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Using Nasreddin Hodja Anecdotes in Diction and Effective Speaking Education: A Text-Based Analysis

Nasreddin Hoca Fıkralarının Diksiyon ve Etkili Konuşma Eğitiminde Kullanımı: Metin Temelli Bir İnceleme

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Abstract

This study examines, through a text-based analysis, the possibilities that Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes offer for diction and effective speaking education. Its primary aim is to determine which oral performance skills can be associated with these texts. The study was designed within a qualitative research framework, and document analysis was adopted as the method of data collection and analysis. The study adopts Pertev Naili Boratav's Nasreddin Hoca as its primary corpus, from which seven individual anecdotes and one repartee pattern were selected through purposive sampling as the units of analysis. This choice is methodological rather than exclusionary: rather than claiming to represent the whole Nasreddin Hodja tradition, the article works within a bounded and traceable corpus while acknowledging the existence of other compilations and textual witnesses. The texts were evaluated according to criteria such as dialogue density, shifts in stress and intonation, concise closure, the potential to generate formulaic expressions, suitability for oral delivery, and classroom applicability. The findings cluster around three main areas: stress and intonation practice, dialogue and repartee skills, and public speaking and oral performance. Their brevity, wit, formulaic phrasing, and compact dialogue structures make these narratives well suited to speaking education, especially for work on closure and enactment. Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes may therefore be read not only as folkloric narratives but also as performance-oriented texts that can inform material selection in speaking instruction.

Keywords: Diction, effective speaking, speaking education, Nasreddin Hodja, oral performance.

Öz

Bu çalışma, Nasreddin Hoca fıkralarının diksiyon ve etkili konuşma eğitimi bakımından hangi imkânları taşıdığını metin temelli olarak incelemektedir. Araştırmanın temel amacı, söz konusu metinlerin hangi sözlü performans becerileriyle ilişkilendirilebileceğini belirlemektir. Çalışma nitel araştırma yaklaşımı içinde yapılandırılmış; veri toplama ve inceleme tekniği olarak doküman analizi benimsenmiştir. Araştırmanın temel korpusunu Pertev Naili Boratav'ın Nasreddin Hoca adlı eseri oluşturmuş; bu eserden amaçlı örnekleme yoluyla seçilen yedi tekil fıkra ile bir hazırcevaplık anlatı örüntüsü çözümleme birimi olarak belirlenmiştir. Bu tercih, Nasreddin Hoca geleneğinin bütününe tek bir derlemeye indirgeme iddiası taşıyan dışlayıcı bir yaklaşım değil; sınırları belirli ve izlenebilir bir korpus üzerinde derinlemesine çözümleme yapmayı amaçlayan yöntemsel bir tercihtir. Metinler; diyalog yoğunluğu, vurgu ve tonlama kırılmaları, kısa kapanış, kalıp söz üretme olanağı, sözlü icraya elverişlilik ve sınıf içi uygulanabilirlik gibi ölçütler dikkate alınarak değerlendirilmiştir. Bulgular, Nasreddin Hoca anlatılarının üç alanda yoğunlaştığını göstermektedir: vurgu ve tonlama çalışmaları, diyalog ve hazırcevaplık becerileri ile topluluk önünde söyleyiş ve sözlü performans. Kısa, yoğun ve nükteli yapıları; kalıplaşmaya açık söyleyişleri; son söz etkisi

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taşıyan kapanışları ve canlandırmaya elverişli diyalog düzenleri, bu metinlerin konuşma eğitiminde yardımcı öğretim materyali olarak kullanılabilmesine işaret etmektedir. Sonuç olarak Nasreddin Hoca fıkraları, yalnızca folklorik içerik taşıyan anlatılar olarak değil, konuşma eğitimi için metin seçimi ölçütleri üreten performatif metinler olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Diksiyon, etkili konuşma, konuşma eğitimi, Nasreddin Hoca, sözlü performans.

Introduction

Products of oral culture carry not only a community's collective memory, but also patterns of language use, communicative strategies, and a shared world of values. Within the Turkish oral narrative tradition, the anecdote (fıkra) occupies a particularly important place in this respect. Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes, in addition to having spread across a wide geography, are notable for their tendency to revolve around a single event, to balance narration and dialogue, and to construct a form of humor that does not wound but still prompts reflection. The prominence of verbal humor in these texts, together with the fact that some of their utterances have solidified into set phrases, makes them worth examining for speaking education (Albayrak, 2006, s. 418-420; Görkem, 2012, s. 83-84).

Nasreddin Hodja's place in folklore requires that he be considered not simply as a historical figure or a biographical subject, but as an anecdotal type. Folklore-oriented assessments show, in fact, that it is more functional to understand Nasreddin Hodja "as an anecdotal type" within oral literature, and that debates surrounding his personality and identity should likewise be evaluated within this generic framework (Görkem, 2012, s. 83-84, 89). Viewed this way, Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes do not appear as a static and uniform corpus, but as a narrative field circulating within oral tradition, one that changes over time and acquires new meanings in different contexts. For the same reason, the tradition cannot be reduced to a single printed compilation; it survives through variants, recontextualizations, and different forms of textual transmission.

The relationship between Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes and education has already been clearly established in the literature. Content analysis studies show that these anecdotes aim not only to amuse, but to provoke thought, cultivate a critical perspective, and convey educational messages concerning human relations, self-criticism, and cultural values (Arıcı, 2018, s. 603, 615-616). More recent work addressing the relationship between oral culture and educational function likewise evaluates Nasreddin Hodja as a cultural type who uses humor as an educational instrument and is given an educational role (Koluçık, 2025, s. 457-458).

The link between this educational function and oral instruction becomes clearer once we attend to the linguistic density of the texts themselves. A study focusing on the formulaic expressions found in Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes demonstrates that these narratives contain numerous fixed utterances and that this feature offers a range of possibilities for the teaching of language, culture, and Turkish (Kara & Yıldırım, 2017, s. 487-490). This structure speaks directly to diction and effective speaking education, since the impact of speech depends not only on what is said, but on how it is said.

Speaking education extends well beyond the correct production of individual sounds. Prosodic features such as stress, tone, melody, pause, and rhythm play a decisive role in constructing meaning and in shaping how speech acts upon the listener. Studies focusing on this prosodic dimension show that the full and effective transmission of a feeling or thought is possible only when these elements are used appropriately in relation to purpose (Karatay & Tekin, 2019, s. 1, 5-7). Research concerned with the relationship among pronunciation, articulation, and diction further indicates that speaking instruction needs to be supported by planned, repeated, and mutually reinforcing activities (Şenyiğit

& Okur, 2019, s. 519, 530, 533-540). A recent study demonstrating the effect of diction training on prosodic speaking skills also supports the applied dimension of this field (Uluçay, 2024, s. 13-15, 21). In the present study, "speaking education" refers to the broader framework; "diction" refers to pronunciation and prosody within that framework, "effective speaking" to communicative impact, and "oral performance" to the way these elements come together in delivery (Karatay & Tekin, 2019, s. 1, 5-7; Şenyiğit & Okur, 2019, s. 519-523, 525-526; Uluçay, 2024, s. 15-16).

This conceptual framework can also be read alongside Ong's (1982, s. 33-48) observations on the dynamics of thought and expression in oral culture and Bauman's (1975, s. 290-295) performance approach. Ong's emphasis on formulaic utterance, participation, and situationality offers a useful theoretical basis for interpreting the oral structure of Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes, while Bauman underscores the need to consider narrative not only as text, but as a speech event within a frame of performance.

One further delimitation should be noted here. Although Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes are often grouped within children's literature, the narrative operations examined here, namely contextual irony, inferential repartee, and the pragmatic management of audience expectations, require a level of cognitive and communicative maturity more typical of adult learners. The model proposed here is therefore most directly applicable to university-level diction workshops, teacher education programs, and advanced oral communication courses (Uluçay, 2024, s. 15-16). These are settings in which participants can recognize, perform, and critically reflect on the layered tonal and intentional demands the selected texts place on the speaker.

Although the literature has addressed Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes from the perspectives of educational value, cultural meaning, oral culture, and language teaching, studies that analyze these texts directly and systematically as materials for diction and effective speaking remain scarce (Arıcı, 2018, s. 603; Koluçak, 2025, s. 457-458; Kara & Yıldırım, 2017, s. 487-490). To address this gap, the present study conceptualizes Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes not simply as folkloric texts carrying educational content, but as performance-oriented texts whose oral features can inform text selection in speaking instruction. Its specific contribution lies in reframing these narratives not in terms of their educational messages, but in terms of their potential for stress, intonation, dialogue, closure, and oral delivery. The study does not aim at a comprehensive or representative claim about the Nasreddin Hodja tradition as a whole. Rather, it adopts Boratav's compilation as a primary, bounded corpus and develops an analytical model from seven individual anecdotes and one repartee pattern selected through purposive sampling. This preference should be understood as a methodological decision made for depth, traceability, and comparability, not as an assertion that other compilations or textual witnesses are irrelevant. The limitation thus preserves the focus of the study while clarifying the scope within which its findings may be considered valid.

The main aim of this study is to determine which oral performance skills Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes can be associated with in the context of diction and effective speaking education. Toward this aim, the study seeks answers to the following questions: What narrative features stand out in Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes with respect to stress, intonation, pause, and rhythm? In which texts do dialogue and repartee become particularly prominent? How may anecdotes that generate formulaic expressions and striking closures be evaluated in effective speaking education? Drawing on seven individual anecdotes and one repartee pattern selected through purposive sampling from Boratav's compilation, the study assesses these texts against oral-performance criteria and develops its theoretical argument from the findings. The study thereby aims to contribute

both to the pedagogical function of folk narratives and to the literature on text selection in speaking instruction.

1. Materials and Method

1.1. Research Design

This study was structured within a qualitative research framework, and document analysis was adopted as the method of data collection and examination. Document analysis is a method that aims to produce meaning, develop understanding, and generate empirical knowledge through the systematic examination, evaluation, and interpretation of printed and electronic documents. It provides an appropriate methodological framework, particularly for studies in which written texts are analyzed in accordance with specific conceptual criteria (Bowen, 2009, s. 27-40; Kırıl, 2020, s. 170-189).

1.2. Study Material

The primary source for the study is Pertev Naili Boratav's *Nasreddin Hoca*. The table of contents shows that the main section titled "Nasreddin Hoca Fıkraları" begins on page 89. In the introductory note signed by Enis Batur at the beginning of the book, it is stated that Boratav, after forty-two years of work, created a "corpus" by examining manuscript microfilms obtained from various libraries around the world one by one and comparing their variants (Batur, 1996, s. 7; Boratav, 1996, s. 89). The work thus offers not merely a compilation but a clearly delimited textual universe for the present study. At the same time, this choice does not imply that the broader Nasreddin Hodja tradition is exhausted by Boratav's volume alone. Other compilations and manuscript-based textual witnesses also preserve anecdotal material that may illuminate different variants and performative emphases. Boratav was therefore selected here as the primary corpus because it offers a bounded, critically organized, and traceable body of texts suitable for a focused document-based analysis. Accordingly, the study universe was limited to the texts included under the heading "Nasreddin Hoca Fıkraları" in Boratav's work.

1.3. Sample and Selection Criteria

Rather than examining the entire corpus, the study employed purposive sampling, specifically criterion sampling. While purposive sampling depends on the selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon under investigation, criterion sampling is based on including cases that meet specified characteristics. In qualitative research, selecting information-rich cases is widely regarded as one of the chief factors that strengthen the explanatory power of data and the force of interpretation (Palinkas vd., 2015, s. 533-544). For that reason, the sample was formed not according to quantitative representativeness, but according to oral performance indicators that could address the research questions clearly.

The units of analysis consist of seven individual anecdotes selected from among the texts in Pertev Naili Boratav's *Nasreddin Hoca*, together with one repartee narrative pattern that shares the same oral logic. In determining the sample, the main aim was not to establish a distribution that quantitatively represented the entirety of Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes or all available textual witnesses, but to identify texts and patterns considered especially revealing for the study. This limitation both preserves the theoretical character of the study and allows the selected units of analysis to be examined in depth. It has also been shown that formulaic expressions in Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes are noteworthy in terms of language, culture, and the teaching of Turkish, and that these texts clearly display a potential for idiomatization and formulaicity (Kara & Yıldırım, 2017, s. 487-498).

This finding supports prioritizing such units in speech education with regard to formulaic phrasing, striking closure, and the production of oral impact.

For methodological transparency, all the texts under the heading “Nasreddin Hoca Fıkraları” in Boratav’s compilation were read in full by the researcher, and each text was evaluated comparatively in terms of dialogue density, suitability for oral delivery, effectiveness of closure, and classroom applicability. Texts in which dialogue, suitability for oral enactment, and closure were more limited, those that relied more heavily on plain narration, or those considered less useful for classroom vocalization were excluded from the sample. By contrast, units judged more methodologically useful according to these criteria were included. It should be noted that the application of these criteria to the corpus as a whole identified a considerably broader pool of candidate texts than the final sample. The seven individual anecdotes and one pattern included here were selected from this pool as the clearest and most formally distinct representatives of each criterion cluster, namely those in which the relevant oral performance features were most concentrated, most clearly observable, and least overlapping with one another (Palinkas vd., 2015, s. 533-544).

The following criteria were used in constructing the sample: (i) dialogue density, (ii) breaks in utterance requiring stress, intonation, and pause, (iii) concise and effective closure, (iv) the potential to generate formulaic expressions, idioms, or proverbs, (v) suitability for role distribution and oral delivery, and (vi) classroom applicability. Each of these criteria bears directly on the oral and performative potential of a given text, rather than on its thematic content or narrative complexity.

Studies on the prosodic features of speech education were particularly instructive in determining these criteria. Karatay and Tekin emphasize that effective speaking depends not only on correct pronunciation, but also on the purposeful use of pause, stress, melody, and other prosodic features; they likewise note that such elements as syllabification, stressed syllable, pause, and grouping should be taken into account in the teaching process (Karatay & Tekin, 2019, s. 1, 5-7). Şenyiğit and Okur, for their part, demonstrate the need to clarify the relationship among pronunciation, articulation, speaking skill, and diction, and underline the importance of providing pronunciation instruction through planned, repeated, and mutually reinforcing activities over time (Şenyiğit & Okur, 2019, s. 519, 530, 533-540). Thus, suitability for vocalization and oral performance, not content alone, became one of the study’s central sampling criteria. The eight units were then distributed across three clusters: (1) narratives focused on stress and intonation, (2) narratives focused on dialogue and repartee, and (3) narratives focused on public delivery and oral performance. The seven individual anecdotes are referred to here by short titles derived from their content: “Watermelon-Walnut” (Boratav, 1996, s. 166), “What Time Is It? / The End Times” (Boratav, 1996, s. 273), “God’s Share / Human Share” (Boratav, 1996, s. 114-115, anecdote no. 90), “Guest of God” (Boratav, 1996, s. 184-185, anecdote no. 336), “Abjad” (Boratav, 1996, s. 258), “Sermon” (Boratav, 1996, s. 207), and “Take My Hand” (Boratav, 1996, s. 260). In addition, “A Thousand Gold Coins” designates not a single anecdote, but a recurring repartee narrative pattern represented here by anecdote nos. 243 and 511. The expression “A Thousand Gold Coins” is not the special title of any one anecdote in Boratav’s compilation; rather, it is a narrative pattern defined by the researcher to designate repartee texts in which Hodja verbally outmaneuvers his interlocutor in contexts of court, debt, trade, or spoken dispute. Two examples may be cited as representative: the anecdote in which a creditor corners Hodja in the marketplace and Hodja silences him by recalculating the debt in his own favor (Boratav, 1996, s. 241, anecdote no. 511), and the text concerning a jar whose upper part is filled with honey and lower part with soil, taken to the kadı for legal certification

(Boratav, 1996, s. 155, anecdote no. 243). Although other texts in the compilation also fit this pattern, it is not possible to assign them all a single anecdote number. "Greetings Depend on Good Cheer" (Boratav, 1996, s. 260) was excluded from the sample and used only as a supporting example in subsection 2.3.

1.4. Data Analysis

In the analysis process, each selected anecdote was first read as an integrated text and then evaluated in terms of the oral performance elements most relevant to diction and effective speaking education. In document analysis, the main aim is not merely to describe the document, but to analyze it so that it answers the research question and can be organized under meaningful categories. Bowen notes that the analytical process includes the stages of locating, selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing the document, while Kırıl states that in the Turkish-language literature this process proceeds through reaching the document, confirming its authenticity, understanding it, analyzing it, and using the data (Bowen, 2009, s. 27-40; Kırıl, 2020, s. 170-189).

The units of analysis were therefore established as stress, intonation, pause, rhythm, dialogue structure, repartee, the use of formulaic expressions, public delivery, and performative closure. At the next stage, the texts were evaluated in three thematic clusters according to their dominant features: (i) anecdotes focused on stress and intonation, (ii) anecdotes focused on dialogue and repartee, and (iii) anecdotes focused on public delivery and oral performance.

This classification is compatible with the literature indicating the central importance of prosodic features and the dimension of oral interaction in speaking education (Karatay & Tekin, 2019, s. 1, 5-7; Şenyiğit & Okur, 2019, s. 519-523, 530). For ease of discussion within the article, the texts were referred to by short researcher-assigned titles while preserving Boratav's order of presentation. Table 1 standardizes the page references and anecdote numbers for all units of analysis; for the recurring pattern, the representative anecdote numbers are listed together. In this way, the original structure of the source text was preserved while simultaneously facilitating citation and comparison during the analysis.

Several points concerning the practical dimension of the analytical procedure should also be noted. Before the analysis began, the categories were derived from the literature through a deductive approach and determined independently of sample selection; thematic clustering, therefore, was established not during the reading process, but while the conceptual framework of the study was being formed. Each anecdote was read multiple times in light of these pre-established criteria, and throughout these readings elements such as dialogue structure, breaks in stress and intonation, use of formulaic expressions, effectiveness of closure, and suitability for oral delivery were marked and annotated directly on the text. The analysis thus rested not on general impression, but on comparative, criterion-based reading. Where a text could plausibly be placed under more than one category, its dominant feature was taken as the decisive criterion; where necessary, this choice is clarified in the discussion of the relevant texts in the Findings section.

1.5. Validity and Reliability

Three points were considered in order to limit interpretive subjectivity. First, the criteria of analysis were determined in advance and explicitly related to the literature; in this way, the study sought to ensure that interpretations would proceed not from the researcher's momentary preferences, but from a conceptual framework. Second, the evaluations of each anecdote were repeatedly checked against Boratav's original text, and

the judgments reached were justified through textual evidence. Third, the analytical categories were established prior to sample selection, and internal consistency was maintained through researcher notes and repeated readings. Even so, the fact that the analysis was conducted by a single researcher should be noted as one of the study's limitations. Taken together, this framework is in line with the principles of credibility and confirmability in qualitative research (Bowen, 2009, s. 27-40).

This process of analysis aims to read the text not only as a folkloric narrative but as instructional material open to oral performance. Rather than presenting an experimental implementation or a quantitative measurement, the study discusses the theoretical basis of a text-based instructional model. The research thus constitutes a qualitative and interpretive inquiry into the possibilities that Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes offer for diction and effective speaking education (Bowen, 2009, s. 27-40; Palinkas vd., 2015, s. 533-544).

2. Findings

2.1. Anecdotes Focused on Stress and Intonation

Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes frequently construct their oral impact through a single short sentence, a sudden shift in direction, or a striking closure, qualities that lend themselves naturally to the practice of stress, intonation, pause, and the capacity to convey meaning through vocal delivery. In speech education, prosodic features are not aesthetic ornaments but one of the principal means by which meaning is carried; poorly arranged pause, stress, and melody can significantly weaken a narrative's effect (Karatay & Tekin, 2019, s. 1-4, 14-15). Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes are particularly suggestive in this respect because they condense meaning into brief utterances. The examples below are evaluated with an eye to that relationship between oral structure and possible classroom use.

Consider first the "Watermelon-Walnut" anecdote (no. 272 in Boratav's compilation). In the text, Hodja reflects that "wisdom would require watermelons to grow on walnut trees and walnuts in fields," but after a walnut falls on his head as he passes under a walnut tree, he withdraws his earlier judgment. The closing sentence delivers the reversal: "If what had fallen on my head had been a watermelon, my head would have been split open" (Boratav, 1996, s. 166).

The effect of the anecdote lies less in an elaborate plot than in the reversal of thought at the last moment. The closing sentence carries the instant of realization that overturns the earlier claim. The text is therefore well suited to practicing the tonal difference between assertion and retraction. While the opening section calls for a calmer, more reflective manner of delivery, the closing line requires an audible shift that conveys realization and acceptance. In classroom practice, the "sentence of prior judgment" and the "sentence of conclusion" may be vocalized in contrasting tones.

A rather different mechanism is at work in anecdote no. 580, structured around a series of misunderstandings and moving along the line of "What time is it? / What is there this evening? / What time are we in now? / The end times." In the text, the questioner tries each time to learn the ordinary time of day, whereas Hodja redirects the question literally into different contexts, answering: "I have only one clock," "With its chain and ornament, it came to one hundred eighty-two akçe and two para," and "Are you coming to us for iftar?" The closing sentence provides a particularly clear example of irony constructed through intonation: "My son! What is there not to know about this? The end times!" (Boratav, 1996, s. 273).

Here the oral effect arises less from the lexical meaning of the words themselves than from the different purpose each reply carries. The question remains outwardly the

same, but each answer opens an entirely different context, and the wit emerges through this contextual displacement. This allows the speaker to distinguish, through voice alone, the different contextual meanings a question may assume and to bring out the irony of the final sentence. Students might be asked, for instance, to deliver the phrase “the end times” not as a flat statement of information, but as the final line that carries the joke. The contrast between the tone of the question and the tone of each answer then becomes an object of comparative study.

At this point, some oral formulae that Boratav notes have acquired proverbial or idiomatic value, although they remain outside the core sample, still provide supporting examples for the general discussion of prosodic structure. The phrases the author explicitly identifies, “He who pays calls the tune,” “The quilt is gone; the quarrel is over,” and especially “Perform your ablution and give me my shoe” (Boratav, 1996, s. 27), all generate a marked closing effect within a short utterance. Such formulae can be used in oral instruction to intensify stress within one-sentence oral units, to produce a last-line effect, and to establish a rhythmic phrase, since meaning here is concentrated not so much in the sentence as a whole as in the manner in which the closing sequence of words is vocalized.

Across these examples, the structures most productive for stress and intonation practice converge on three points. The first consists of sentences of realization constructed through a last-minute reversal of thought. The second involves chains of misunderstanding and misdirected answers based on polysemy and contextual displacement. The third consists of short, rhythmic closures that have become formulaic and have acquired proverbial or idiomatic value. All three serve not only the accuracy of pronunciation, but also the cultivation of a speaker’s ability to establish intention and effect through the voice itself. When selecting Nasreddin Hodja texts for stress and intonation practice, then, the decisive criteria should be linguistic density and effectiveness of closure, not narrative length.

2.2. Anecdotes Focused on Dialogue and Repartee

Some Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes derive their energy entirely from question-and-answer exchange, reciprocal speech, and improvised verbal response, a quality that makes them especially valuable for speaking education. In such texts, wit arises not merely from the event itself, but from the unexpected reply given to an interlocutor’s question, from a phrase that suddenly redirects the course of speech, and from the mental quickness revealed at the moment of response. Repartee is an important dimension of effective speaking because it requires the speaker not only to use the voice well, but to organize thought on the spot. Anecdotes built on brief dialogue structures may accordingly be linked to the student’s ability both to construct meaning and to convey it effectively through the voice. Role-play and drama-based speaking practices have been shown to support activities of precisely this kind, developing voice, body language, self-expression, and oral interaction skills in tandem (Kurudayıoğlu & Özdem, 2015, s. 26-27, 31-33).

The narrative “God’s Share / Human Share” (Boratav, 1996, s. 114-115, anecdote no. 90) stages, within dialogue, a conceptual opposition built around the act of distribution. The tension between question and answer transforms the notion of justice into ironic verbal play, and Boratav’s observation that this narrative shares common ground with the Bektaşî type opens a comparative dimension as well (Boratav, 1996, s. 114-115). What proves decisive in this short dialogue is the tension between the tone of the question and the redirecting stress of the answer. A natural classroom exercise involves asking students to pronounce the question “Shall it be God’s making, or man’s

making?" (Boratav, 1996, s. 114) in two different tones, attending to what changes in vocal intention when the same words carry different weight.

In this study, "A Thousand Gold Coins" is treated not as the title of a single anecdote, but as a recurring repartee narrative pattern. This pattern brings together texts set in the contexts of court, trade, debt, or verbal dispute, in which the interlocutor tries to corner Hodja and the narrative changes direction through an unexpected reply. What stands out here is not simply the continuation of speech, but the ability to develop a verbal maneuver that turns the exchange to one's own advantage. This feature may be associated with skills of defense, justification, objection, and the rapid production of persuasive counter-response. For classroom purposes, this unit lends itself more readily to role-based dramatization than to monologic reading: its instructive value emerges most clearly from the tension established through the other party's speech.

In the narrative "Guest of God / Father-in-Law's House," humor is produced through the mismatch between the social-religious connotation of the phrase and the everyday context in which it is placed. This text lends itself to a paired exercise: students deliver the same response first in a plain tone and then with irony, attending to precisely what shifts in the voice when context changes beneath the words. The fact that the answer is logically possible yet contextually surprising makes the redirection of meaning within the dialogue visible through voice and stress alone.

Several shared structural features stand out in anecdotes focused on dialogue and repartee. First, these texts often open not with long descriptions, but directly with speech. Second, while the interlocutor's words establish the expected line of meaning, Hodja's answer disrupts that line or redirects it elsewhere. Third, the final line becomes effective not only in terms of meaning, but in terms of the timing of response. The anecdotes in this cluster lend themselves particularly well to pair or small-group activities; one participant may take the role of questioner and the other that of respondent, allowing attention to focus on verbal reflex, tonal difference, and emphasis at the moment of answer.

The contribution of such texts to the classroom is not limited to producing the "correct answer." It also matters that the student can construct the reply with appropriate volume, well-placed pause, intention-consistent tone, and oral confidence. Although repartee is already visible in the written form of the text, its instructive aspect becomes more pronounced in oral performance. The dialogue-centered examples among Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes can be read as texts that train students not only to pronounce words correctly, but to think quickly and respond effectively within oral interaction.

2.3. Anecdotes Focused on Public Delivery and Oral Performance

Beyond dialogue and repartee, a distinct group of Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes situates speech explicitly in contexts of congregation, assembly, village gathering, pulpit, or public address. In such anecdotes, the effect of speech arises not simply from one-to-one dialogue, but from the speaker's manner of addressing a group, directing listeners, and managing the audience's expectations. In effective speaking education, public delivery cannot be explained solely in terms of volume or correctness of pronunciation; elements such as shaping the flow of speech, gathering the audience's attention, adjusting rhythm, and placing the closure effectively also belong to this field. The Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes focused on public address therefore warrant treatment as a separate cluster, one oriented toward classroom enactment and oral performance.

The "Abjad" anecdote is built directly on a pattern of public address; Hodja's complaint from the pulpit in a rhyming and rhythmic manner concentrates the effect of the narrative not so much in content as in sonic arrangement. The fact that the villagers,

affected by this address, apologize to Hodja demonstrates the power of oral performance on a collective audience. Classroom work with this text might center on rhythm, vocal projection, and performative repetition, with students attempting a mock pulpit address, for instance, or working through the rhythmic pattern of the rebuke aloud until the sonic structure becomes audible independently of meaning.

The “Sermon” anecdote, by contrast, stages one of the basic crises of public speech: the interruption of verbal flow. The tension of the narrative is built as the audience’s expectation rises and Hodja becomes increasingly stuck; the son’s final sentence then resolves this tension with a witty closure: “Father! If nothing at all comes to your mind, does stepping down from the pulpit not come to mind either?” (Boratav, 1996, s. 207).

This text invites reflection on the difference between pulpit speech and everyday conversational tone, as well as on how moments of blockage may be managed. The same sentence might be delivered in tones of surprise, irony, and courtesy, while strategies for recovery in public speaking are discussed alongside it. The text thus functions not only as an example of successful address, but also as a narrative that dramatizes the moment of blockage in public speech.

The “Take My Hand” anecdote is built on the contrast between the ineffective utterance repeatedly used by the crowd and the functional form of address Hodja chooses by taking the addressee’s psychology into account. What stands out here is not so much finding the right proposition as speaking to the right person in the right grammatical mood and tone. The persuasive force of the forms “give” and “take” can be compared through vocal exercises, making the text especially instructive for the principle of addressee-centered speech in public communication.

Although excluded from the formal sample, the anecdote “Greetings Depend on Good Cheer” also supports the logic of this cluster by making visible the ability to rescue speech in a moment of public crisis. Hodja’s witty recovery of an ill-timed “greetings” uttered in the presence of Timur may be considered a supporting example in terms of verbal agility, composure, and situational management in formal or semi-formal settings (Boratav, 1996, s. 260).

Three basic structures emerge from these examples in terms of public delivery and oral performance. The first consists of rhythmic and directive utterances constructed through pulpit and address patterns. The second includes narratives that expose moments of blockage or error in public speaking. The third comprises texts exemplifying the ability to manage crisis and direct the addressee through the selection of the right utterance in public. These three structures offer concrete examples for diction and effective speaking education in areas such as volume, form of address, rhythm, performative closure, and audience management. Anecdotes centered on public address deserve separate consideration within the broader field of oral instruction.

The seven individual anecdotes and the one repartee pattern analyzed separately in the three subsections above are presented together in Table 1 in order to make the pedagogical framework more concrete and to render the logic of text-selection decisions more systematic. The table is limited to the principal units of analysis in the sample; supporting examples are excluded.

Table 1: Oral performance features of the units of analysis and suggested classroom activities

Text / Pattern	Oral Performance Feature	Classroom Activity
Watermelon-Walnut Boratav, 1996, s. 166 (no. 272)	Moment of realization; reversal of thought; tonal shift	Comparative vocalization of assertion/retraction tone
What Time Is It? / The End Times Boratav, 1996, s. 273 (no. 580)	Contextual shift; shift in communicative purpose; irony-laden closure	Context-sensitive intonation; foregrounding the ironic final sentence
God's Share / Human Share Boratav, 1996, s. 114-115 (no. 90)	Conceptual opposition; two-sidedness of question and answer tone	Paired vocalization; comparing question-and- answer tone
A Thousand Gold Coins (repartee pattern)* Boratav, 1996, s. 155, 241 (nos. 243, 511)	Verbal maneuver; unexpected response; verbal agility	Role-based dramatization; defense and counter- argument
Guest of God Boratav, 1996, s. 184-185 (no. 336)	Contextual shift of meaning; tension between literalness and irony	Reciprocal delivery; showing difference in intention through the voice
Abjad Boratav, 1996, s. 258 (no. 546)	Rhythmic public address; performative repetition; pulpit delivery	Pulpit imitation; rhythmic vocalization; vocal projection
Sermon Boratav, 1996, s. 207 (no. 426)	Crisis in verbal flow; moment of blockage in public speech	Vocalization in different tones; recovery strategies
Take My Hand Boratav, 1996, s. 260 (no. 551)	Addressee-centered selection of utterance; persuasive public address	Comparative vocalization of the "give"/"take" distinction

Note. * Represents a recurring narrative pattern in the compilation rather than a single anecdote.

The anecdote "Greetings Depend on Good Cheer," which falls outside the sample, was discussed separately in subsection 2.3 as a supporting example reinforcing the ability to rescue speech in a moment of crisis during public delivery (Boratav, 1996, s. 260).

3. Discussion

This discussion turns on a central claim: Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes are not simply folkloric narratives; they are also performance-oriented texts whose oral features can inform text selection in speaking instruction.

The findings on stress, intonation, and prosodic features align with Karatay and Tekin's (2019, s. 1, 5-7) observations on the central importance of prosody in speaking education. The contribution made here, however, is not confined to restating the importance of prosody. Examples such as "Watermelon-Walnut" and "What Time Is It? / The End Times" illustrate more precisely which kinds of short narrative are most

productive for classroom work on pause, tonal intent, and contextual shift. The texts selected from Boratav's compilation situate the prosodic priorities Karatay and Tekin identify, namely pause, stress, and melody, in specific, traceable narratives. The study's contribution to the literature, then, is less a direct list of activities than a clearer basis for text selection: it helps identify which narrative types are best suited to prosodic practice.

In evaluating the findings on dialogue and repartee, Arıcı's (2018, s. 603, 615-616) content analysis of educational aspects provides an important point of comparison. Arıcı demonstrates that Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes convey educational messages in such areas as critical perspective, self-criticism, and human relations. The present study accepts that observation but shifts the focus to the verbal operation of the narratives. "God's Share / Human Share," "Guest of God," and the "A Thousand Gold Coins" pattern matter here less because of their educational messages than because of their question-and-answer structure, contextual shift, and demand for immediate verbal production. In other words, what is foregrounded is not what these anecdotes say, but how they say it, and how that mode of expression may be practiced in the classroom. This is precisely where the study's contribution to existing literature lies.

From the perspective of oral performance pedagogy, the activity forms proposed here, such as role-based dramatization, tonal variation in delivery, and mock pulpit address, overlap with drama- and role-based applications in Turkish language teaching (Kurudayıoğlu & Özdem, 2015, s. 26-27, 31-33, 38-39). Examples such as "Abjad," "Sermon," and "Take My Hand" show that this relationship is not merely a general resemblance: public address, role distribution, and vocal practice find concrete counterparts within the texts themselves. This convergence suggests that, within speaking education, Nasreddin Hodja narratives may serve not only as texts to be read, but as resources to be worked on through enactment and dramatic reading. Because these activities require participants to navigate irony, manage audience expectation, and control tonal intention, they are most productive at the adult and university level, where learners can engage critically with layered performative operations (Uluçay, 2024, s. 15-16).

Koluçık's (2025, s. 457-458) study of Nasreddin Hodja's educational function in Turkish cinema offers a revealing point of comparison. Both studies position Nasreddin Hodja not merely as a folkloric figure, but as a pedagogical instrument. Yet whereas Koluçık examines the context of visual culture and cinema, the present study focuses on oral delivery and prosodic skill. The distinction matters: where Koluçık examines the medium of representation, the present study attends to the qualities of utterance that make the material suitable for speaking instruction. Taken together, the two perspectives provide complementary grounds for understanding how Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes may function across different educational settings.

Finally, from the standpoint of oral culture theory, the persistence of Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes within oral tradition may be read alongside Ong's (1982, s. 33-48) observations on the dynamics of thought and expression in oral culture and Bauman's (1975, s. 290-295) approach to verbal art as performance. Ong's emphasis on formulaic utterance, participation, and situationality, together with Bauman's insistence on treating narrative as a speech event within a frame of performance, helps explain why the anecdotes analyzed here may be approached as performative texts. The theoretical framework thus shows that these narratives enter speaking education not only through their folkloric content, but through the specific properties of their oral form.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study conceptualizes Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes not simply as folkloric texts carrying educational content, but as performance-oriented texts that can inform the

selection of materials in diction and effective speaking education. The text-based analysis has shown that these narratives are not simply folkloric; they also possess structures well suited to oral delivery, vocal practice, and speaking instruction.

The findings cluster around three main areas: work on stress, intonation, pause, and rhythm; dialogue, repartee, and verbal responsiveness; and public delivery, forms of address, and performative speech. Their brief and concentrated structures, striking closures, tendency toward formulaic phrasing, and dialogue arrangements suited to enactment explain why Nasreddin Hodja narratives may be regarded as suitable texts for speaking education.

At the theoretical level, the study reframes folk narratives along the axis of diction and oral performance. This makes it possible to evaluate Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes not merely as vehicles of cultural transmission, but as texts through which stress, intonation, dialogue, closure, and strategies of oral interaction may be practiced.

From an educational standpoint, the study foregrounds four criteria for text selection: linguistic density and effectiveness of closure, potential for dialogue and contextual shift, openness to formulaicity and memorization, and suitability for public delivery and shared oral performance. These criteria may serve as useful guides not only in evaluating Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes, but also in assessing other short narrative texts intended for use in speaking education.

A further contribution of the study lies in its treatment of Boratav's compilation as a bounded and traceable primary corpus. In this way, it offers a source base with clearly defined limits for a text-based instructional model without implying that the wider Nasreddin Hodja tradition can be reduced to a single compilation.

The study is, however, limited to a sample of seven individual anecdotes and one narrative pattern and does not include classroom experimentation or quantitative measurement, since it offers a theoretical reading grounded in carefully chosen examples rather than quantitative representation. For that reason, the purposive sample was constructed for analytical depth and comparability rather than breadth. The findings should therefore be read not as measures of effect, but as a conceptual proposal grounded in textual analysis within a delimited corpus. They are not intended as a comprehensive judgment on the whole Nasreddin Hodja tradition or on all of its variant-bearing sources.

Future studies should test the framework proposed here through classroom applications, particularly in university-level diction workshops, teacher education programs, and advanced oral communication courses where participants have the cognitive and pragmatic maturity to engage with the full tonal and performative demands of the selected texts. When structured practice sessions in these contexts are combined with voice-recording-based performance analyses and student self-assessments, the model advanced in this article may be discussed on a stronger empirical basis. Comparative work drawing on other compilations and manuscript-based textual witnesses may also show whether the oral-performance features identified here remain stable across variants or become more pronounced in particular textual traditions.

The place of Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes in diction and effective speaking education can thus move beyond intuitive judgment and become testable through more systematic research.

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