

Ethnopedagogical Analysis of Talip Apaydın's novel Toprağa Basınca

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ABSTRACT:

Ethnopedagogy is a scientific field that investigates how ethnic groups and nations transfer their material and spiritual knowledge to younger generations by utilizing the accumulation of centuries. As a relatively new discipline compared to other branches of social and educational sciences, research on ethnopedagogy is limited. This study aims to contribute to the developing research on ethnopedagogy and provide guidance for future research. The Village Institutes in Turkey, which were decided to be opened on April 17, 1940 and closed on November 27, 1947, have an important place in the history of Turkish education. These institutes trained thousands of teachers with knowledge in almost every field. Talip Apaydın, who grew up in one of these institutes and was an important writer, generally focused on village life and children in his works like other Village Institute writers. *Toprağa Basınca* is a children's novel that tells the story of a village teacher and his little brother in a small village in Anatolia. In the study, the novel was analyzed through the lens of ethnopedagogy. Document analysis, a qualitative research method, was used in the study and the findings were analyzed through content analysis. The study analyzed the various aspects of folk culture as portrayed in "*Toprağa Basınca*", including children's games and toys, oral culture products such as fairy tales, proverbs and idioms, culinary culture, hospitality and rites of passage (e.g. birth, circumcision, military, marriage, death) and the use of nicknames. These elements are critically analyzed from an ethnopedagogical perspective.

KEYWORDS:

Education, ethnopedagogy, folklore, Talip Apaydın, Toprağa Basınca.

Introduction:

Talip Apaydın was born in 1926 in Polatlı, Ankara, to a poor family. Apaydın, who helped his family in agriculture and animal husbandry in the village until he reached school age, started going to school unofficially with his father's insistence on the teacher, despite his young age. Despite this, Apaydın makes more progress than many other students in his class and learns to read and write. He starts to do some math operations. Seeing this progress, the teacher enrolls Apaydın in the second grade the following year. For secondary school, he goes to a boarding school for village children in Ankara's Beypazarı district, but fails to pass the exam. His father is told that the Çifteler Village Institute will be opened and he should enroll Talip there. However, his father did not have the money for the school. Talip and his father return to the village. Apaydın receives good news from Çifteler Village Institute. Although he lacks money, he goes to school. His father says that he will pay the rest of the money later and he is accepted and thus enrolled in the school. In 1943, after graduating from this school, he attended the Higher Village Institute in Hasanoğlu district. After studying there for three years, he graduated in 1946. In the same year, Apaydın is appointed as a teacher at the Cılavuz Village Institute in Kars. Here he teaches Turkish and music. In the same years, he starts writing poems and stories in various magazines. Then he starts publishing books. He received various awards for these books. He marries Halise, a village teacher like himself. He taught in various parts of Anatolia with his wife Halise. In 1976, he retired. In 1978, he was offered a consultancy position

by the Ministry of National Education, which he accepted. In 1979, he resigned from this position. He continued to write books throughout his life. On September 27, 2014, he died in Ankara [1].

Talip Apaydın's *Toprağa Basınca* was first published in 1966 by Arkin Publications in Istanbul. It is published in 192 pages. This work is a children's novel. This work was deemed worthy of the third prize in the “Doğan Kardeş Children's Novels Competition” organized by Arkin Publishing for the first time in Turkey. When the 1966 edition of the book was finished, the same book was published again in 2022 under the label Cumhuriyet Kitapları. This study is based on the work published in the said year [1].

In the novel *Toprağa Basınca*, the story follows young Erdal, who is of primary school age, and his sister İnci, who has just been appointed as a new teacher at a village school. Erdal and İnci's mother passed away when Erdal was only a year old. Their father works as a civil servant in a public institution. The father and his two children live together in a large city. After İnci graduates from teacher training school and is assigned to a village school in Anatolia, their father does not want to send her alone. So, he sends Erdal along with her, believing that she might struggle being on her own. He hopes that Erdal will attend the school where his sister will teach and that they will be companions for each other. In the novel, the experiences of these two siblings in the village they move to and the daily life of the village are portrayed in vivid detail. As a children's novel, this work aims to offer readers not only the adventure of these two characters in the village but also an educational approach inspired by ethnopedagogy, which is often defined today as traditional education.

1) Methods and Methodology:

Qualitative research is a method that is inquisitive and interpretive about the problem it examines and strives to understand the form of the problem in its natural environment [2], [3]. Qualitative research, which uses qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis to solve a problem, refers to a subjective-interpretive process for perceiving previously known or unrecognized problems and realistically addressing natural phenomena related to the problem [4]. In qualitative research, qualitative data collection techniques such as observation, interview, document and discourse analysis are generally used. In addition, qualitative research, which is based on in-depth examination of human perceptions and events in social reality and natural environment, has a holistic perspective that combines different disciplines [5], [6]. In addition, qualitative research examines the problematic in its own context with an interpretive approach; while interpreting events and phenomena, it focuses on the meanings that people attribute to them. The exploratory mental processes of a researcher who turns to qualitative research become functional [7] and perceives different relations between events with a sharper perception [8]. Although the process of discovery is employed in all research methods, it is essential in qualitative research to sharpen the details of the event and phenomenon under investigation. In addition, qualitative research is largely subjective and can be influenced by the personal views of the researcher, as it involves a researcher-oriented investigation process [9], [10]. For many years, document analysis has been perceived as a research method monopolized by disciplines such as anthropology, librarianship and history, but it has also been used in social sciences as an additional method alongside methods such as surveys, interviews and observation [11]. Document analysis is a series of processes that take place in the process of analyzing and evaluating printed and electronic (computer-based and internet-accessible) materials [12]. Document analysis is collecting, reviewing, interrogating and analyzing various forms of written text as a source of primary research data [13]. Document analysis is one of the most valuable sources of information for qualitative researchers [14]. By looking at documents, a lot of detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation can be obtained [15].

Content analysis constitutes one of the important methods of research techniques in social sciences. Since the 1980s, content analysis has been intensively incorporated into research methods in psychology and social sciences, while it has been frequently used in journalism and communication studies. The content analysis technique is a technique that has emerged for both qualitative and quantitative research on the content of mass media. This technique is defined as a systematic, methodological and objective method used to identify, classify and interpret the basic components of text/discourse content; it is carried out to analyze the existence of categories/codes systematically determined in a text or visual [16].

The following questions constitute the research questions of the study.

1. Are children's games important for ethnopedagogy? What findings were made about children's games in the children's novel “Toprağa Basınca”? How did it contribute to the traditional education of children?
2. Is it important for fairy tales and other oral culture products? What determinations are made about fairy tales and other oral culture products in the children's novel “Toprağa Basınca”? How did it contribute to the traditional education of children?
3. Are nicknames important for ethnopedagogy? What findings were made about nicknames in the children's novel “Toprağa Basınca”? How did it contribute to the traditional education of children?

4. Are hospitality and hospitality important for ethnopedagogy? What findings were made about hospitality and hospitality in the children's novel "Toprağa Basınca"? How did it contribute to the traditional education of children?
5. Is sharing and gift-giving important for ethnopedagogy? What findings were made about sharing and gift-giving in the children's novel "Toprağa Basınca"? How did it contribute to the traditional education of children?
6. Is clothing and dress important for ethnopedagogy? What observations were made about clothing and dress in the children's novel "When I stepped on the soil"? How did it contribute to the traditional education of children?
7. Are traditional sports important for ethnopedagogy? What findings were made about traditional sports in the children's novel "Toprağa Basınca"? How did it contribute to the traditional education of children?
8. Are rites of passage (birth, circumcision, military service, marriage and death) important for ethnopedagogy? What observations were made about rites of passage in the children's novel "Toprağa Basınca"? How did it contribute to the traditional education of children?
9. Is ethnobotany important for ethnopedagogy? What observations are made about ethnobotany in the children's novel "Toprağa Basınca"? How did it contribute to the traditional education of children?

3) Literature Review/ Case Presentation:

Many definitions have been proposed for ethnopedagogy. Volkov the founder of ethnopedagogy, defines it as "a field of science that examines the spiritual, ethical, and aesthetic aspects of the values that have existed within a people, ethnic group, tribe, or family since the past; the control and evaluation of manners and etiquette; moral motifs within ethnic groups; the evaluation and control of these among different ethnic groups; and attitudes toward nature." [17] Alimbekov, who conducts studies in the field of ethnopedagogy, defines it as "a body of knowledge, experience, and methodology encompassing educational thought and experiences reflected in sources such as oral and written novels, traditions, customs, styles of dress, eating habits, rites of passage, music and art lessons, oral cultural products, games and toys, methods, and materials, relevant to all people without distinction of characteristics such as gender and age" [18]. According to Alimbekov, ethnopedagogy involves both the systematic study of ideas and experiences related to folk education, which people have gradually developed in their daily lives from past to present, reflected in their oral and written novels and traditions, and the exploration of effective ways to integrate the richness of folk education into modern educational systems and curricula, along with proposing suggestions on this matter. [19]. Akramova, on the other hand, views ethnopedagogy as national ideology education. [20]. The most comprehensive definition of ethnopedagogy is given by Palatkina. Palatkina defines ethnopedagogy as "the societal influence and interaction that gathers and systematizes all the wisdom of the people, encompassing empirical knowledge, social norms, and values that shape an individual's identity through public knowledge related to the education and upbringing of younger generations, religious teachings, oral cultural products, games, toys, family and social lifestyles, traditions, and philosophical-ethnic, and specifically pedagogical, ideas and views, all rooted in the historical-cultural experiences that contribute to the individual's formation" [21].

In Turkish culture, ethnopedagogy reflects a strong educational tradition that has continued for centuries. Traditional life, oral cultural products, and written novels have played a significant role in children's education. Oral cultural products, which begin with a person's birth, appear throughout various life rituals. Additionally, traditional children's games, folk literature, and rites of passage are other important elements contributing to child development.

Another significant aspect of Turkish ethnopedagogy is traditional children's games. The concept of play has been defined in various ways in Turkish and other literatures. Kantarcıoğlu defines play as "an activity that supports a child's physical, mental, and moral development, provides pleasure and joy, and can be done individually or in groups." [22]. Dönmez describes play as "an activity that may or may not have a specific purpose, may follow rules or be rule-free, but in every case is an activity that the child willingly and joyfully engages in. It forms the foundation for physical, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and social development, is part of real life, and serves as the most effective learning process for the child." [23]. With these characteristics, games play a crucial role in child development. Traditional children's games, in particular, are valuable from an ethnopedagogical perspective as they carry cultural codes.

When we analyze the novel *Toprağa Basınca*, we can see that traditional children's games are highlighted. For instance, "The yard was full of dust and dirt. Wood was piled up in one corner. Chickens were scratching near the door. Abdul came pulling a large melon rind tied to a string. He was calling out 'danaaaaaa' (making sounds), mimicking the sound of an ox-cart. I had never seen a toy like this" [1]. This excerpt shows how a child living in a rural area, with no access to store-bought toys, uses available materials—like food scraps—to make a toy and play with it. Although it reflects a lack of resources, the core philosophy here is the children's creativity in making their own toys and playing with them.

In modern societies, children in cities play with ready-made toys and may even become picky with their toys, while children in rural, traditional settings have the opportunity to create their own. This experience also involves an experimental

process, as they load soil onto their melon-rind “truck” or “tractor,” imitating real-life tasks. The novel captures this with the line, *“Let’s haul some wheat,” he said. “This can be the threshing floor. And that’s the house. We started pulling soil from the wall to the front of the door”* [1].

In later parts of the novel, another children’s game is described, resembling the modern playground activity of sliding. The lack of a slide in village life doesn’t mean much to the children living there. Climbing to the top of a pile of hay bales and sliding down is even more enjoyable for them than sliding on a modern slide. This scene is depicted in the novel as follows: *“Further ahead, close to the village, there was a large haystack. The children had climbed on top and were sliding down. It must have been a lot of fun. They were laughing and joking with each other. I recognized one of them—it was the kid who had teased us yesterday. When he saw us, he started shouting ‘city cat, city cat.’ Then he let himself go, rolling down from the top. Another kid did the same. They were having a great time”* [1]. This game reflects how rural livelihoods shape children’s games. In the absence of modern playground equipment, children create their own enjoyable experiences using their surroundings, embodying the spirit of rural playfulness and resourcefulness.

Especially in rural areas and villages, children make or have toys made from objects they find in nature. These handmade toys often reflect the local lifestyle. In the novel, since the families of village children are involved in livestock farming, the children’s games revolve around livestock or have themes related to farming and animal husbandry. Another game is described as follows: *“Muhsin said, ‘I have an ox-cart. You’d be amazed if you saw it! My father made it. Come, let’s play.’ The yard was full of dust and dirt. Wood was piled in one corner, and chickens were scratching in front of the door. Abdul came pulling a large melon rind tied to a string, imitating the sound of an ox-cart. I had never seen a toy like this before. ‘Let’s haul some wheat,’ he said. ‘This can be the threshing floor. And this will be the house.’ We started pulling soil from the wall to the door. ‘You be the ox,’ he said to me. ‘Pull the cart.’ At first, I found it strange. He had tied a stick to the end of the string. I had no choice but to hold the end of the stick. We started moving in circles. He kept making high and low sounds, like the creaking of an ox-cart. The game became more exciting. I would slowly pull the cart loaded by Muhsin to a shaded spot near the door and unload it. Little by little, we filled the entire area with soil”* [1]. This children’s game, like the previously described ones, reflects the realities of poverty and the rural environment of village life. What is significant here is not the variety of toys available to children, as seen in modern life, but rather the fact that they create their own toys and are influenced by their geographical and sociocultural surroundings. This aspect highlights their resourcefulness and creativity, showcasing how play is shaped by the local context and the children’s experiences. In doing so, it emphasizes the connection between play, culture, and the daily lives of children in rural settings, illustrating how they adapt to their environment and find joy in simplicity.

In the novel, in addition to these games, “gagı oyunu” (the game of beak), “aşık oyunu” (the game of aşık), and “esir alma oyunu” (the game of capture) are also described in detail. Like the other games, these are traditional children’s games that reflect the cultural heritage of the community.

In ethnopedagogy studies, one of the most important materials is folklore products, particularly oral cultural products such as fairy tales. Fairy tales, in particular, hold great significance in the traditional education of children.

Fairy tales, epics, legends, proverbs, idioms, etc. are important materials in child development and traditional child rearing. Fairy tales are defined in the Turkish Dictionary as *“A literary genre that is generally created by the people, based on imagination, lives in oral tradition, and tells the extraordinary events experienced by mostly people, animals, witches, genies, giants, fairies, etc.”* [24]. However, fairy tales have an important place in child development and education, especially because they contain messages rather than being a literary text. William R. Bascom, in his article titled “Four Functions of Folklore”, includes the following view of M.J. Herskovitz: *“A significant number of fairy tales have more meaning than the literary self-expression of the people. In fact, when folk tales are systematically examined in the real sense, they are the ethnography of a people, providing in-depth information about their own way of life”* [25].

O. F. Raum comments: *“Another function of folk tales is the role they play in education, especially in illiterate societies. The importance of many forms of folk tales as pedagogical tools has been documented in many parts of the world, but perhaps the most comprehensive on this subject is Raum’s study of education among the Chagas of East Africa. Here monster tales, like our ghoul stories, are used to discipline young children, and lullabies are sung to make them well-behaved children. Folk tales containing moral points are then presented to inculcate general attitudes and principles such as industry and filial piety, and to despise laziness, rebelliousness and snobbery.”* [25].

In the novel, a tale called “The Giant’s Tale” (“Dev Masalı”) is told. The tale is told by Grandma Hüri, an old woman living in the village. In Turkish society, tales are told especially by grandmothers and mothers. For this reason, those who tell tales are called fairy tale mothers or fairy tale midwives/grandmothers. The Giant’s Tale told in the novel is as follows: *Once upon a time, in a country with abundant water, there was a fountain that flowed with a roar. Its water was as cold as ice. Everyone who came would drink, everyone who went would drink and pray for the one who had it built. The water in the fountain was so abundant that the excess water would irrigate the vineyards and gardens. Red-cheeked apples,*

yellow quinces, purple plums would all grow with the water of this fountain. There would be tomatoes, eggplants, peppers. There was also a wide meadow underneath. Sheep, lambs, cows, and calves would spread out. The cows would lie down in the water of this fountain and cool off. Honey would flow from everywhere. The deer of the mountains and the birds of the hills would all drink from the water of this fountain. This country was a paradise, people would always smile. Folk songs would be heard from the houses, bards would play the lute. One morning they woke up and saw that the fountain had dried up at the bottom. No water would flow. Everyone was shocked. The wise men asked and investigated, bent down and looked inside, they could not find any reason. People were left without water. The vineyards and gardens dried up. The meadows turned yellow. All the animals started to die. They saw that the country would turn into a desert, everyone would die and go away. They said, "Let's understand why this happened." They started to dig over the fountain. They dug and dug... They dug a huge hole. Now, time understood everything. A seven-headed giant emerged. He put his mouth on the fountain's source and drank all the water that came out. He would not let a drop spill to the ground. What could people do? They ran back out of fear. The giant whistled. Stop, he said. Do you want water? If you bring me a girl child every day, I will give you as much water as you can drink. But how is that possible? how can we find a girl child every day? You can't get a drop of water from here otherwise, he said. Go away. What could the poor people do? They were helpless. They started bringing a girl child from the village every day and getting drinking water in return. But how long can this go on? Soon there were no girls left in the village. It was the turn of the daughter of the sultan of that country. The sultan's daughter was a very beautiful girl with golden hair, pearl teeth. She was the only one of her mother and father. For her, she was raised as delicate as a potted flower. The whole country wept because it was her turn. How that girl would be given to the giant, how that girl would be killed, became a problem for everyone. The elders of the country gathered and started to think of solutions. The young people gathered and made preparations. They realized that there was no other choice but to fight the giant. The sultan declared: I will marry my daughter to whoever kills the giant. I will give him my treasures. The young men sharpened their swords and rehearsed until evening. A ruthless battle began at night. When the giant slapped its tail on the ground, earthquakes occurred. When it opened its mouth and blew, the place was ablaze. When it shouted, the countryside and plains groaned. Everyone was trembling with fear. However, no one died. The giant could not kill anyone. He was only frightening them. A Keloğlan was the first to sense this. He said, "This giant is a huge lie. It has nothing but its grandeur. I can even kill him myself. Oh, they said, don't do it. It's not like you think. Don't come near him. I will come near him, he said. You will see, and I will kill him. He drew his sword and walked into the noise and flames. Those places were covered in straw and dust. As if the apocalypse had broken out. Stones were rolled, trees were uprooted from their roots. Deep voices were heard, but after a while the situation changed. The voices diminished, the dust and soil settled to the ground, the flames receded. They ran to him and saw Keloğlan standing with a sword in one hand, stepping on the giant's throat. Keloğlan! they shouted. How did this happen? Is it over? It's over, he said. I killed him with one blow of the sword. We had been afraid for nothing until today. This giant was a huge nothing. The people rejoiced and rejoiced. They played drums and zurna, they held feasts. They played for forty days, they danced for forty days. The sultan of the country gave his daughter to Keloğlan. The wedding party had started. But Keloğlan said: I am a poor shepherd. I am not worthy of the sultan's daughter. What I did is not that important. It is enough for me that my sheep and cattle have water. I don't want anything else. Leave me alone. I'll continue my job as before. No one could change his decision. In fact, the most courageous people are like this. They get tired of being valued too much, they don't ask anyone for anything in return for what they've done. The waters of the fountain started to flow again. The vineyards and gardens were green. The country returned to its old state [1].

With this tale, the importance of water and the need to use it carefully is explained to the children. It is also trying to explain that not everything we see is how it seems from the outside, and that the things we exaggerate are actually simple and things we can overcome. At the end of the tale, it is emphasized that we should not expect anything in return for everything we do.

Although the novel does not provide a full fairy tale text, it does briefly refer to a tale about a miller. The fairy tale is presented as follows: "I remembered a tale about a miller. One night, spirits filled the mill, and they began to poke the miller from all sides. The miller didn't know where to look; as he glanced from one side to the other, he lost his mind. The fault lay in the spilled wheat and flour on the ground" [1]. The main message intended for the reader in this tale is the sanctity of wheat and bread. In Turkish society, bread and wheat are considered fundamental foods and are attributed with great sanctity. The narrative seeks to convey to children reading the novel the importance and sacredness of bread, highlighting its vital role in daily life and cultural practices. This emphasis serves not only to teach children about food but also to instill respect and appreciation for essential resources in their culture.

Another oral cultural product featured in the novel is folk poetry. One of the characters, a child named Ali, walks to his destination while singing a folk song. The lyrics of the song are as follows:

*"Biri al biri beyaz (One red, one white)
Bir dalda iki kiraz (Two cherries on a branch)
Kavuştur bizi bu yaz (Reunite us this summer)
Allah kurban olayım"(Allah let me be a sacrifice) [1]*

This folk song reflects the rich tradition of oral poetry in Turkish culture, often characterized by themes of love, nature, and longing. The act of singing while walking not only illustrates Ali's connection to his surroundings but also highlights the role of folk songs in cultural expression and community identity. Through such traditions, children are introduced to their cultural heritage, fostering a sense of belonging and continuity.

Poetic texts also have great importance in child development and education. Poetry texts, which especially support children's linguistic development, also provide children with the opportunity for joy and entertainment. Since these poetic texts are easier to memorize and retain due to their melody, children learn these texts quickly and can share them in various environments for both entertainment and different purposes.

Erdal, like Ali and other village children, sings folk songs while grazing the animals. Erdal's folk song is as follows:

"Aman Ayşem, yaman Ayşem (Oh Ayşem, good Ayşem)

*Dağlar başı duman Ayşem (Mountains are full of smoke Ayşem)
Dağlar başı duman olsa (If mountains were full of smoke)
Seni burada komam Ayşem"(I won't leave you here Ayşem) [1].*

In almost every part of Turkey, families with a few animals in villages hand over the animals to primary or secondary school children and ask them to graze them. The aim here is to give the children a workload as well as to ensure that they gain a sense of responsibility. Bringing home both themselves and the animals they took with them safe in the evening is an indication that the child has a sense of responsibility, first towards themselves and then towards their family.

Another subject that will be examined from an ethnopedagogical perspective in the novel and that has taken shape in the oral environment and continued with different names for centuries is the subject of nicknames. Nickname is defined in the Turkish Dictionary as *"A name given to a person or a family, separate from the person's own name, originating from a characteristic of that person or that family"* [24]. The use of nicknames, which are seen in almost every society and culture, to distinguish people with the same name from each other or to distinguish related families from each other has continued from the earliest periods to the present day. Although this function has largely disappeared after the Surname Law in Turkey, it still continues in rural areas today. In addition to these functions, nicknames also have many other functions, primarily sociocultural and social psychological [26].

In the novel, the story of a boy named Rıfat getting the nickname Kanuncu is told as follows: *"There was a boy named Rıfat. We called him Little Rıfat. He was a small boy with squirrel teeth. He was very cute. He would raise his finger every now and then and shake his hand in the air. One day in the Natural Sciences class, he said about Kanuni Sultan Süleyman that Kanuni Sultan Sütlüman (Suleyman) was as tall as a minaret, my father had seen his grave. Teacher Mustafa stopped and looked. Which mistake should he correct? Rıfat, he said. Now you've made a minaret-high mistake! We fell down on the ground laughing. From that day on, we named the boy Kanuncu Rıfat."* In the novel, the story of a girl named Ayşe getting the nickname "Turus" is told as follows: *"There was also Ayşe in our class. She was one of those village girls we know, with her braided hair parted in two and her pale cotton trousers. But she had a handwriting as sweet as pearl. She would bend her head down and stick her tongue out and write, you would think she was writing a book. But she could not say the Taurus Mountains. She would say the Turus Mountains. Her name remained "Turus Aysha."* [1]. In addition to these nicknames, the novel also mentions Tombak Ahmet and Kinnap Halil. Nicknames used in the past and in rural life continue to a large extent in today's modern world. Especially in schools, children give each other different nicknames (names). These nicknames arise as a result of an event, from the surname, from the country of origin, etc. A different version of the nicknames has begun to be used electronically in social media with the expression "nickname" and has begun to be used frequently and sometimes compulsorily among these young people in social media environments. As can be seen, nicknames have maintained their existence in every period of life from traditional life to modern life, and children have given each other nicknames as a result of the events they have experienced, even at a young age. This is a situation that the word has emerged from the cultural environment. The most important thing to be careful about nicknames is not to hurt people when giving them nicknames. The person or child who is given a nickname may be uncomfortable with it. When giving a nickname to someone from this plane, it is necessary to pay attention to whether this nickname will upset the event. We should not give others nicknames that we do not want to be put on ourselves.

Another subject examined ethnopedagogically in the novel is the concept of hospitality and guesthouses. Caravanserais, inns, and guesthouses were built in Anatolia and these structures were used to show hospitality to the whole world. In Turkish society, guests who come to the house are always seated in the best place in the house, a guest room is kept ready for each house and the guest is hosted in this room. Even while the household spends their days in narrow rooms, that room is not used much out of respect for the guest; it is kept clean and equipped for the guest [27]. Today, this opportunity is only partially maintained in rural areas and villages. This has become impossible in modern life and cities.

In Turkish culture, perhaps one of the most important aspects of hosting guests is food and other treats. Especially if there is a guest or official coming to the village from outside, they are respected and for a while, a neighbor invites them to dinner almost every day. In the novel, the newly appointed teacher İnci and her brother Erdal are invited to dinner by the villagers every day. These invitations are described in the novel as follows: *"The villagers invite us to dinner almost every day. It is their custom. Of course, if Mustafa Bey and his wife go, we go. We do not go alone. If the working hours of the village are like this, who knows what it will be like in the winter? It is a very hospitable village"* [1].

In Anatolia, tables are set up for guests coming to the house and a variety of foods are served. Lambs are slaughtered and served especially to guests coming from outside the village or from outside the city, and slaughtering a lamb is considered a sign of love and respect for the guest. This situation is also explained in the novel as follows: *"Ms. İnci, they are calling us to the gardens tomorrow. We will have lunch there. The headman will slaughter a lamb. It is the custom of these places, when an official comes to their village, they take them to the garden and feed them lamb meat."* [1]. As can be seen in a section taken from the novel, lambs are slaughtered for guests coming from outside, especially for the official slaughter. The importance given to the guest can be understood from the dishes prepared. Here, the glorifying function of the food is presented to the reader.

In another part of the novel, Erdal and his sister are invited to a house for a visit. His sister gives Erdal advice before going to dinner. *"Don't behave like you do at home! Don't say things like 'I won't eat this food.' Eat whatever is put on the table slowly. Even if you don't like the food, pretend to eat it. Always take your bites slowly. Don't rush. Don't start eating before the adults start eating. Don't get up before they get up from the table!"* [1]. The idea derived from the expressions in the novel is that children should have table manners, we should not offend the people who invite us even if we don't like the food, we should eat the food politely and we should not start eating before the adults start eating and we should not get up from the table before them. These rituals are of great importance in Turkish culinary culture. The author aims to teach these behaviors to children who read the novel. The events that took place at the dinner are narrated by Erdal, the main character of the novel, as follows: *"My sister was looking into my eyes. Had I made a mistake? I was leaning forward so that I wouldn't spill anything on myself. Erdal, sit down nicely, my sister whispered. So my sitting position was wrong. How should I sit? I moved. I couldn't get comfortable if I put my feet under me. My legs ached if I knelt down. Let the child sit however he feels comfortable, Nuri Agha said. I extended one of my feet under the table. My sister kept looking into my eyes. I didn't care, I continued to spoon the soup. Every time the spoon went in and out of the big bowl, the soup was shaking like a sea caught in the wind. Then they brought green beans, rice, and a pastry whose name I didn't know. We ate it all with appetite. Nuri Agha, Uncle Mustafa Bey, and my sister İnci were talking about the village. But I wasn't listening because I was going to eat. Another table had been set up for the family in the back. The children were crying there."* [1]. Just like in the novel, in real life, children are usually warned when they go to visit. They are asked to behave in accordance with table manners. Another issue explained here is that especially the children and other people in the house do not sit at the same table with the guests, they eat their meals at another table or in the kitchen.

Another topic related to the kitchen in the novel is winter preparations. In Turkish culture, when crops grow in the summer, preparations are made for winter. Some products are dried, some are canned, and some are prepared for winter with different storage methods. These winter preparations are described in the novel as follows: *"The vineyards and gardens were ruined. Grape molasses was boiled in front of the houses, tomato paste was made, peppers and eggplants strung on strings were dried. These were the days of plenty for the village. Everyone carried what they could from the soil to their homes with their ox carts, donkeys or backs. They boiled, dried and prepared their winter food. The village smelled of molasses"* [1]. Tarhana soup, which has an important place in Turkish culture, is made in almost every home. In the novel, the preparation of tarhana and other products for winter is described as follows: *"Autumn had progressed. These months were months of prosperity in the village. Wheat was washed in front of the fountains, then spread out and dried. Women were preparing tarhana for the winter on top of the houses. They were boiling bulgur in large cauldrons on the stoves. They called boiled bulgur "gölle" or "hedik". It was very delicious. Especially if eaten with walnuts, it was delicious. Sometimes neighbors would send it home, and sometimes friends would put it in their pockets and bring it to school. We would eat handfuls."* [1]. These types of winter preparations are preparations that are carried out every autumn in almost every village in Anatolia. Children are also included in these winter preparations in villages in Anatolia. It is recommended

that they learn these preparations and then do them themselves when they become adults. Sometimes children help bring and carry the materials, sometimes they are kept on guard to prevent animals from approaching the food, as well as the products laid on the roofs of the houses or on the ground to be dried. These tasks given to children are important in creating and developing a sense of responsibility in children.

Unity and sharing are also among the themes discussed in the novel. Especially in village schools, students would provide fuel during the winter months. Since there was usually no one to do the cleaning in village schools, tasks such as cleaning and lighting the stove would be done by the students in turns. When each student brought one or two pieces of wood, enough wood would be provided to run through the classroom all day, and the students would continue their lessons without getting cold. This situation is described in the novel as follows: *"When they come in the morning, everyone brings a piece of wood from their homes. The book bag and the wood are like a student badge. I am the only one with a bag at school. I use it because my sister forced me to. Otherwise, I don't feel like it at all. It is embarrassing to have it when no one else has. Everyone looks at my bag badly. I think it would be more comfortable if I put a bread bag around my neck and carried my notebooks and books with it."* [1]. As can be seen in the quote, each student bringing one or two firewood in their bag means that they will spend that day in a warm classroom. In addition, Erdal, the main character of the novel, is upset that his friends come to school with bags from the field and he has a school bag. He does not want to be different from them. In Turkish society, not only being in a bad situation but also being in a good situation sometimes creates a sense of shame. Here, instead of boasting about his bag, Erdal feels ashamed of having a bag. This feeling is an indication that he is a conscious child.

Sharing and exchanging gifts are also important in Turkish society. Everyone, young or old, tries to give and receive gifts and help those in need. In the novel, Erdal's help to a student in need is described as follows: *"I noticed her feet, she was barefoot. She was probably crying, wondering how she was going to get home. I went to the teacher and told her in her ear, 'If you let me, I'll bring my other shoes from home and give them to her,' I said. 'Go,' she said. I ran and got them. Snow had immediately piled up on my head and shoulders. It was snowing so much. I brought my old shoes and left them at Ayşe's feet. I said, 'Put these on, Ayşe.' She bent her head over the desk. She didn't want to put them on. She started crying even harder... finally, the teacher forced her to put them on."* [1]. Erdal's kind thought is an example for the children readers of the novel. However, on the other hand, Ayşe does not accept the shoes even though she needs them. She feels bad. She thinks she will be in a bad position among her friends. The teacher takes the other students out of the classroom and convinces Ayşe that this situation is not shameful, by telling her that her friend loves her very much and that they are making an effort to help her. The message that is given here is that although we want to do good, we should do it without upsetting, hurting or offending others.

In Turkish culture, gifts are also given to people who move or migrate from one place to another. These gifts are given so that one can remember others wherever they go. The main character of the novel, Erdal, is given gifts when he leaves the village, as *"Some were giving me a slingshot, some were giving me a pocket knife with a bone handle. Ali also gave me a small, round mirror."* [1]. When we look at the gifts given by children, they are mostly materials that can be used in rural life. They are given so that he can remember them when he goes.

Another subject is the concepts of time and distance. Especially in villages, rather than the time period according to the hour, it is measured by the weather getting brighter, the sun rising to the top or the weather getting dark. Especially the time when children playing on the streets come home is the evening call for prayer. In the novel, this situation is expressed with the words, *"The weather was starting to get dark. The evening call for prayer was recited. One of the adults shouted, 'Come on, children, go home.'"* [1]. Distance is not expressed in meters or km. In the novel, it is explained how the distances in the village are described with the words, *"In fact, the place these villagers call 'aha right there' was taking at least an hour."* [1]. Right there is given as the most commonly used distance unit in the village.

Another striking subject in the novel is the subject of clothing. Almost all women dress the same way, but it is obvious whether a woman is young or old from the way she walks. This situation is expressed in the novel with the words, *"Their heads were covered with white headscarves. It was not clear who was young or old. However, if she was walking quickly, it was understood that she was a young girl."* [1].

Especially in villages, men and women, young and old, wore almost the same clothes, and it was understood from the speed of their walk whether they were young or old. The message that is intended to be given here is that young girls should finish their work without delaying too long in the village square and go home as soon as possible.

Another important subject in Turkish culture is traditional sports. Wrestling is one of these sports. Wrestling is an old traditional sport that was first mentioned in Sumerian civilization documents about 5000 years ago [28]. Wrestling is a combat sport between two people, where each person tries to defeat the other and tries to win by fighting hand to hand [29]. The Turkish nation has given great importance to wrestling, which has an important place in the context of ethnosport

[30]. Especially in the spring and summer months, children wrestle with each other on the grass in the countryside, both as a sport and as entertainment. In the villages, children who go to graze animals wrestle to pass the time while the animals are grazing. In the novel, the children's enthusiasm for wrestling is also expressed in the following words: *"We always wrestle around here, Hasan said. Are you in? I said let me hold it like this. Wow, he was so strong that I quit immediately."* [1].

In Turkish culture, transition rituals are also important. Wedding celebrations in particular include various rituals. In the novel, the events that take place at a wedding are described through the eyes of children as follows: *"When the bride mounted her horse, a coin was thrown at her head. The children would scramble to collect it. Then they would be sent off with the 'Hey veterans' words. All the villagers would join the wedding procession. A crying sound came from the house. It meant the bride was about to leave. Hasan and Ali were constantly pulling my hand. Come here. The money will be thrown here. One of the horses was brought up to the stairs. We had gone that far. Then the bride, dressed in all her spangles and with her face covered, was brought out from inside. Two men had taken her by the arms. She was walked down the stairs amidst crying and whimpering voices. She was helped to mount the horse. Just as she mounted the horse, Ali poked my arm. Hold on tight, now the money will be thrown! We got closer to the horse. We were keeping our eyes open. What he said came true. The groom's father reached into his pocket. He took out a handful of coins and threw them up to the bride's head. We immediately bent down. We were under the horse's belly. We were collecting money like chickens collecting feed. The horse got scared."* [1]. In traditional Turkish weddings, coins, wheat, etc. are thrown over the bride's head. This ritual is performed to bring abundance.

Finally, another subject discussed in the novel is ethnobotany. Especially in the spring months, the herbs that grow naturally in the countryside are collected by the villagers and cooked in various ways or consumed raw. This situation is described in the novel with the following expressions: *"I think the villagers always ate herbs in those days. The women and children had spread out in the countryside. Their eyes were on the ground; they were constantly looking for harmless herbs. Because some herbs were poisonous and could kill people. The villagers knew the beneficial herbs."* [1]. As in the novel, children are also taken when going to collect herbs from nature in the villages. The reason for this is to ensure that the children also get to know nature and natural herbs and to guide them in using them as consumables.

4) **Conclusion:**

The author Talip Apaydın, who graduated from the Village Institutes, which have an important place in terms of education in Turkey, has written about the village and the peasants with all clarity. Written as a children's novel, this work, titled *Toprağa Basınca*, aims to contribute to the traditional education of children while narrating various events from the village. In the work, it is aimed to provide the reader with traditional education through traditional children's games and this was achieved by the author. Likewise, through oral culture products such as fairy tales, folk poetry and folk songs, both the novel and the children who read the novel were educated. With the nicknames in the work, it is emphasized how people were distinguished from each other, especially before the Surname Law, and what should be considered when giving nicknames. The subject of guest and hospitality is one of the subjects covered intensively in the work. Children are told how a guest should be and how they should behave. Hospitality, which corresponds to this, is explained in detail. In addition, the culture of giving and helping is another subject that is explained to children. Especially how we should treat people who need help, how we should treat children, how we can help them without hurting them. It was also emphasized how happy it makes people to receive and give gifts. The transition rituals that we always see in life are also tried to be given in full detail. Wrestling, which is one of the traditional sports and has an important place in Turkish culture, was introduced and the importance of wrestling for Turkish culture was emphasized. Finally, the subject of ethnobotany is covered and it is tried to explain how children can be fed from nature in natural ways and how to understand whether the herbs they find in nature are harmful or not. Especially the events narrated through Erdal, the protagonist of the work, have been both educational and instructive for the children. Other child protagonists and Erdal's older sister İnci also guided the children in the novel and tried to convey to the reader how children should exhibit behaviors desired by families and society in the traditional sense.

5) **Conflict of interest:** The author declares that there is **no conflict of interest**.

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