawns and puts the hodja off. They cause the hodja to sleep in the lesson. As John Locke states, the element of punishment causes a change in the students focus instead of attracting their attention. On the other hand, it brings about the development of characters with slave psychology by standardization of individuals having different feelings in their own world.

The students starting to sneeze when they sniff the sniff of hodja wake the hodja up and they are sentenced to falanga punishment again. The students will become different persons considering themselves worthless and cannot make free choices on time, according to John Locke.

The hodja gets so angry that he swears by saying that he will bastinado and beat whoever yawns and sneezes. The narrator goes home and asks his mother what this swear means and learns that it is a huge swear and if you do not make it, it means that you are divorced. He tells what he learns to his friends and the children begin to swear in the same way as married men.

The narrator comes to class after lunch break one day. The hodja falls asleep on his lectern amidst roars in the class. The narrator silences his friends by making the shut-up sign. He walks silently and empties the open sniff box on the lectern into a fascicle. His friends think that they sniff the sniff in and come along but the narrator tells them that he has another plan. The hodja wakes up when the students laugh and sees that the box is empty. Although the hodja asks who takes it, they swear by saying “we don’t know” all together. The hodja says that the person taking the sniff will sneeze and reveal himself and he swears that he will bastinado the one who takes the sniff. The hodja waits angrily if one of them sneezes. The narrator pulls two sheets from the fascicle and twists them like a pipe under his lectern and puts the sniffs inside. When it starts to get dark, he asks for permission to take out the donkey to prepare it with his friend and goes out. They raise the donkey by kicking it. They place a saddle on the donkey and blow the sniff through the donkey’s nose when they understand that the class is about to go out.

While the hodja goes down the stairs, the donkey rears up and sneezes. Taking advantage of it, the narrator says that the donkey makes fun of the hodja and needs to be bastinado. The children start to shout “falanga”. The narrator is encouraged by the children and reminds the hodja of his swear and says that he will be divorced if he does not keep his word. The children shout “divorce” repeatedly and pass the falanga to the hodja hand to hand. The hodja who is stuck in a difficult situation because of his swear orders to get the donkey down and starts to beat it by putting its foot in the falanga.

This part of the study is an indicator of how children think logically and trick adults when they use their intelligence. Locke says “I am amazed when I see the ability of children to think logically when they communicate. Children think extremely rationally even when they first learn to speak” (Locke, 2003; part 81). This expression sheds light on educators after families. The story character acting rationally saves the whole class from the falanga and causes the hodja to harm his beloved donkey.

Conclusion Layer and Interpretation

While all children shout and have fun with the wallowing of the donkey, one of them shouts “Caimacam!” The caimacam coming for the inspection asks the hodja what he does. The hodja tries to explain the situation befuddledly but he can’t. The caimacam, meeting the children laughing and sneezing, leaves angrily by taking the hodja. From that day on, the children do not see the hodja and falanga. Thereafter, whenever the narrator sees someone sneezing, he remembers the joke he did and the hodja fired because of him and he feels guilty.

At the end of the story, it is embodied that education given with the traditional punishment method does not contribute to the development of the individual based on the pedagogy of John Locke. Although, the students feel the fear of beating and violence, it becomes like a play for them because they are used to it. John Locke puts forth that it is important to make the individual feel regard and shame sensation instead of reward and punishment. While the child’s appreciation and respect reinforces that behavior, the same child thinks that he will be denigrated and not paid attention because of his bad habits. Punishing the body by beating (falanga, beating, etc.) or rewarding the body with pleasure (the food he likes) are not suitable education tools to raise wise, good and honest people. Locke also explains that the individual can obtain terminal behavior without requiring punishment and reward if he feels the acts like being respected, being appreciated, being
ashamed and being disgraced at younger ages.

**DISCUSSION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Consequently, whereas the research presents the mistakes in child education in our country during the 19th century, the reflection of the critical view on the story behind the humorous narration of Ömer Seyfettin is very effective. While the writer criticizes the rote learning based on the Arabian alphabet, he also finds the hodja giving religious education insufficient. He criticizes the hodja due to the irregularity of their appearance (rolling up their sleeves) and bringing harmful substances to classes (sniff-tobacco). He makes a reference to the physical inability of the elementary school buildings. However, he makes the greatest criticism on the punishment method used to educate children and he fictionalizes the story on the falanga. Accordingly, the writer agrees with the pedagogy of John Locke on the point of criticizing the punishment method in child education.

John Locke, a British philosopher who lived in the 17th century, believed that child-based education considering the development level of a child in education is effective and defends the importance of using an entertaining teaching method in education. According to the theory of Tabula Rasa which is the fundamental view of John Locke about education, the mind of a human is like an empty plate when he is born. We gain experience and knowledge thanks to the relation with the environment after birth. Environmental conditions play a great role in the development of a human. The purpose of education is to prepare a good environment for a child and enable him to have good experiences. Locke, who affected early childhood education as well as many areas of education and psychology with his views, is opposed to the punishment method in education. Within the scope of the research, the perspective of the philosopher on punishment in child education was embodied in the fictional text titled “Falaka” and it has been shown that the thoughts of John Locke about education have a universal qualification and shed more light on today’s education.

**REFERENCES**