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## **AN EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE WORDS FREQUENTLY USED IN TURKISH LULLABIES TO LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

*Research article*

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# AN EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE WORDS FREQUENTLY USED IN TURKISH LULLABIES TO LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

## Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to determine the words frequently used in Turkish lullabies and to evaluate the contributions of the lullabies to language education and development through the words determined. Qualitative document analysis was used in the study. "Turkish Lullabies" by Demir and Demir (2014) and "Turkish Lullabies from Anatolia" by Demir (2018) were used as data sources. In order to create a document pool in the study, both sources which included the lullabies used for the data of the study were transferred to digital environment. In the analysis of the data obtained, descriptive analysis method was used. Based on the word frequency determined in the lullabies, the top most frequently used 100 words were identified. Among these words, the words related to family and kinship relations and words used for metaphors were analyzed in terms of the meanings they refer to in different contexts and the functions they assume were analyzed. Considering the results obtained in the study, it is believed that the words frequently used in lullabies are the words that can be primarily preferred in children's language development. It is clear that the lullabies, which are examined through word frequency, are sung to educate babies and children, beyond putting them to sleep. When the frequently used names expressing family ties are examined, it is noteworthy that they are definitely handled in the context of a message. As the person who sings the lullaby, the mother mostly calls out to her son and daughter. In the social context, the duties of boys and girls and their expectations from them are inscribed into the minds of children. In addition, it is noteworthy that the basic rules of the language, concepts and terms are included in lullabies in detail.

*Keywords:* lullaby, word frequency, language education, language development

## 1. Introduction

One of the prerequisites in the development of verbal language skills for the individual is to perceive sounds through hearing. The process related to the human beings' hearing the sounds occurring in their environment begins before being born. It is well-documented that fetuses can hear various sounds while they are still in the mother's womb (Moon and Fifer, 2000). Recurrence of a certain sound or sound frequency enables the individual to become familiar with the sound and to learn quickly and retain it in his/her mind. The physiological paraphernalia that a newborn possesses to meet his/her basic needs also manifests itself in the process of learning the language. It has been argued that the baby brings along several innate physiological and cognitive competences for learning a language. As these competences will allow language acquisition and development to be realized under the impact of internal and external factors, to what extent the language-related process will be affected by what types of factors draws attention as an important issue (Polat and Şaşmaz, 2015).

The interaction with the mother has a critical role in L1 acquisition and learning. As the person meeting the basic needs of the baby, the mother plays a great role for the baby to recognize and understand the world. The attitude that the mother assumes towards the baby, the words she uses, her gestures, and mimics are the primary verbal and non-verbal communication elements perceived by the baby. A communication element that the mother uses starts to occupy a place in the baby's mind and affects language development directly (Toker, 2011).

It is known that the most basic function of language is to establish communication through transmitting emotions and thoughts. Individuals' emotions and thoughts develop in parallel with the culture of the society in which they live. And language, which hosts many elements

in itself, involves the elements of the culture from which it is fed. In the cultural memory of societies, there are numerous traditions, customs, and cultural elements that help individuals to understand and interpret the past and the present, and to make inferences for future. As one of these elements, lullabies are one of the cultural memory indicators which are mostly sung by mothers, and therefore assign mothers the role of cultural transmitters, and play an important role in terms of relaying linguistic and cultural symbols (Kırcı-Uğurlu, 2014).

Considering that language acquisition starts in the period when the baby is in the cradle, the role played by lullabies in this process cannot be denied. Lullabies are one of the significant communication tools in which words are chosen prudently, which have a simple and smooth language, and ensure the interaction between the baby and the mother. The fact that lullabies are sung with a certain harmony and an intensity of tune and emotions, and that this singing feature is blended with language and culture invaluablely contribute to the language development of the baby in the cradle (Çıblak-Coşkun, 2013). Although they may seem like words said to the baby by the mother at first sight, lullabies positively affect mother tongue and musical intelligence development of babies, and they constitute the first activity samples that babies encounter after they are born (Kaya and Özkut, 2017).

Lullabies exist in almost all societies with similar purposes and in similar ways. It is only natural that written and verbal cultural elements of certain societies display certain characteristics that belong to the society they emerge. For instance, songs may generally vary in terms of intercultural styles and structures. However, especially lullabies share common characteristics due to their unique functions and their listeners. Addressing the baby shows structural similarities among various languages. While speaking to the babies before the language development, adults typically speak with a higher and wider range of pitch and use smooth, simple, and highly modulated tone styles. In addition, they employ shorter expressions, longer pauses, a slower pace, and more prosodic repetitions. With these features, a musical quality is added to speech (Unyk, Trehub, Trainor and Schellenberg, 1992).

Music has the power of establishing strong connections and facilitating the communication between individuals. It also promotes friendship and sincere sharing. Singing and playing music have been an inseparable part of the relationship between an adult and a child throughout history and in cultures. These features are also true for lullabies. Lullabies are a universal and ancient type of song which is accepted as a significant part of child care in all cultures (Bonnar, 2014). Learning music and words together usually along with hand and body movements is an excellent way of combining brain connections for children to learn and providing enjoyment for them. Throughout centuries and in different cultures, adults have created lullabies in order to calm down babies and get them to fall asleep (Honig, 2005). In addition to getting the baby to sleep, calm down, be loved, and play, lullabies help establish a psychological bond between the mother and the baby. In this context, in addition to the functional properties of lullabies, they also draw attention as an important element that protects the baby from fear, stress, and anxiety during growth and development, comforts him/her, and ensures his/her interaction with the mother (Şimşek, 2016).

Children having an extraordinary memory storage capacity is considered a positive aspect in terms of the development of language skills. Along with the maturation of their vocal tract, they conceive everything better that contributes to their speech production. Besides, children's digesting language skills more than it is observed from outside is seen as an understandable situation. Despite low performance, their brains are much more developed in babyhood. Babies get familiar with the words accompanying the rhythm when a lullaby is sung repetitively within a certain period of time. As they are naturally sensitive towards rhythm, they tend to listen to the lullabies sung by their mothers more attentively. Moreover,

babies are more careful about the prosodic features of language. They are curious about tone patterns at all times. Normal speech has various intonations, yet the intonation in lullabies varies depending on how the mother performs this. Therefore, the voice of the individual singing the lullaby directly affects the development of guidance and intonation skill, language habit, and interest in music (Nandakamura, 2016).

Lullabies involve both the singer and the baby in a communicational activity in which the baby in the position of the receiver expresses acceptance feelings through facial and bodily movements. The mother and the baby are involved in a cultural practice process by singing and listening to a melody with which they are familiar. The communication process includes the mother's repetition of her presentation in order to get the desired feedback from the baby. In this music sharing which is described as "quite typical" by the mother, repetition elements are prominent. It helps the baby to produce the sounds and learn the words. This repetition action is considered functional in teaching a language and therefore a source of acculturation. The lyrics of the lullabies are chosen among short, simple, and fluent words. As a result, lullabies facilitate learning words sung in them. Some expressions such as stars, the moon, sleep movements in order to shut the eyes help babies to learn and recognize the world around them (Anzak, Sultana and Zulfiqar, 2019).

Lullabies, which form the lowest step of children's literature, are melodious poems that have a great effect in the first years of language development, have the feature of shaping personality, and are created based on the mood of the individual singing them (Polat and Şaşmaz, 2015). As the singer of the lullaby, the mother expresses her expectations, sufferings, concerns, problems, confidence, and hopes through the lullaby. These feelings constitute the initial knowledge stored in the individual's mind by being transmitted through lullabies, and lullabies sung through a mother's affection form the groundwork of love and tolerance in the individual (Güneş, 2010). When lullabies, which are a simple and harmonious literary genre mostly with a rhythm, are considered in terms of musical taste, it is clear that the real value of the melody, sound, and vocabulary transmitted by the mother, who occupies a significant place in the development of the individual, should not be ignored (Kaya and Özkut, 2017).

Lullabies are used as a tool in teaching children the skills, concepts, or events that need to be taught both formally and informally, and they enable children to develop in line with their development speed. Thus, children are provided with more opportunities for discovering and learning. In this sense, the educators and parents, who play an important role in children's education, should display a conscious and sensitive behavior regarding this issue (Gelişli and Yazıcı, 2016). The teaching aspects of lullabies can be used as course materials for L1 courses.

Lullabies that the individuals becomes familiar with starting from early years of life can transfer these educational aspects with the help of this familiarity. Teachers' experiences and recommendations in this regard are important in terms of forming a teaching technique theory (Bağcı-Ayrancı, 2017). The basic rules and vocabulary of language are included in detail in lullabies. Accordingly, it is possible to find many concrete and abstract concepts and their meaning in lullabies such as verbs, adjectives, address, antonyms, reduplications, idioms, rhymes, colors, emotions, names of the organs, numerical system, etc. (Çıblak-Coşkun, 2013). In this regard, it is known that the use of lullabies, which have been classified as a type of poem in the Turkish Course Curriculum (Ministry of National Education, 2019), in the early years of the primary school education as reading and listening texts contributes positively to the development of these skills. The child whose listening skill has developed through lullabies can also develop listening and reading skills when s/he becomes literate.

Hence, it can be claimed that comprehension and productive skills, which are the keystones of language education, are developed through this genre.

As a literary genre, lullabies need to be examined by various scientific disciplines. Considering their rich content and meaning intensity, lullabies are texts that contain legends that could be examined by historians, sociologists, and linguists, and various elements related to the history of thought, concept of being, religion vision, and societal concerns. These texts, which reflect many issues of culture and common values created by the society, are an invaluable treasure in terms of understanding the society's language and thought system (Tökel, 2008).

When the 2019 Turkish course curriculum is examined, it is seen that lullabies are mandatory texts to be included in the textbooks for grades 1-4 (Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2019). However, the curriculum does not include information on how to use the lullabies in the textbooks in language education and development. This situation brings to mind the questions of how lullabies should be used in activities for language development and what should be given priority. Moreover, it is seen that many studies have been conducted on the effect of lullabies on the cognitive and linguistic development of the child (Farsakoğlu-Eroğlu, 2018; Güneş and Güneş, 2012; Kabadayı, 2009; Kanak, Önder and Subaşı, 2018; Mindell and Williamson, 2018; Polat and Şaşmaz, 2015; Toker, 2011). However, in the literature review, it is seen that there is no study on the word frequency of lullabies and the effects of frequently used words on language development. At this point, it is considered as a starting point to determine the frequency of the words used in lullabies in order to find answers to these questions. Based on this information, it was aimed in the study to determine the most frequently used words in Turkish lullabies and to evaluate the contribution of lullabies to language development over the words determined. In accordance with the purpose of the study, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are the first 100 words most frequently used in lullabies?
2. Which are the most prominent words in terms of language education among the frequently used words in lullabies?
3. What is the overlap between the words frequently used in lullabies and the words frequently used in children's books?

### **1.1. Methods**

Qualitative document analysis method was used in the study. Document analysis is a procedure based on the systematic examination and evaluation of written or electronic materials containing data sources such as texts, images, recorded interviews (Bowen, 2009). In the study, "Turkish Lullabies" by Demir and Demir (2014) and "Turkish Lullabies from Anatolia" by Demir (2018) were used as data sources.

### **1.2. Limitations**

In the study, besides the works used as data sources, the works named "Folk Lullabies" by Chapelyo (1938) and "Turkish Lullaby Treasure" by Çelebioğlu (1982) were also reached. However, the works named "Turkish Lullabies" and "Turkish Lullabies from Anatolia" were preferred because they are both more up-to-date and complementary to each other. The research is limited to the word frequency of the lullabies in these two works.

In the first 100 word list reached in the research, there are words in different types and tasks. The findings presented and interpreted in the research were limited to the words that indicate family and kinship in the first 100 words and the words used for metaphor.

### 1.3. Document Pool Creation

In order to form a document pool, the two sources used in the study were transferred to digital environment. A total of 2,919 lullabies were determined in these sources. The lullabies were collected in one file, and the data obtained were uploaded to CasualConc 3.0 word count software. With the help of the word count program, the total number of words in the lullabies was determined, and as a result of calculations, unique words were obtained. A total of 86070 words used in lullabies were analyzed one by one. Inflectional suffixes were removed from the words in order to obtain unique words. Words in base form or words with derivational affix were accepted as unique words. The frequency of unique words were determined, and they were listed from the most frequent down to the least frequent.

### 1.4. Data Analysis

In the analysis of the data obtained in the study, descriptive data analysis technique was used. Descriptive data analysis is an analysis technique in which it is aimed to build research findings, based on the data collected as much as possible, especially through the qualitative data, without depending on previously determined themes, categories, or codes within a theoretical framework (Lambert and Lambert, 2012). Based on the frequency of the words obtained from the lullabies, the top 100 most frequently used words were determined. The nouns included in these words that are related to family and kinship relations and which are used for metaphors were analyzed in terms of the meanings they assume in various contexts and the functions they perform.

## 2. Findings and Interpretation

A total of 86,070 words were determined in the lullabies examined in the study. It was also determined that there were 3,295 unique words in these lullabies, and the total number was reached with the repetitions of these unique words. The usage frequency of the first 100 most frequently used words in the lullabies was determined to be 57,025. Accordingly, the 100 most frequently used words corresponded to 66.25% of the total number of words in the lullabies screened in the study ( $57,025/86,070 \times 100$ ).

Table 1: *The first 100 most frequently used words in Turkish lullabies*

Word	f	Word	f	Word	f	Words	f
ninni (interjection.)	17,640	sleep	357	child	154	a lot (adv./adj.)	104
little one	4,818	beautiful	330	head	154	uncle	104
baby	2,629	to go	327	water	154	stranger	104
to sleep	2,594	willy-nilly (adverb)	325	to bring	149	pine	102
and, too	2,244	mountain	313	calf	147	to burn	101
I (pron.)	1,610	what (pron./adj.)	279	to put	146	to lie	100
to grow	1,464	eye	253	hennaed	138	soldier	99
lamb	1,342	this (pron./adj.)	251	to play	137	camel	99
to be	1,087	Allah	249	inside	136	to sift	99
to come	1,060	road	241	sacrifice	136	white	98
you (pron.)	981	put	233	to say	136	to flow	98
		to					

sleep							
son	815	to cry	230	now (adv.)	134	to love	98
daughter	793	to eat	222	to see	133	pasha	97
to say	769	to raise	221	like (prep.)	131	black	94
hu (interj.)	762	hand	212	God	128	mawla	94
father	737	to take	202	to fall	126	to stay	92
to walk	560	to do	188	arm	125	flower	91
mother	540	bird	168	angel	125	to roll	91
one	493	to swaddle	164	to rock	123	problem	90
rose	463	life	164	by (adv.)	122	dervish	90
cradle	461	home	163	red	119	branch	89
have	445	husband	161	stone	116	boy	89
to give	444	to make	161	honey	111	to go up	88
dandini (interj.)	424	to wake up	160	roof	110	sweetie	88
oy (interj.)	394	to look	159	we (pron.)	104	with	87

Table 1 includes the first 100 most frequently used words in Turkish lullabies. Among these words, in addition to nouns and verbs, there are interjections (ninni, hu, dandini, oy), words used in the functions of conjunction and preposition (too, by), pronouns (I, you, what, this, we), and adverbs and prepositions (willy-nilly, now, called, a lot, like). The word “willy-nilly” used as an adverb is the only reduplication among the first 100 most frequently words.

### 2.1. Words Related to Family and Kinship Relations

When the first 100 most frequently used words in Turkish lullabies are examined, it is seen that there are words expressing family and kinship relations. Accordingly, the word “son” is used 813 times, “daughter” 793 times, “father” 737 times, “mother” 540 times, and “uncle” 104 times. In addition to these family related words presented in Table 1, the word “grandpa” is used 45 times “uncle and aunt” 43 times each, “aunt” (mother’s sister) 42 times, and “sibling” 33 times in Turkish lullabies. This indicates that family and kinship relations are widely used in the lullabies and contribute to the enrichment of meaning by being used in various contexts.

According to the Turkish Dictionary (Türk Dil Kurumu, 2011: 1790), the word “son” has four different meanings; the first meaning is “baby boy” and the third meaning is “a group of young bees who left the hive with a mother bee.” In the example “If I call you my lamb/ A lamb is born from a sheep/ If I call you son / A son is born from a bee, ninni” / What should I call you, ninni / How should I love you, ninni”, it is seen that the word is used in both senses, enriching the meaning. In the example “Sleep on my knees, son / The apple of my eye, son / Sleep and grow up / Be a soldier, son”, the mother use the word “son” in its first meaning and expresses her emotions and expectations from her son. The singer referring to soldiership, which is very important in the Turkish culture, expresses her wish that her son will grow to become a soldier, based on the tradition that males reaching a certain age must do compulsory service in the military.

In another example, the mother singing the lullaby assigns a different duty to her son. Family is a sacred structure in the Turkish culture. As per the Turkish customs, the protector of this sacred structure is the father (Aslan, 2019). In the absence of the father, the responsibility passes onto the son. In the example, “At the skirts of the snowy mountain / on the leaf of the violet / If the father is gone, the son in his bed / Ninni, my little lamb, ninni”, in the absence of the father, the mother sees her son in the cradle as the person who will assume the responsibility of the family and expresses her expectations in the form of a lullaby. This important element of the Turkish family structure is thus instilled in the mind of the son, who is still a baby in the swaddle.

One of the words that are used most frequently is the word “girl” and therefore “daughter.” She is depicted as a person who is attached great value in the lullabies, is expected to grow up and become a bride, and helps her mother at home. As can be seen in the example “Springs comes, summer comes / crane comes, goose comes / gold in earthenware / Is not enough for my daughter / Ninni, my daughter, ninni / Ninni, my lamb, ninni”, the mother sees her daughter more valuable than gold in earthenware and emphasizes that her value cannot be measured with material things. In the example “Nanay nanay coy daughter / Go out and walk around the courtyard my daughter / when guests come visit us / Serve them sugar and sherbet, my daughter / Ninni my baby ninni / Ninni my baby ninni”, the baby girl in the cradle is instilled the duty of hosting guests. Here, the daughter, who is allowed to walk around freely at home, is advised to fulfill her responsibilities when guests come, and thus this is inculcated in the baby’s mental world.

In addition, there are elements in Turkish lullabies regarding the girls’ school education. As can be seen in the example “Let my baby girl grow by sleeping / Let my baby be a scholar by reading / Let my baby girl know everything in the world / My baby girl, my beautiful baby girl”, there is an expectation from the girl to get education and be a scholar and knowledgeable person. The girl will go to school, will gain knowledge, and will be known with this aspect of hers. By singing such a lullaby, the mother imagines a future for her daughter and expresses this vision to her, which is evaluated as a significant expectation in terms of the education of children, and girls in particular.

When the texts that include the word “father” are examined, it is seen that the father’s role as the head of the family in meeting the needs of the family and in the children’s education is mentioned a lot. Besides, issues such as the father’s being away from home for compulsory military service or other reasons are included in the lullabies. In the example “Come his father come / Hold him in your bosom / Your son will be a soldier / Make him a man, his father / Ninni my pasha ninni / Ninni my courageous boy ninni”, the emphasis is placed on the fact that the father raises the child as a courageous man as he will become a soldier. In another example “From the hospital, hospital / Camels are returning from chestnut harvest / Lady from the mother, gentleman from the father / Let him sleep and grow ninni / Let him walk willy-nilly ninni / Ninni my baby ninni / Ninni my daughter ninni”, an educational process in which the child learns being a lady from the mother and a gentleman from the father is mentioned. The father is frequently impersonated in Turkish lullabies as the person who makes the living for the family and meets the needs of the children. In the example “You can get angry as much as you wish, mother / I won’t give my daughter to him / Let her father work and bring home food / My daughter will sit and eat / Ninni my baby girl ninni / Ninni my baby girl ninni”, the mother singing the lullaby emphasizes the role of the father in meeting the basic needs of the baby.

In many lullabies, the father’s being in compulsory service in the military or being away from home is mentioned. In these lullabies, the mother expresses her longing for the father



and her wish to come together again while sleeping the baby. In the example “Is the cradle too narrow for my baby / Will her father come back from the military soon / Are her mother’s lullabies not sufficient / Ninni my baby girl ninni / Ninni my baby ninni”, the mother’s wish for her husband’s quick return from the military is emphasized, while in the example “Your father has gone away / Sleep my baby, so he comes soon / Full of longing are our days and nights / He may come to sunny days / Sleep my baby, so he comes back soon / Ninni my coy baby ninni / Ninni the apple of my eye ninni”, the mother’s wish for the father to return home soon from foreign lands is expressed.

In Turkish lullabies, we see the mother as the person who spends the most effort for the growth and development of the baby. As it is usually the mother who sings the lullaby to the baby, it is seen that the mother reflects her own life and views onto the lullabies. It is possible to observe this situation in the examples “Let the mother who bears have joy / Let the mother who breastfeeds be happy / Let the mother who sings the lullaby be proud / Ninni my baby ninni / Ninni my baby ninni” and “My lullabies affect you / Your mouth is honey, your lips are sugar / Your mother bears your problems / Ninni my baby ninni”. Moreover, it is possible to see lullabies in which the mother perceives the baby as a life companion for herself, and the mother needs the baby just as the baby needs the mother. In the example “She becomes my playmate while playing house / She becomes both parents and sibling / She comes a life companion for me / My baby ninni, my lamb ninni”, it is expressed that the baby has an important role in eliminating the mother’s loneliness. In another example “Sugar dust is not scattered / Heart does not leave the beloved / Mother can’t exist without her baby / Baby cannot exist without the mother / Let my baby sleep, ninni”, other than the basic needs, it is emphasized that the baby and the mother cannot be separated from each other.

The word “uncle” is the last kinship related word among the first 100 most frequently used words in Turkish lullabies. It is seen that this word is used together with other kinship words in lullabies. By using it along with words such as “aunt” and “uncle” (on the father’s side), the baby is made to perceive that s/he has a wide family. For instance, in the lullaby “She has rocks on both sides / She has double uncles / She has too many aunts / Ninni my lamb ninni / Ninni my rose ninni”, it is emphasized that the mother and the father have many siblings, and therefore the baby has many relatives to take care of him/her, thus instilling safety in the baby. In the example “Come her uncle come / Her uncle on a white horse / Ninni my baby / Ninni and ninni to my baby”, the mother singing the lullaby introduces her brother as a gentleman on a white horse to the baby. Another striking point related to the word “uncle” in the lullabies is that this person is always associated with positive aspects. This may suggest that the mother reflects her love for her brother to the lullaby and wishes her baby to love her uncle just as she loves her brother.

## 2. 2. Words Used for Metaphors

Regarding the words included in the first 100 most frequently used words in Turkish lullabies, the word lamb is used 1,342 times, bird 168 times, angel 125 times, flower 91 times, and sugar 88 times. In addition to their real meanings, these words are used as metaphors in many lullabies. It is noted that the mother singing the lullaby addresses the baby with these words and uses one these words according to the context.

The word lamb ranks eighth among the most frequently words used in lullabies. It is seen that this word is mostly used in the final two lines of the lullaby in the gently singing part. As can be seen in the example “Is the cradle too narrow for my baby / Will her father come back from the military soon / Are her mother’s lullabies not sufficient / Sleep and grow up my lamb ninni / Sleep and grow up my lamb ninni”, the person singing the lullaby firstly expresses her emotions and tries to get the baby to sleep by likening him/her to a lamb. In

addition, there are examples of lullabies in which the word lamb is used and the baby is likened to a lamb in the main part. In the example “I watched your road for weeks / Her mother’s lamb, the most beautiful / Sleep now, and grow up soon / Sleep my baby ninni / Sleep my baby ninni”, the mother mentions how she impatiently waited for her baby’s birth and likens her to a lamb. In yet another lullaby “White sheep black sheep / go to my lamb, sheep / If my lamb does not come / Beg her to come and bring her, sheep / Ninni to my daughter ninni / Ninni to my lamb ninni”, we can see very well how the word lamb is used in its real meaning and metaphorical meaning in the context of sheep-lamb relationship.

The word bird is one of the metaphors used the most in Turkish lullabies. This word is mostly used in order to express the cuteness of the baby and the sounds s/he produces and with the wish for some of the features of a bird to be possessed by the baby. In the example “You are my summer and winter, my love / My little cute bird / I am flying love to you / Let her sleep and grow up ninni / Let her walk willy-nilly ninni”, the baby is likened to a bird due to being tiny and cute. As can be seen in another example “Lay like a stone / Lift like a bird / Oh God, let my lamb / Sleep soon”, it is wished that the baby should lie like a stone without moving and fall asleep, and rise from the cradle with the agility of a bird after s/he sleeps enough.

In the Turkish Dictionary, the word angel is defined as “1. The spiritual entity made up of light which is believed to mediate between the God and humans, 2. A well-mannered, docile person,” In addition, the expression “like an angel” is defined in the dictionary as “1. Silent, calm, 2. Beautiful” (Türk Dil Kurumu, 2011: 1648). It is seen that this word is used in Turkish lullabies with all its meanings, and that the baby is likened to an angel with an aspect of hers. In the example “You are a tiny angel / You are a wish in hearts / You will also grow up / Sleep my baby sleep / Sleep my baby sleep”, the person singing the lullaby likens the baby to an angel due to her innocence and docility. Also, in the example “Their eyes glitter / They are clean in essence / Their faces are like an angel / Ninni my baby ninni / My little lamb ninni”, it is seen that the word angel is used in order to express the beauty of the baby.

The word flower creates a perception of beauty in almost everywhere it is used. Flowers have a nice fragrance and are colorful. The meaning attached to the word flower in lullabies emerges in this direction. The person singing the lullaby likens the baby to a flower and addresses him/her with this word. In the example “The only flower of the home / Sleep, my apple of the eye / I would endure all suffering for you / Sleep my baby ninni / Grow up my baby ninni”, the baby is pictured as the precious one and beauty of the home. Similarly, in the example “The black sheep comes blating / It drills mountains and rocks and comes / Your father is riding a bay horse / He comes counting the stars at night / Ninni my baby ninni / Ninni my flower ninni”, the baby is addressed as “my flower”, and is put to sleep with this word expressing her elegance and beauty.

It is seen that in the examples of Turkish lullabies in which the baby is likened to sugar, the word sugar is used in order to express cuteness and beauty. In these samples, it is observed that in addition to likening the baby to sugar as a whole, his/her lips are a matter of metaphor as well. As can be seen in the example “My daughter my rose daughter / My sugar daughter my honey daughter / Are you rose or are you honey / Or are you orange flavored / Sleep my baby ninni / Sleep my baby sleep”, the baby is likened to many things that express sweetness, beauty, and cuteness in addition to sugar. Also, in the example “My lullabies affect you / Your mouth is honey, your lips are sugar / Your mother bears your problems / Ninni my baby ninni”, the baby’s mouth and lips are likened to sugar and his/her cuteness and sweetness are emphasized, and these words are instilled in the baby’s mental world.

### **2. 3. The Use of the Words Frequently Used in Lullabies in Children’s Books**

In this part of the study, the first 100 most frequently used words in Turkish lullabies are compared with the first 100 most frequently used words in children's books. The word frequency in children's books used in the study was borrowed from the children's books word list obtained by Baş (2006) in his doctoral dissertation. The findings obtained as a result of the comparison made are presented below in Table 2.

Table 2: The comparison between the words frequently used in lullabies and the words frequently used in children's books

The First 100 Words Most Frequently Used in Lullabies						The First 100 Words Most Frequently Used in Children's Books					
Rank	Word	f	Rank	Word	f	Rank	Word	f	Rank	Word	f
1	<i>ninni</i>	17,640	51	<i>child</i>	154	1	<i>one</i>	13,054	51	<i>head</i>	1,368
2	<i>little one</i>	4,818	52	<i>head</i>	154	2	<i>and, too</i>	8,688	52	<i>to stay</i>	1,358
3	<i>baby</i>	2,629	53	<i>water</i>	154	3	<i>to be</i>	7,373	53	<i>water</i>	1,272
4	<i>to sleep</i>	2,594	54	<i>to bring</i>	149	4	<i>this</i>	6,505	54	<i>every</i>	1,242
5	<i>and, too</i>	2,244	55	<i>calf</i>	147	5	<i>to say</i>	6,356	55	<i>road</i>	1,229
6	<i>I</i>	1,610	56	<i>to put</i>	146	6	<i>he/she/it</i>	5,741	56	<i>to pass</i>	1,192
7	<i>to grow</i>	1,464	57	<i>hennaed</i>	138	7	<i>to come</i>	4,334	57	<i>to stop</i>	1,142
8	<i>lamb</i>	1,342	58	<i>to play</i>	137	8	<i>and</i>	4,245	58	<i>master</i>	1,130
9	<i>to be</i>	1,087	59	<i>inside</i>	136	9	<i>I</i>	3,741	59	<i>none</i>	1,108
10	<i>to come</i>	1060	60	<i>sacrifice</i>	136	10	<i>what</i>	3,581	60	<i>human</i>	1,096
11	<i>you</i>	981	61	<i>to say</i>	136	11	<i>to go</i>	2,846	61	<i>not have</i>	1,091
12	<i>son</i>	815	62	<i>now</i>	134	12	<i>girl</i>	2,828	62	<i>until</i>	1,089
13	<i>daughter</i>	793	63	<i>to see</i>	133	13	<i>mi(mi,mu ,mü) yes/no q.</i>	2,813	63	<i>to turn</i>	1,079
14	<i>to say</i>	769	64	<i>like</i>	131	14	<i>a lot</i>	2,781	64	<i>man</i>	1,058
15	<i>hu</i>	762	65	<i>God</i>	128	15	<i>after</i>	2,467	65	<i>time</i>	1,052
16	<i>father</i>	737	66	<i>to fall</i>	126	16	<i>have</i>	2,368	66	<i>sound</i>	1,036
17	<i>to walk</i>	560	67	<i>arm</i>	125	17	<i>to give</i>	2,354	67	<i>work</i>	1,023
18	<i>mother</i>	540	68	<i>angel</i>	125	18	<i>like</i>	2,335	68	<i>inside</i>	1,019
19	<i>one</i>	493	69	<i>to rock</i>	123	19	<i>to take</i>	2,296	69	<i>horse</i>	1,011
20	<i>rose</i>	463	70	<i>by</i>	122	20	<i>day</i>	2,240	70	<i>to find</i>	1,006
21	<i>cradle</i>	461	71	<i>red</i>	119	21	<i>you</i>	2,222	71	<i>there</i>	985
22	<i>have</i>	445	72	<i>stone</i>	116	22	<i>to see</i>	2,179	72	<i>here</i>	973
23	<i>to give</i>	444	73	<i>honey</i>	111	23	<i>for</i>	2,108	73	<i>big</i>	967
24	<i>dandini</i>	424	74	<i>roof</i>	110	24	<i>give</i>	2,098	74	<i>not</i>	960
25	<i>oy</i>	394	75	<i>we</i>	104	25	<i>to do</i>	2,068	75	<i>immediately</i>	941
26	<i>sleep</i>	357	76	<i>a lot</i>	104	26	<i>to look</i>	2,060	76	<i>to me</i>	884
27	<i>beautiful</i>	330	77	<i>uncle</i>	104	27	<i>by</i>	2,052	77	<i>like this</i>	879

28	<b>to go</b>	327	78	<i>strange</i> <i>r</i>	104	28	<i>but</i>	2,049	78	<i>to enter</i>	879
29	<i>willy-nilly</i>	325	79	<i>pine</i>	102	29	<i>father</i>	1,963	79	<i>so</i>	877
30	<b>mountain</b>	313	80	<i>to burn</i>	101	30	<i>to do</i>	1,936	80	<i>you</i>	865
31	<b>what</b>	279	81	<i>to lie</i>	100	31	<i>...that</i>	1,935	81	<i>to think</i>	853
32	<i>eye</i>	253	82	<i>soldier</i>	99	32	<i>self</i>	1,844	82	<i>the most</i>	850
33	<b>this</b>	251	83	<i>camel</i>	99	33	<i>to want</i>	1,832	83	<i>word</i>	849
34	<i>Allah</i>	249	84	<i>to sift</i>	99	34	<i>child</i>	1,805	84	<i>good</i>	846
35	<b>road</b>	241	85	<i>white</i>	98	35	<i>to start</i>	1,741	85	<i>small</i>	836
36	<i>put to sleep</i>	233	86	<i>to flow</i>	98	36	<i>hand</i>	1,719	86	<i>above</i>	820
37	<i>to cry</i>	230	87	<i>to love</i>	98	37	<i>to get out</i>	1,685	87	<i>correct</i>	818
38	<i>to eat</i>	222	88	<i>pasha</i>	97	38	<i>eye</i>	1,585	88	<i>sibling</i>	817
39	<i>to raise</i>	221	89	<i>black</i>	94	39	<i>mother</i>	1,576	89	<i>front</i>	812
40	<b>hand</b>	212	90	<i>mawla</i>	94	40	<i>home</i>	1,572	90	<i>interior</i>	808
41	<b>to take</b>	202	91	<i>to stay</i>	92	41	<i>we</i>	1,554	91	<i>to ask</i>	803
42	<b>to do</b>	188	92	<i>flower</i>	91	42	<i>two</i>	1,516	92	<i>break</i>	790
43	<i>bird</i>	168	93	<i>to roll</i>	91	43	<i>to know</i>	1,508	93	<i>sultan</i>	760
44	<i>to swaddle</i>	164	94	<i>problem</i>	90	44	<i>more</i>	1,495	94	<i>young boy</i>	758
45	<i>life</i>	164	95	<i>dervish</i>	90	45	<i>son</i>	1,461	95	<i>to bring</i>	753
46	<b>home</b>	163	96	<i>branch</i>	89	46	<i>side</i>	1,448	96	<i>again</i>	743
47	<b>husband</b>	161	97	<i>boy</i>	89	47	<i>they</i>	1,429	97	<i>how</i>	741
48	<i>to make</i>	161	98	<b>to go out</b>	88	48	<i>beautiful</i>	1,418	98	<i>to hear</i>	737
49	<i>to wake up</i>	160	99	<i>sweetie</i>	88	49	<i>to say</i>	1,396	99	<i>mountain (hill)</i>	733
50	<b>to look</b>	159	100	<i>with</i>	87	50	<i>thing</i>	1,389	100	<i>whole</i>	715

Table 2 includes the first 100 words most frequently used in Turkish lullabies and in children's books. It is seen that 37 words frequently used in Turkish lullabies are also frequently used in children's books. This suggests that Turkish lullabies can form an important source for teaching many words in addition to teaching these words through children's books. It is considered significant to categorize these words according to their types and to determine the contexts in which they are used in lullabies in terms of getting children to understand the depth of the concepts. Based on this, it is thought that preparing the collocation map of the words frequently used in lullabies and interpreting them is important for understanding the depth of concepts and teaching vocabulary.

Considering the contexts of the verbs frequently used in lullabies, it is seen that they carry various meanings. The lullabies in which the verb "come" is frequently used and the meanings it carries are presented below in order to elaborate this situation.

The verb “come” has been used 1,060 times in Turkish lullabies. According to the Turkish Dictionary, this verb is used in 36 different meanings. It is believed that a comprehensive screening of the lullabies will yield most of these meanings. In addition, a quick review of the lullabies shows that this verb has been used in 7 different meanings even only in 4 samples. In the example “Why is my lamb crying / crying because her sleep has come / If you don’t sleep / Your mother will cry as well”, the verb is used in the meaning of emergence of natural needs; in the example “What will happen if I say ninni / Roses will bloom, the spring will come / Mute birds start to sing”, the verb is used as a compound verb by adding it to words signifying direction; in the example “My lullabies feel pleasant / Sheep and ram are coming / Don’t you cry, my rose / Your father loves you a lot, ninni”, it is used with the meanings of “having an effect” and “arrive”; and in the example “Ninni my baby the summer has come / Cherries have come to the uplands / I bought and paid 5 to 10 cents / That was not sufficient for my baby”, the verb come is used in the meanings of “reaching a certain period”, “emerge”, “rise”, and “be sufficient.”

### 3. Discussion

The individual’s love of his/her language and skill of using the language effectively and appropriately should be developed starting from early years of life. Lullabies, which are among the types of language products encountered in early years of life, are important in this regard. The harmonious feature of language inherent in lullabies necessitates their use in order to develop a linguistic awareness in the child (Bağcı-Ayrancı, 2017). The results obtained in the study clearly reveal the role played by lullabies in the development of language skills. Considering the cultural, social, and linguistic elements they contain, lullabies are a unique treasure for the societies in which they emerge.

It is known that literary texts play a substantial role in the language development process. Many literary texts are used as listening and reading texts in order to get individuals to gain and develop language skills. Lullabies are texts that can be used for such purposes. Because, lullaby is the first pedagogical material used in the acquisition and development of basic language skills (Toker, 2011). The frequency list obtained in the study and inferences regarding the words with high frequency in this list are important in this regard. It was determined that the number of unique words in the lullabies examined was 3,295. It is seen as a problem to determine which of these words would be appropriate to use in the development of basic language skills in general and reading/listening comprehension skills in particular. At this point, the list of the first 100 most frequently used words determined in the study is presented to the researchers regarding what the words that will be used in language education will be and which words should be prioritized.

It was revealed that the lullabies examined in terms of word frequency are sung not only to get children to sleep, but also to primarily educate them. It can be claimed that the groundwork of today’s pre-school education was laid thousands of years ago. The lullabies indicate that girls and boys are not discriminated in the Turkish culture, and that both genders are attributed the same degree of significance (Demir, 2008). When the nouns frequently used expressing family bonds are examined, it is seen that they are absolutely used in the context of a message. As the person usually singing the lullaby, the mother addresses her son and daughter and instills the responsibilities of and expectations from boys and girls in the social context in their mental world. It was determined in the study that the most frequently used words in the lullabies were son, daughter, and mother. In the lullabies they examined, Özdemir and Sarı (2020) determined that when a son was mentioned, references were made to features such as bravery, courage, and savior. In parallel with these features, in the present study, references were determined to the responsibilities that the son would assume when he

grew up and the bravery that he would display by doing the compulsory military service. In the same study they conducted, Özdemir and Sarı (2020) reported that the features of a daughter such as elegance, beauty, and helping her mother were emphasized in the lullabies. This result is in parallel with the findings of the present study regarding the word daughter as a frequently used word in lullabies.

Lullabies are among the distilled national culture in which traditionality is dominant. Lullabies have a privileged position in terms of the functionality of traditions and nurturing and developing national identity. By blending the knowledge they acquired with the feeling of motherhood, mothers lead to meaningful learning in children (İşcan and Karagöz, 2016). At this point, the word “uncle”, which is frequently used in lullabies and indicates a kinship relationship, holds a mirror to the society. The mother singing lullaby to her baby reflects her love of her brother and her positive thoughts of him onto her words in the lullaby. This situation shows how the relationship between siblings is perceived and interpreted in the social structure. The mother is noteworthy in that she assumes many responsibilities related to the baby’s physiological and cognitive development. In addition, she sees the baby as a companion, and inculcates her expectations, joys, sorrows into the baby’s mental world through lullabies. In this context, Aka (2010) states that lullabies serve as a tool that leads to the surfacing of various emotions subdued in the subconscious to the conscious level. The fact that the word “mother”, which is one of the most frequently used words in Turkish lullabies, is referred to along with concepts such as loneliness and mutual needs is considered meaningful in this context.

Regarding the lullabies, it is seen that the child’s education starts while the baby is still in the cradle. The singing of the lullabies with simple and selected words and the use of pure and clear words are related with L1 teaching. It is noted that the basic rules, concepts, and terminology of language are included in lullabies (Demir, 2008). In the frequency list created in the study, there are numerous words used as metaphors. These words are used in different meanings depending on the contexts, and this situation demonstrates that lullabies are a significant source for teaching vocabulary. It is also seen that many words frequently used in lullabies are also used frequently in children’s books.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, lullabies are considered as texts that are highly important for getting children to acquire and develop language with its cultural, social, and conceptual dimensions. When the results of the study are evaluated, it is thought that the words frequently used in lullabies are the words that can be preferred in the language development in children. It is seen that the duties and responsibilities that an individual will meet in social life can be processed through the words frequently used in lullabies. It is also seen that many words that are frequently used in lullabies can be beneficial in the teaching of concepts such as synonyms and near-synonyms. Moreover, these words are significant examples in terms of getting children to acquire metaphors as one of figures of speech.

It is believed that benefiting from lullabies in reading and listening education studies in the early years of primary school education will significantly contribute to children’s language development. Considering that many of the words that are frequently used in lullabies are also used frequently in children’s books, it is thought that lullabies can be used at certain levels just as the other types of children’s literature. In this context, it is possible to state that developing reading and listening activities over the words frequently used in lullabies can positively affect the development of children’s comprehension skills.

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