

## **An Analysis of Children's Books in Translation of Christian Nöstlinger in Construction of the Constructor Learning Theory\***

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### **Abstract**

Constructivist approach is based on constructing, explaining, interpreting and transferring any given knowledge in mind and generating new information from the current one, rather than memorising it. Since the constructivist approach that was put into effect in Turkey in 2005-2006 academic year, the individuals are expected to rethink, interpret and reach to the knowledge with their own deductions by organizing it in their own minds, rather than accepting what is presented to them. The constructivist approach, which aims students to actively use their research, questioning and thinking abilities, advocates free thinking and the subjectivity of knowledge, as opposed to the behavioural approach. In this study, the works of Christine Nöstlinger, a writer of German Children and Youth Literature, were examined on the basis of the aims of the constructivist approach. The result of the study concludes that in Nöstlinger's books there are types of individuals who learn constructively, and that the characters in those books overlap with the types of individuals projected by constructivist learning theory.

**Keywords:** Christine Nöstlinger, Constructivism, Children's Literature, Constructivism, Structuralism, Constructivist Learning

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## Introduction

### Constructive Approach

Constructivism, which began to develop as a theory of how learners learn their knowledge, has in time become an approach on how learners construct knowledge. Learning relies not on memorizing but on transferring knowledge, reinterpreting existing knowledge and creating a new one. Learner puts the constructed knowledge, which he/she generates by harmonizing the knowledge he already has with the one he just has had, into practice in solving life problems (Erdem, 2001: 6, as cited in Perkin).

The changes in the social structure of the world, which is in a constant change, necessitate the continuous renewal of the education systems. When the purpose of education is understanding, problem solving, using information in new situations, and critical thinking, there has been a transition from teacher-centered approaches to learner-centered approaches (Güzel Demir, 2019: 12) . In this case, the constructivist approach is revealed.

"Constructivism" refers to the construction of knowledge by the student. In other words, the individual does not receive the knowledge as it is, but he/she recreates their knowledge. They learn by adapting new knowledge and their existing knowledge to their own subjective situations (Ozden, 2003: 54-55). In this learning approach, previous experiences of the student are the basis for learning. Knowledge exists through being structured in such a way that individuals create and express, rather than depending on subject areas (Kaptan-Korkmaz, 2001: 41). It may be said that the constructivist learning approach is mostly related to cognitive learning theories. With regard to learning, the main points of the traditional and constructivist approach can be compared as follows (Ozden, 2003: 55-56):

**Table1.** Traditional Approach vs. Constructivist Approach

| Traditional Approach   | Constructivist Approach  |
|--|--|
| Knowledge is outside the individual, it is objective. Transferable from teachers to students   | Knowledge has personal meaning, it is subjective. Generated by the students themselves   |
| Students learn what they hear and read. Learning depends more on the teacher's good expression | Students form their own knowledge. They interpret what they hear and what they read based on their previous learning and habits. |
| Learning depends on students repeating the teachings.  | Learning depends on students being able to show conceptual comprehension.  |

Matthews summarizes the philosophical views of constructivism on knowledge, truth and meaning as follows (Simsek, 2004: 119, as cited in Matthews):

1. The standard questions of classical epistemology cannot be answered in a valid way, and these questions are not even reasonable, they are wrong. Constructivist interpretation of knowledge requires going beyond the framework of traditional epistemology.

2. Although we can assume the existence of the external world, we cannot have direct access to it. Science as the human knowledge is not a sufficient description regarding the complete discovery of the external world.

3. Knowledge is the product of our cognitive filtering. We can not have directly-obtained knowledge on our environment or objective reality, without using a mediator. Our meanings are heavily influenced by our experience and our experience by our cognitive lens.

4. Knowledge is individual and socially structured, not objective but subjective.

5. Scientific theories are temporary; because they are deficient, condemned to be refuted or replaced by new ones.

6. Nature has no law; the explanations and rules known as scientific laws are based purely on the explanations resulting from the human activity and are the structures revealed by the human mind.

7. The "reality" defined by scientific knowledge is not the reality itself or the whole of it; but only the predictions of observations and interpretations influenced by all the limitations of the scientific method, and a picture of a reality that is assumed to be in accordance with absolute reality. Neither equals the reality to science's predictions of it, nor is scientific knowledge the whole reality that science predicts. Scientific knowledge lacks the ability to directly explain reality.

8. Scientific knowledge is produced by observing theories, which are themselves loaded with theories. Since objective quantification can not be attained, there is no possibility of reaching objective information.

9. There is no way to check the truth of scientific theories and models. As humans, we do not have a criterion or reference to attain that goal.

Simsek (2004) summarizes the assumptions of constructivism on learning as follows:

1. Learning is an individual process that occurs either entirely in him/herself or in a social environment.

2. Learning is not a linear or hierarchical process.

3. Foreknowledge, beliefs, prejudices, worldview... are the determinants, beyond affective, in the construction of the knowledge

4. Learning within its social dimension is a process of reconciliation.

5. Context is important. Learning occurs only in a context.

6. In learning, actuality and relevance to life are important.

7. Multidimensional and dynamic interaction is important to learning.

8. Knowledge is temporary, developmental, social and cultural.

9. Learning is a situated activity.

10. Learning is the refining and structuring of the mental cognition map. (Simsek, 2004: 125).

The most important and distinctive feature of constructivism is the opportunity to create, construct, interpret and develop the knowledge. Contrary to the traditional approach, in the case of constructivism, the student does not acquire knowledge as he or she was told, but either practice the rule that he/she has already generated or creates new rules in order to better explain the knowledge (Eryaman & Genc, 2010). Therefore, the constructivist approach advocates that the solution to a problem may be best found by the individual, and argues that knowledge can not be acquired through traditional approaches. In this study, the fiction in Christine Nöstlinger's children's books, and the characters in accordance with the type of individual that the constructivist approach seeks, were examined. In the study, individual types formed by the objectives of the constructivist learning theory were compared to the behaviours of the children characters of the books. These types are children who question, investigate and think critically, children who turn their thoughts into actions, children who generate new knowledge from their previous knowledge, and children with managerial-entrepreneurial behaviour. Detailed summaries of the examined books were attached to the appendix.

### **Literature Survey**

Karatay (2014) assesses the Turkish course book and the teacher's guide, which activate students in the learning process and were prepared with the understanding of constructivist learning theory, in terms of intertextuality. The themes and references to texts, that are used to construct learning in these teaching tools, are made by associating with disciplines other than Turkish course, and these goals are not achieved enough in every theme and text. In addition, all of the references specified in the texts are not included in the guidebooks. The establishment of these relationships is left to the knowledge, skills and experience of the teachers.

Gul, Dilci and Arseven (2014) aimed to reveal the opinions and evaluations of the prospective teachers in the Turkish Language Education and Classroom Teaching Programs about the education they have taken and their competences regarding the constructivist approach. According to the results of the research, the prospective teachers found themselves adequate in terms of theoretical knowledge but inadequate in terms of implementation. Students stated that these inadequacies were due to their lack of adequate education and proper training compatible with the constructivist approach. More practice lessons, lessons in accordance with constructivism, use of more written, visual and practical resources were among the suggestions

Demirtas, Oguz, Oredi and Akbasli (2015) aim to determine the opinions of the prospective class teachers about whether the learning experiences organized in the education faculties are in

accordance with the constructivist understanding. According to the results of the study, the learning environments of the prospective class teachers are not found to be in accordance with constructivism.

Arslan, Orhan and Kirbas (2010) aim to determine whether the constructivist learning approach that forms the basis of the new elementary curriculum may be applicable to Turkish lessons, and whether Turkish teachers fulfill the roles they have assigned to them by this learning approach, with regard to the opinions of superiors. At the end of the research, it is stated that the school administrators have the opinion that the constructivist learning approach is being applied only partially in the Turkish lessons. In addition, it has been found that Turkish teachers could only partially fulfill the roles they have been assigned by the constructivist learning approach, which is the mainstay of the Turkish curriculum in 2005.

Tunca (2015) examines the prediction level of the constructive learning environment characteristics on the classroom environment characteristics that support critical thinking. The result of the research confirms to a great extent the idea that the classroom environment organized in accordance with the characteristics of constructivist learning environment is effective in the organization of the classroom environment that supports critical thinking.

Karaduz (2014) focuses on the extent of whether the learning environments in Turkish lessons are appropriate for constructivist learning. Turkish lessons are those in which many thinking and social skills, along with the skills of understanding and explaining are gained. In this respect, the course environments need to be designed according to the current understanding. Teachers are the ones who needs to organize these qualitative learning environments. In this study, data were gathered from the interviews with teachers and the observations in Turkish lessons. According to the results of the research, behaviourist understanding, in many respects, is still dominant in the Turkish classroom-learning environment. In the discussion section of the research, the reasons for this situation and the ideas toward the resolutions of problems are discussed.

Ayaz and Sekerci (2015) conduct a meta-analysis study to determine the effect of the constructivist approach on the academic achievement and attitudes of students. As a result of the study, constructivist approach is found to have strong positive effect in the students' academic achievement, and moderately positive effect in their attitudes, comparing to traditional teaching methods. In the last section of the study, proposals are made to practitioners, program developers and researchers according to the results obtained in the research.

Teyfur and Teyfur (2012) evaluates the opinions of teachers and administrators on the constructivist curriculum in their study. The study concludes that the administrators and teachers seem to adopt the constructivist approach. However, managers and teachers are reported to have problems regarding classroom management resulting from crowded classes and the lack of infrastructure.

## **Method**

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study tries to determine the characteristics of the individual projected by the constructivist approach, on which the understanding of Turkish National Education is based.

### **The Importance of The Study**

The study is important because it gives an idea about the type of individual appropriate for the constructivist approach, and therefore explores the goals of the constructivist approach.

### **Method of the Study**

This study is a qualitative study to evaluate Christine Nöstlinger's novels with a constructivist approach. Qualitative research, qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis are used, and perceptions and events in the natural environment, realistic and holistic way to reveal a qualitative process is followed (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006).

In this study, a qualitative research design was used for a document review. C. Constructivist learning features of the child characters in Nöstlinger's books have been identified and interpreted through a document review method. "A document review involves the analysis of written materials containing information about the facts or phenomena targeted for investigation" (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013: 217).

In this research, content analysis, one of the qualitative research data analysis techniques, was used. Content analysis is based on the classification of elements of a text by predetermined categories. Such as words, sentences, paragraphs or all documents (Gökçe, 1999: 101). The aim of content analysis is to reach the concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data. In content analysis, the data is subjected to a deeper process and concepts and themes that cannot be noticed by a descriptive approach are discovered by this analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006).

### **Research Group of Study**

In this research, Christine Nöstlinger's books (for 9 years and over), "Lollipop, Sakli Miras, Evde ve Uzakta, Arkadas Dumeni, Kim Takar Salatalik Kral'i, Aklindan Dusunceler Gecen Cocuk", was selected through simple random sampling. Random sampling, a technique used in the selection of a sample, gives all the elements in a defined universe equal and independent chance for getting selected for the sample group. In other words, the probability of getting selected for all elements is the same, and the selection of one element does not affect the selection of the other (Ozen and Gul, 2007: 399). Books used in the study are shown in the table below.

**Table 2.** Books Reviewed

| Isbn              | Name of The Book   | Number of Pages | Publisher |
|-------------------|--|-----------------|-----------|
| 978-975-8142-96-5 | LOLLİPOP   | 102             | GÜNIŞİĞİ  |
| 978-605-4603-31-2 | SAKLI MIRAS (Detective Jacob-Boy Next Door)                          | 177             | GUNISIGI  |
| 978-994-4717-60-1 | EVDE VE UZAKTA (Fly Away Home)                                       | 196             | GUNISIGI  |
| 978-975-6227-28-2 | ARKADAS DUMENI (Lillis Supercoup)                                    | 180             | GUNISIGI  |
| 978-975-6227-75-6 | KIM TAKAR SALATALIK KRAL'I (Cucumber King)                           | 158             | GUNISIGI  |
| 978-9944-717-18-2 | AKLINDAN DUSUNCELER GECEN COCUK (Rosalinde Has Thoughts in Her Head) | 86              | GUNISIGI  |

### **Questions of the Study**

The study focuses on the following question:

Does Christine Nöstlinger's children characters fit in with the type of individual characteristics targeted by the constructivist learning theory? What are the characteristics of the characters that fit in with this requirements?

### **Findings**

The constructivist approach argues that learners should make their own interpretations of the world they live in. Marlove and Page (1998) argue that the constructivist approach is based on the development of knowledge and thinking process, generation of new ideas and concepts, and the development of meaning (Erdem, 2001: 6, as cited in Marlov and Page).

The fiction in the books are examined one by one; and the characteres who investigates, questiones, seeks solutions to problems in their own minds by their own experiences, deductions and thoughts, are studied.

### **Questioning, investigating and critical-thinking child**

In the constructivist approach, the main goal is to make the learner find solutions to problems by constructing the knowledge in his/her own mind through his/her deductions. In other words, as opposed to the behaviourist approach in which the student gets the knowledge directly, constructivist approach advocates that the learner should be active in the learning process. Constructivist learner questions, researches, examines and thinks critically and differently in order to obtain knowledge.

"Bellicosity, entrepreneurship, curiosity and patience are among the personal characteristics that the constructive learner has. The learner is constantly curious during the learning process and researches as he/she wonders. While motivating more and more to learn with his/her curiosity, entrepreneur learner freely explores, deeply examines, investigates, analyzes, solves problems, questions critically, makes comparisons, discusses what he/she finds, interprets them and defends what he/she interprets with the underlying reasons" (Erdem and Demirel, 2002: 86, as cited in Marlov and Page).

Among the children characters compatible with the type that constructivist approach promotes, children who question, research, and think critically are very common in the books of Nöstlinger.

Victor-Emanuel, the protagonist of *Lollipop*, is an intelligent and questioning child who lives with her mother, grandmother and sister. Presented to the reader as a constantly questioning character throughout the book, Lollipop questions his name, the attitude of the girl he loves, the difference of friendship and relationship, and as a result he finally solves the problems with his own efforts.

Lollipop decides to change his name after reaching the outcome that he does not look like a king, since he often hears that his name is used as the name of an Italian king.

"No, my dear, I am not at all like the Italian king. Then I can not accept my name stay as Victor-Emanuel anymore" (p. 11).

In *Detective Jacob-Boy Next Door*, the protagonist, Jakob, finds himself in an adventure after one day, their neighbours Zwochs' receive a letter. Looking for the heritage of Knitzdeibl in her old house inherited to the Zwochs' after their elder aunt Mw Knitzdeibl's death, Jacob constantly moves, inquiries, investigates and constructs new knowledge based on the previous knowledge throughout the book.

Jakob finds it questionable that the inheritance of mean and old Mrs. Knitzdeibl, who lost her life, involves no money.

"I think it is impossible that a 85-year-old lady lost her entire fortune on gambling or spent it, especially if she is sceptical and mean" (p. 46).

Jakob, who thinks Knitzdeibl's money is hidden in the house inherited from the old Knitzdeibl, wants to do research at the house with his neighbour's daughter Tete. But the keys to the house are in the bag of the neighbour girl Tete's mother. Tete can not get these keys from her mother's purse. Jakob evaluates Tete's failure on getting the keys from her mother's bag in a questioning and critical perspective.

"I think it's damaging Tete's nobility to steal something from her mother. But even she is not aware of it. The subconscious prevents this action!" (p. 92).

In *Rosalinde Has Thoughts in Her Head*, a little girl named Rosalinde is the protagonist. In this book, Rosalinde constantly questions the behaviours of her elders and reviews them in a critical manner.

Rosalinde thinks in a questioning and critical way that even though her family can see the physical differences in her body, no one can see what anyone has in his/her mind.

"Mother sees the hole in the sock, dad sees the bandage on his knee, the cat sees the ladybug on its hand. Grandmother sees collar on her neck. But nobody sees what is on your mind" . (s. 10)



Rosalinde's grandmother, hides the button of the iron to make her grandfather get a new iron to replace the old one in the house. The grandfather searches for the button for hours and the grandmother says that the button is missing. Dede stops searching and gives the money to buy a new iron. Rosalinda later finds the button in her grandmother's tenner pocket while cleaning the kitchen. So she realizes that her grandmother lied to get a new iron. Rosalinde gets surprised from witnessing her elders lie to each other, even though they tell her that it is such a bad behaviour. She questions her grandmother's behavior following this incident.

"Rosalinde looked at the button of the iron for a long, long time and had very secret thoughts about her grandmother in her head, so secret that she could not tell anyone". (Aklindan Dusunceler *Gecen Cocuk*, p. 28)

In *Cucumber King*, Wolfgang questions the authority imposed upon them by his father, who has an authoritarian and fierce nature, and evaluates his father's approach in a critical point of view. Having an interrogating and critical approach to his father's understanding, Wolfgang refuses to adhere and admit to everything his father tells and evaluates things with his own questioning, deductions and point of view; as the incidents begins to develop after the King of Kumi-Ori, some kind of underground creature, takes refuge in their house.

One day Wolfgang goes to his friend's house after he left from swimming club. After seeing the life at his friend's house, he compares the life at his house with the life he has just witnessed.

"At Huber Erich's, everything is very different from our house. Erich should not have to take permission every time went to swimming club, cinema, his friends " (Kim Takar *Salatalik Kral'i*, p. 40).

In another episode of the book, Wolfgang critically evaluates his father's refusal to allow him and his sister to go to the café that his friends usually goes. His father forbids his children to go to cafés because he thinks it is inconvenient for children to go to these places which, for him, are not suitable for children.

"My father never allowed us to go to Gogo's. "Kids do not go to cafés," he says, all the time. At least Martina is no longer a child. And Gogo's is not a café, either. Everyone drinks Coke. But my father is also against Coke. He says that Coke damages stomach. I do not fully understand what he means by that"(Kim Takar *Salatalik Kral'i*, p. 41).

Again in *Cucumber King*, Wolfgang, using a rude and hurtful fashion, does not allow his younger brother Nik to go out late in the evening. Later, by developing a critical view of himself and making a self-criticism, he thinks that this behaviour is not right.

Then I realized that I was very unfair and rude to him. I thought that i talked to him just like the elders. I thought it was so easy to get rude and bad (p. 153).

In *Lillis Supercoup*, two main characters and very good friends, Lilli and Marlen, are presented to the reader. Lilli is a bold girl. In the book, it can be seen that Lili and Marlen have a questioning and interrogating approach sometimes to their teachers, sometimes to their parents, and sometimes against each other.

Marlen, one of the two main characters in *Lillis Supercoup*, draws attention to her mother making decisions on her own behalf and evaluates this wrong behaviour critically.

Mom turned down the volume of the TV as she said "Give it to me!". She loves deciding on my behalf. (Arkadas Dumeni, p. 68).

In *Fly Away Home*, Erika tries to bring Ilse, who eventually leaves home after constantly having problems with her mother and her stepfather, back home. During this process she criticizes, evaluates and questions her mother, her father and stepfather, her sister, her friends and herself. Erika, especially evaluating her mother's approach to both her sister and herself with a critical point of view, succeeds in bringing her sister back home after a long effort.

Erika, after her research, realizes that her sister's best friend, Helli, did not ask her about Ilse, and she decides to start the work of finding Ilse by asking Helli after reaching the deduction that she must know about where Ilse might be.

Besides, I already have an idea on where to start looking. I'll start with Helli. (Evde ve Uzakta, p. 87)

Speaking to Helli, Erika learns that her sister is interested in a child named Herbert Plank. She then explores Herbert Plank's house, thinking that he might have some information about where to find her sister.

Herbert Plank lives on our street. Three blocks from our home. I found the address on the phone book (Evde ve Uzakta, p. 91).

Again in the same book, *Fly Away Home*, Erika, whilst investigating where her sister might have escaped, learns that a child named Wolfgang-Joachim (Spotted), who follows each step of her sister, is in love with her. After learning that, she goes to Spotted's house with her two friends, thinking that she can learn from Spotted where her sister might have gone. Spotted can not withstand the long insistence and gives information about the last car that Erika's elder sister got into, on the day she escaped home.

Spotted: "The red BMW 2000, black leather seats, a plastic mermaid waving at the rear, also the plate was W 704 265 " (Evde ve Uzakta, p. 108)

"I already found out who the owner is". He said, with a victorious expression. "That guy in the leather coat, "The Golden Goose" ". (Evde ve Uzakta, p. 108)

Spotted does a very detailed research on the car Ilse got in. Not letting well enough alone, Spotted also finds out who the owner of the car is as a result of this detailed research.

### **Child That Generates New Knowledge Based on Previous Knowledge**

Prior knowledge, learnings and experience of learners are of great importance in constructivist learning. According to the constructivist approach, the individual can use the previous learning to construct the new situation, the knowledge. That is, in constructivist learning, the learner integrates new experiences with past experiences, and makes sense of this new occasion. Constructivist learning theory emphasizes on previous learning, because previous learning is of great importance in the process of constructing the new knowledge.

In *Detective Jacob-Boy Next Door*, Jakob, the protagonist, gets the idea that their neighbour's passing aunt Knitzdeibl may have forgotten about the money after she hid it. The reason for this idea is that his grandmother has also experienced these situations. Jakob tries to construct this new situation based on his experiences.

After her mother passed away, my grandmother found some money papers in the bottom of the coal bucket while tidying up her house. Knitzdeibl's money definitely must be somewhere in the house. We have to find him . (Sakli Miras, p. 47)

In *Fly Away Home*, Erika learns from her grandmother that Ilse tells her entourage lies about her life by changing it with the one she designed in her dreams. Her grandmother tells some of Ilse's lies to Erika. For example, Ilse told her grandfather that she had a very young and beautiful teacher, whereas Ilse's teacher was old and very ugly. Again, Ilse's told Berger, her neighbour, that her mother would marry a circus manager. But, her mother was married to a journalist. So Erika learns that his sister makes up lies that would make her happy. She also realizes that Ilse's love for Herbert Plank is also a fiction after she went to Herbert Plank's house. She brings an explanation to the current situation by associating it to the lies that her grandmother told about earlier.

### **The Child That Transforms What He/She Thinks into Action**

In constructivist approach, learner is not passive. On the contrary, he/she is active at every stage of learning. Learner has a position in which he/she transforms what they learn into action, carry them into effect, practices them. The learner, who binds their inferences, their interrogations, their researches to a result, puts them into practice and thus uses the knowledge he/she has acquired.

In *Lollipop*, Victor-Emanuel, after researching, inferring and interrogating for a long time, eventually decides that he does not look like the Italian king and that he wants to chance his name, then he starts to take suggestions from his entourage about possible names.

Lollipop gave this important decision (the decision of changing the name) alone at home in an afternoon (Lollipop, p. 11).

Lollipop's birthday coincides with Christmas. That was pretty annoying for Lollipop. Because Christmas and his birthday gets celebrated at the same time. But, Lollipop wanted to spend his birthday as a birthday only, independent from the Christmas day. In order to prevent this injustice, Lollipop produces a solution and puts it into practice. He changes his birthday date, thus his birthday would no longer be in the same day as Christmas.

Lollipop ran home and announced to his mother and grandmother that he had moved his unfair birthday to April 1 (Lollipop, p. 96).

In *Saklı Miras*, Jakob thinks that the money of the deceased woman is hidden among the books in the house inherited to his neighbours. But the neighbours sells the books at the old house to a recycling company. After the company officials loads all of the books in a truck to take them to a warehouse, the van gets broken in a street near to the house. They leave the van in the street and go home to fix it later. Hearing about this, Jakob thinks that the books has to be examined in detail in order to get the money and finds the van.

I thought about examining whether Kumi-Ori told the truth. Was there really a people of Kumi-Ori in the cellar? I wondered why I could not think of this before. I got home immediately. I passed slowly through the kitchen door; because my mother was in the kitchen. I did not want her to see me stepping into the cellar ... (Kim Takar *Salatalik Kral'i*, p. 93-94)

In *Cucumber King*, wanting to know whether there is a people named Kori-Omi in their cellar as the fleeing Cucumber King of Kumi-Ori -who takes refugee in their house- tells him, the protagonist Wolfgang is seen to decide on secretly getting into the cellar and then puts that decision into action

### **Discussion and Interpretations**

Knowledge is the meaning resulting from the individual's own experience. Therefore, human beings do not gain the knowledge directly, but construct it themselves. This means that learning can only occur on the basis of existing knowledge and experience (Kayaoglu, 2006: 54). Constructivism advocates that knowledge is a totality of meaning that the individual creates by his/her own efforts. The constructivist approach, in contrast to the behavioural approach, advocates the participation of the individual in the learning process; and regeneration and construction of knowledge as a result of his/her own experiences, inferences, and research efforts.

Contemporary children's literature aims children to be raised in a healthy way, both cognitively and sensuously. The relation of constructivist approach to child literature begins at this very point. Children's literature has an important place for the accomplishment of the goals of

constructivist approach, which aims to make children investigate, examine, think critically, and reach the results with their own deductions. Books of child literature, which enable children to research, inquire, and use of critical thinking skills to construct their knowledge with their own deductions, contribute to the raising of individuals projected by constructivism.

In the books examined in the study, Nöstlinger's children characters come into prominence especially with their individual researching, questioning and critical thinking sides. Children characters who, by opposing to the advocacy of behavioural approach, do not receive any knowledge as it is presented, and who reach results by their own deductions, are very evident in the books of Nöstlinger. In *Lollipop*, the character is not satisfied with his name, and after a long period of time he spends questioning the appropriateness of his name, he finally decides to find a new one. In *Lillis Supercoup*, Marlen examines her relationship with her best friend, her parents and their parents with a critical point of view. In *Cucumber King*, Wolfgang examines his over-traditionalist and authoritarian father with a questioning and criticizing approach, and as a result of his curiosity, he also discovers a completely different world under their house. In *Rosalinde Has Thoughts in Her Head*, Rosalinde criticizes her elders, and examines their false attitudes critically. In *Saklı Miras*, Jakob finds the lost inheritance by using his researching and inquiring skills and his curiosity, even though everyone around him tries to make him give up. *Fly Away Home* tells Erika's story of tracking down and getting her sister Ilse, who is a troubled child escaped from her house, back home by the help of her friends after a long struggle.

### **Conclusion**

The constructivist learning model does not consider the human mind as a place in which knowledge can be put and stored as it is, learning is an internal process taking place in the mind of the individual. The individual is not a passive recipient of external stimuli, but their assimilator and an active generator of behaviours. In all learnings, new knowledge is added to the knowledge already exists in mind, and meaning is derived by associating new knowledge with previous knowledge. There are individual interpretations in meanings. Because every pupil has a mental structure that contains meaningful knowledge, that bear traces from the day he/she was born to various individual or social experiences and acquired from previous learning experiences. Herewith, each person creates his/her own meaning and builds his/her own interpretation. Learning does not occur in the same way for each individual (Kayaoglu, 2006: 41).

As mentioned above, for the constructivist approach, which indicates that learning can not be independent of the individual, the learner must have certain characteristics such as researching, questioning, critical thinking, and constructing new knowledge based on previous knowledge. The constructivist learner, as opposed to the behaviourist learner, should not accept the given, instead,

he/she should include him/herself into the learning process and construct knowledge in his/her minds with his/her own efforts.

Constructivist learning approach advocates that the individual should be the main subject of the learning process. According to the constructivist approach, which advocates that the individual should be inside of the learning activity through his/her own experience, knowledge comes from the individual's own research, inquiries and his/her previous knowledge. In constructivist learning approach, the responsibility of learning is on the learner.

Contemporary children's literature, too, supports, and produces towards the thinking, investigating and learning-through-his/her-own-experience kind of individual.

In this work, which aims to examine constructivist approach in the children's books of Christine Nöstlinger, one of the writers of contemporary child's literature, the accordance of the children characters with the type of individual projected by the constructivist learning approach is examined. In all the books examined, there are protagonist or protagonists in accordance with the type of constructive learner. Analyzing the characters of Nöstlinger, we can see that they tend to research, question or criticize instead of accepting what is presented.

In Nöstlinger's subjected books, the protagonists reach the right conclusion either with their critical thinking skills or by researching-investigating-inquiring. It can be deduced, from the findings obtained, that the children's books of Nöstlinger mostly include the individual type that criticize, question, investigate and transform what they think into action, and that is projected by the constructivist approach.

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