

Mass Communication in the Context of Feminist Critical Theory: Analysis of Violence Against Women on Folk Songs

Nurgül Ergül Güvendi¹ - Mehmet Serdar Erciç²

Article Info

Abstract

Keywords:
Mass Communication
Gender Roles
Turkish Folk Songs
Women's Studies
Feminist Critical Theory

Folk songs are cultural and artistic products produced with both literary and auditory means. The processes of perceiving, interpreting and making sense of life by the individuals who make up the society cannot be considered independent of the environment and culture they belong to. Art works of a society are important historical cultural values that show the way that society perceives, interprets and makes sense of life. In this research, in which folk songs, which are one of the most important values of Turkish culture, are examined in the context of gender roles, physical factors such as the forced marriage of the woman at a young age by her own family, not being allowed to marry the person she wants, marrying someone younger than her due to the bride price, being taken into the sand because she has no children, and psychological violence. Folk songs are important in terms of evaluating gender roles, as they represent traditional characteristics, carry the role of cultural carrier and historical document, and are an indicator of socio-cultural structure. In addition, the discursive structure and messages of these ballads in the context of discourses that establish gender roles, which are at the core of feminist critical theory, are worth investigating. The aim of this study is to investigate the problems arising from gender roles. For this purpose, the folk songs created on a real experience were examined within the scope of violence against women. TRT Repertoire was used for data collection and descriptive analysis method was used for analysis. The results were evaluated in the context of feminist critical theory. Deciphering the negative discriminatory discourses on the female gender is very important for the analysis and transformation of the social structure. In the research, music, one of the branches of art, has been examined within the category of folk songs, which is a traditional communication element. As a mass media, folk songs with the theme of violence against women have been evaluated in the context of feminist theory. The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of folk songs, which are one of the important elements of cultural structure, in terms of gender roles in mass communication. While our findings confirm the violence that women are exposed to in life, they show that these works should be replaced with different ideas and discourses.

Introduction

Creation, display, image and all actions that interact with other people, which are characterized as the products of our feelings, beliefs, tastes and thoughts, are described as communication. If musical, verbal communication, emotions, thoughts, observations or designs are expressed by visual means, if a work of art consisting of sounds is mediated, there is a nonverbal visual communication process. If the sounds are shared through relations established with a certain order, rule, and aesthetic wholes, the artistic aspect of musical communication is in question (Uçan, 1996: 76). In the communication process, which is expressed as the process of reaching the target audience through a channel of the message that comes out of the source in its simplest definition, if the target audience consists of a large number of complex and large groups of people, then mass communication is mentioned. The common denominator of the

¹ Lecturer, Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Public Relations and Publicity Program, nurgulergul@gmail.com., Orcid: 0000-0002-9473-1474.

² Prof. Dr., Atatürk University, Communication Faculty, Public Relations and Publicity, serdarerc@hotmail.com, Orcid: 0000-0003-1007-9085.

communication activity, which is divided into various categories according to the target audience, source, process, method, message format, style and forms, is that it expresses an interaction process. In the literature, folk songs and communication relations, being a communication tool (Kinik, 2011), functionality (Görkem, 2020), media relations (Ekici, 2004), being an educational tool (Söğümlü and Tekşan). There are studies examining many different disciplines such as being a traditional transfer tool (Karataş, 2014), being a psychological tool (Aktaş, and Şimşek, 2014). From this point of view, in our research, music, which is one of the branches of art, has been examined as a traditional element within the category of folk songs. As a mass media, folk songs with the theme of violence against women have been evaluated in the context of feminist theory. The aim of this study is to investigate the relations of folk songs, which are one of the important elements of cultural structure, in terms of gender roles in mass communication. For this purpose, in the first part, conceptual and theoretical scope analysis was made, in the second part, the importance of folk songs in terms of mass communication was mentioned, in the third part, the songs determined within the scope and constraints were analyzed by descriptive analysis method, and in the last part, the findings were evaluated in the context of feminist critical theory. We believe that our results will contribute to the relevant literature, as it is the first study in which the cultural elements of gender roles in Turkish folk culture are examined in terms of communication and feminist critical theory.

Cultural Studies: Communication Art Relations

The values that a society has are the sum of beliefs, values and experiences that make up the individual or collective memory, and the sum of these material and moral values is called culture. The works produced as a result of the feelings and thoughts of a nation are very important in terms of understanding the sociocultural and sociopolitical situation of the period in which they were written. All of the artworks witnessing history are fingerprints that reflect the cultural values of the society. Therefore, works of art, which are a part of communication, whether produced by written, visual or auditory means, are also an important part of culture. Literary texts, especially those that bear witness to history and carry cultural values, are important sources that are thought to reflect the cultural structure of a society (Kaplan, 2003: 7). Although the value of a work in terms of its artistic style varies according to the structure of that branch of art, it is considered successful to the extent that it has a universal quality and reflects the beliefs, values and experiences of the society. In particular, its intergenerational permanence shows the feature of being a cultural heritage both in terms of communication and art. At this point, written literature is accepted as one of the most important treasures of the cultural language (Kaplan, 2003: 153-161). According to Filmer (2003: 200-202), the emotional and mental structure of a period can be understood by experiencing the works of art of that period. Three important functions of literary works are mentioned in the execution of cultural memory. Commemoration is a tool for remembering, being the object of commemoration and remembering, and being a tool for understanding the formation processes of cultural memory (Erll and Rigney, 2006: 112). From this point of view, literary works, as a means of expression, have very important functions in terms of creating social memory by mediating the creation, understanding and transfer of the cultural structure of the period. All these functions mediate the formation and continuity of cultural memory, as they are in a coherent structure with fields such as psychology, philosophy, ethics, and sociology (Erll and Rigney, 2006: 113).

Mass Communication and Turkish Folk Songs

Folk songs are described as one of the most effective communication tools of Turkish Folk Music due to the sincerity, enthusiasm and intense emotional expressions in their lyrics. "In communication, information, thoughts, feelings and behaviors can be transferred in different ways. They can be expressed in written, oral or expression forms that appeal to the five senses such as color, sound and image. In this process, it is important that the messages are transmitted from whom to whom, how and in what way, by what means and by what means" (Cemalcılar, 1988: 6). In musical communication, the

source is the composer and/or the artist who sings the song, the lyrics are the message, the audio (radio-cd, etc.) audio-visual (television) mass media of the folk songs, and the listeners are the receivers. In this context, the messages carried by Folk Songs are very important in terms of understanding the cultural structure of the relevant society, due to their traditional features, story, history and being a cultural element. On the other hand, the instantaneous reach of the message to large masses, especially due to the developing mass media, has made the receiver a mass, thus increasing the power and impact of communication. Folk music, which is accepted as the traditional music of the Turkish people, characterizes the lifestyles of the people according to the region or regions, but is also one of the important elements that express the lifestyle of the people in many fields such as linguistics, history and geography (Büyükyıldız, 2009: 13).

The cultural memory and the messages that we can define as historical documents in the lyrics of folk songs are one of the other factors that increase the relevant effect. As a result, auditory works of art, which are one of the important indicators of cultural structure, on the one hand, and the target audience's transforming the receiver into a large audience, on the other hand, have made the process of influence, persuasion, interaction and communication much more important. Depending on the purpose of the research, our research sample consists of folk songs that deal with the subject of violence against women among the Turkish Folk Songs. These folk songs are a deep-rooted folk art that reflects the essence of the Anatolian people in many ways. However, Turkish Folk Music is not limited to Anatolian Geography. Regardless of where they live, the sole owner of these works is Turkish people (Yener, 2006: 30). In short, Turkish Folk Music, It is one of the oldest folk arts that has spread to many areas of the world (Öztuna, 2006: 327).

Feminist Critical Theory

Feminist criticism movement is an approach that consists of seven feminist movements and is shaped by the first wave movement, the foundations of which were laid in 1920. Feminist thought, in which women acted in order to obtain various rights until the 1920s, turned to important academic studies to change the masculine perspective after the 1960s (Marshall, 1998: 240). Feminist critical theory, which developed with the second wave feminist movement, focused on the origins of the narrative structure and focused on the field of literature. Especially the novels of women writers have led to important developments in this field. In summary, feminism; states that there is an inequality between men and women in the economic, political and socio-cultural fields and argues that the causes of this inequality should be investigated and eliminated (Erçen, 2008). Cultural Feminism is focused on cultural transformation and advocates that the transformation be formed on the axis of matriarchal, that is, feminine values. It emphasizes the shaping of the enlightenment from an emotional, melodic point of view instead of a mechanical, material point of view (Donovan, 2005: 71).

According to Fuller, the reason for this thought is that women's development is seen as a very important factor for the change of society. According to Post Feminist thought, language and verbal products are the most important tools to be evaluated in terms of this development. For this reason, in our research, folk songs that allow a comprehensive analysis of the situation and issues where gender inequality is against women were preferred. In particular, the critical analysis of linguistic and discursive products offered by post-feminist thought has guided our research as it offers solutions to related problems.

Method

In this study, Turkish Folk Songs on Women were determined as the Universe, and Turkish Folk Songs on Violence against Women (4) were determined as samples. Relevant data are taken from the TRT Repertoire. In the analysis of the data, document analysis method and culture analysis design, which are among the qualitative research methods, were used. As Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013: 76) express from Hancock, cultural analysis is a method that focuses on the definition and analysis of cultural elements such as social behavior, structure, functioning, values and norms. In order to determine the themes of

violence against women in folk songs, which are an important part of our oral culture, a total of four works were analyzed by descriptive analysis method. Descriptive analysis is the interpretation of data according to determined themes. The purpose of this analysis is to present the findings in a systematic way. For this purpose, data first, it is systematically examined in line with the determined themes, and then it is evaluated in the context of cause-effect relationships (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013: 256). In addition, the data obtained in our research were interpreted in the context of feminist critical theory.

Findings

Folk Songs Themed Violence Against Women in TRT Repertoire

Table 1 gives the name of the song, the author, the region, the subject and the compilers of the songs with the theme of violence against women examined as a sample.

Table 1. Folk songs themed violence against women

Repertoire No	Folk Song	Author/Region	Topic-Theme	Compiler
3587	Ceviz Oynamaya Geldim Odana	Kayseri Adnan Türköz	A woman is forcibly married by her family to a boy much younger than her.	Nezahat Bayram
7	Ağ Elime Mor Kınalar Yaktılar	Denizli Süleyman Uğur	A little girl is married as a teenager by her parents for bride price.	Nida Tüfekçi
1530	Aktaş Diye Belediğim	Southeast Anatolia Selahattin Sarıkaya	The woman, who was taken to the sand because she did not have a child, goes crazy after the trouble she experienced.	Ateş Köyoğlu
1488	Kaçındasın Gelin Ümmü	Afyon Nezahat Bayram	A woman who runs away to her lover in order not to be forced into marriage with someone she does not want, falls into the river and drowns.	Muzaffer Sarısözen

Folk Song 1. Ceviz Oynamaya Geldim Odana

The woman, who was forced to marry a child much younger than her, by her family, tells that the child wants to play with her. The child, who is still at the age of play, wants to play with walnuts and the song is written on it.

Ceviz oynamaya geldim odana
Nişanlın da bu mu derler adama
Dayanamam senin kara sevdana
Aman aman olmuyor
Eş eşini bulmuyor
Kara yağız genç oğlan
Niye gönlün olmuyor
Asker bayrağını burca diktiler
Küçük yarimi asker ettiler
Ben doymadan o yari de alıp gittiler
Aman aman olmuyor
Eş eşini bulmuyor
Kara yağız genç oğlan
Niye gönlün olmuyor
Asker oldu yarim gitti kışlaya
Ben beklerim yarim gelsin sılaya
Ben ölmeden o yari de bana yollaya
Aman aman olmuyor
Eş eşini bulmuyor
Kara yağız genç oğlan
Niye gönlün olmuyor

Image 1. Folk song named "Ceviz Oynamaya Geldim Odana"

Folk songs, one of the most important products of Turkish Folklore, are works of art in which Turkish people express their feelings, thoughts, experience and artistic understanding (Ataman, 2009: 59). In the folk song called "Would you come to play Walnuts", as seen in the lines "Did you come to play walnuts, the wife doesn't find her husband, but it doesn't happen", there is a woman's involuntary marriage and her complaining, unhappiness, and disbelief over this situation.

Folk Song 2. Ağ Elime Mor Kınalar Yaktılar

The story of the girl who was married as a teenager-child, by her family for bride price.

Ağ elime mor kınalar yaktılar
Gaderim yok gurbet ele saddılar
On iki yaşındı gelin etdiler
Ağlar ağlar gözyaşımı silerim (of of)
Merdimenden endim endim yıkıldım
Mevla'm izin verdi gine dikildim
Her çiçekten aldım aldım takındım
Gırmızı gül sendi galdı tamahdım (of of)
Yüce dağ başındı n'asmalı pınar
Asması yıkılmış suları hurlar
Galındı gal gal süpürgü çaldığım evler
Başım alıp gurbet ele giderim (of of)

Image 2. Folk song named "Ağ Elime Mor Kınalar Yaktılar"

In this folk song, the physical and mental violence that the 12-year-old boy, who was forced into marriage, has been subjected to with his verses, I have no destiny, they sold him abroad, I went down the stairs, I collapsed, I cry, I wipe my tears, is clearly seen.

Folk Song 3. Aktaş Diye Belediğim

The woman, who is wanted to be taken to the sand by her husband because she has no children, goes crazy with sadness. She sees a stone as her child.

Ak Taş Diye Belediğim
Tülbendime Doladığım
Tanrıdan Dilek Dilediğim
Mevlam Şu Taşa Bir Can Ver
Tarlalarda Olur Yaba
Savururlar Gaba Gaba
Merzifonda Piri Baba
Mevlam Şu Taşa Bir Can Ver
Yoldan Geçen Yolcu Gardaş
Ben Kimlere Olam Sırdaş
Kırşehirde Hacı Bektaş
Mevlam Şu Taşa Bir Can Ver
Bebeksiz Oldum Divane
Hep Ağlarım Yane Yane
Konyada Ulu Mevlane
Mevlam Şu Taşa Bir Can Ver
Yüksekte Şahin Yuvası
Alçakta Avşar Ovası
Gelsin Yavrumun Babası
Emzireyim Nenni Nenni
Bebek Uyandı Bakıyor
Sevinci İçim Yakıyor
Gözlerimden Yaş Akıyor
Emzireyim Nenni Nenni

Image 3. Folk song named “Aktaş Diye Belediğim”

Folk Song 4. Kaçındasın Gelin Ümmü

Forced to marry someone she doesn't want by her family, the woman runs away with the person she loves on the day of her marriage. She falls off the horse while fleeing and drowns in the river, she dies. The folk song is then written in prison by the person he ran away with.

Kaçındasın Gelin Ümmü kaçında
Sar'altınlar delebiyor saçında
Gelin Ümmü kaldı göller içinde
Katil Göller nere koydun Ümmü'mü
Ümmü'mü Ümmü'mü Gelin Ümmü'mü
On sekizdir siyah saçın örgüsü
Bu güzellik sana Hakkın vergisi
Suya düştü Ümmü kızın kendisi
Katil Göller nere koydun Ümmü'mü
Ümmü'mü Ümmü'mü Gelin Ümmü'mü
Davulcusu kaya dibi dolaşır
Seymenleri kuzu gibi meleşir
Evlerine kara haber ulaşır
Katil Göller nere koydun Ümmü'mü
Ümmü'mü Ümmü'mü Gelin Ümmü'mü
Altın taşı suya düşmüş dalabır
Sırma saçlar su üstünde yalabır
Şu gelinsiz gelen kirvan banadır
Katil Göller nere koydun Ümmü'mü
Ümmü'mü Ümmü'mü Gelin Ümmü'mü
Akmaz iken kanlı sular harladı
Gelin Ümmü başın kimler bağladı
Gökte melek, yerde insan ağladı
Katil Göller nere koydun Ümmü'mü
Ümmü'mü Ümmü'mü Gelin Ümmü'mü

Image 4. Folk song named “Kaçındasın Gelin Ümmü”

In the folk song, where are the killer lakes, Umm, dark news reaches their house, the death of the bride Umm and the pain experienced due to this situation are expressed in verses. The death of a forced marriage woman while escaping is one of the most painful indicators of the psychological and physical violence she has experienced.

Discussion and Conclusion

Language, which is one of the basic tools of communication, is a system of symbols that constitute the mutual interaction and communication process of people. These symbols are created by various means such as pictures, writing, signs, music. Folk songs are cultural and artistic products produced with both literary and auditory means. The processes of perceiving, interpreting and making sense of life by the individuals who make up the society cannot be considered independent of the environment and culture they belong to. In that case, the artworks of a society are important historical cultural values that show the way that society perceives, interprets and makes sense of life. For this reason, in this study, in which folk songs, one of the most important values of Turkish culture, are examined in the context of gender roles, the sale of women at a young age by their own family, their forced marriage, it is seen that he was exposed to physical and psychological violence such as not being allowed to marry the person he wanted, marrying someone younger than him because of the bride price, being taken in the sand because he did not have a child.

Gender roles need to be evaluated because folk songs represent traditional features, are the carrier of culture and historical documents, and are indicators of socio-cultural structure. The intergenerational transmission feature of folk songs shows the continuity of the interaction process in terms of functionality. In addition, the discursive structure and messages of these folk songs are very important in the context of the discourses that establish gender roles, which are at the base of feminist critical theory. In terms of feminist critical theory, sexist approaches to language and thought are products that create false social assumptions and need to be changed. Especially in poststructuralist philosophy studies, names such as Lacan and Derrida point to the importance of language and thought criticism in terms of deciphering women-themed discourses.

Deciphering the negative discriminatory discourses on the female gender is very important for the analysis and transformation of the social structure. From this point of view, folk songs, which are one of the important components of the cultural structure, have been examined as one of the important arguments showing the results of sexist actions. While our findings confirm the violence that women are exposed to in life, they show that these works should be replaced with different ideas and discourses. Should our oral and artistic cultural heritage, which we will pass on to future generations, continue as "I cry, I have no destiny, they sold it abroad, they married when I was twelve years old, I cry, I wipe my tears" or should we continue with freedom, equality, happiness, should it be rebuilt with messages like justice? We believe that all these questions, which constitute our research purpose, will create awareness in terms of both the evaluation of other cultural elements and the production of works of art containing the relevant messages.

References

- Aktaş, H.& Şimşek, E. (2014). Pozitif psikoloji bağlamında türk kültüründe yaşamın anlamı ve yaşam doyumunun analizi: Neşet Ertaş türküleri örneği. *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları*, (208), 449-480.
- Ataman, A. (2009). *Bu toprağın sesi-halk musikimiz*. Süleyman Şenel (Ed). İstanbul: Türk Edebiyatı Vakfı Pub.
- Büyükyıldız, Z. H. (2009). *Türk halk müziği*. İstanbul: Papatya Pub.
- Cemalcılar, A. (1988). *İletişim sanatı olarak müziğin öğretim ve eğitim ortamlarındaki kurumsal yapısı ile yaygın eğitimde bir model önerisi*. Eskişehir: Anadolu University Pub.
- Donovan, J. (2005). *Feminist teoriler*. Aksu Bora, Meltem Ağduk Gevrek and Fevziye Sayılan (Trans.). İstanbul: İletişim Pub.
- Ekici, S. (2004). Popüler kültür'ün icra ortamı bağlamında medya-Türk halk müziği ilişkisine dair bazı tespit ve öneriler. *Türklük Bilimi Araştırmaları*, (16), 181-189.

- Erçen, A. E. Y. (2008). *Kadınların cam tavanı aşma stratejiler: büyük ölçekli türk işletmelerinde bir inceleme*. [Unpublished Doctoral Thesis] Adana: Çukurova Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü
- Erl, A.& Rigney, A. (2006). Literature and the production of cultural memory: Introduction. *European Journal of English Studies*, 10(2), 111-115.
- Filmer, P. (2003). Structures of feeling and socio-cultural formations: The significance of literature and experience to Raymond Williams's sociology of culture. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 54(2), 199-219.
- Görkem, B. (2020). Kayseri Türkülerinde 'Mektup' ve 'Posta' İmajından Hareketle Türkülerin 'İletişim İşlevi. USBİK 2020 3. Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Kongresi.Proceding Book. Kayseri.
- Kaplan, M. (2003). *Kültür ve dil*. İstanbul: Dergâh Pub.
- Karataş, H. (2014). Geleneğin kuşaklara aktarımı bağlamında bir Çatalzeytin düğün türküsü: "Dünür Ağa". *Milli Folklor*, 26(101), 138-148.
- Kinik, M. (2011). Bir iletişim aracı olarak türk halk müziği ve türküler. *Erciyes İletişim Dergisi*, 2(1), 136-150.
- Marshall, G. (1998). *Sosyoloji sözlüğü*. Osman Akınbay (Trans.). Ankara: Bilim ve Sanat Pub.
- Öztuna, Y. (2006). *Türk musikisi ansiklopedik sözlüğü*. Ankara: Orient Pub.
- Süğümlü, Ü. and Tekşan, K. (2018). Türkülerin Türkçe eğitiminde kullanılabilirliği. *Sakarya University Journal of Education*, 8(4), 286-299.
- Uçan, A. (1996). *İnsan ve müzik insan ve sanat eğitimi*. Ankara: Müzik Ansiklopedisi Pub.
- Yener, S. (2006). *Liseler için müzik lise 1 ders kitabı*. İstanbul: Ilıcak Press.
- Yıldırım, A. ve Şimşek, H. (2013). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri*. Ankara: Seçkin Pub.
- "Turkish Folk Songs" (2023) <https://www.repertukul.com/> [Access Date: 10.02.2023].