

# An Examination of Preschool Teachers' Use of Interactive Book Reading

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## Abstract

This mixed methods study aims to examine the use of interactive book reading of preschool teachers. While the participants of the quantitative dimension consisted of 51 preschool teachers selected by convenience sampling method from preschool teachers working in different provinces and districts of Turkey, among these teachers, 36 preschool teachers who volunteered to participate in the qualitative dimension of the research were made up of the study group of the qualitative dimension. Quantitative data were collected through a 22-item questionnaire developed by the researchers and frequency percentage, arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of each item were calculated. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed with the content analysis. Results suggested that while the item "I show the cover of the book to the children before reading it" has the highest percentage ( $f=100$ ) in terms of "always agree", the item "I use images to explain the words in the book that I think the children do not know" has the lowest percentage ( $f=21,6$ ). On the other hand, it was concluded that teachers included reading activities in the daily education flow, but they did not have enough information about the interactive book reading and did not adequately apply the steps of the interactive book reading. Therefore, it is suggested that interactive book reading should be included in the preschool education programs and that preschool teachers should follow the steps of the techniques so that they can spend their book reading activities more efficiently.

**Keywords:** Interactive book reading, preschool teachers, survey method, content analysis.

## Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Duygu Düzenleme Becerileri ile Bilişsel Esneklik Düzeylerinin Sınıf Yönetimine Etkisi

### Öz

Bu karma yöntem araştırması, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin etkileşimli kitap okumayı kullanma durumlarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmanın nicel boyutunda yer alan katılımcılar Türkiye'nin farklı il ve ilçelerinde görev yapan okul öncesi öğretmenlerinden uygun örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilen 51 okul öncesi öğretmeninden oluşurken, bu öğretmenlerden gönüllü olarak katılmak isteyen 36 okulöncesi öğretmen ise nitel boyutun çalışma grubunu oluşturmuştur. Nicel veriler, araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen 22 maddelik bir anket aracılığıyla toplanmış ve her bir maddenin frekans, yüzde, aritmetik ortalama ve standart sapma değerleri hesaplanmıştır. Nitel veriler yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmış ve içerik analizi ile analiz edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular doğrultusunda, "Kitabı okumadan önce kitabın kapağını çocuklara gösteririm" maddesi "her zaman katılıyorum" derecelendirmesi açısından en yüksek yüzye ( $f=100$ ) sahip iken, "Kitapta geçen çocukların bilmediğin düşündüğüm kelimeleri açıklamak için görseller kullanırım" maddesinin en düşük yüzye sahip ( $f=21,6$ ) olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Öte yandan öğretmenlerin günlük eğitim akışında okuma etkinliklerine yer verdikleri ancak etkileşimli kitap okuma hakkında yeterli bilgiye sahip olmadıkları ve etkileşimli kitap okuma adımlarını yeterince uygulamadıkları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu nedenle, okul öncesi eğitim programlarında etkileşimli kitap okumaya yer verilmesi ve okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin kitap okuma etkinliklerini daha verimli geçirebilmeleri için etkileşimli kitap okuma içerisinde yer alan tekniklerin aşamalarını takip etmeleri önerilmektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Etkileşimli kitap okuma, okul öncesi öğretmenleri, anket yöntemi, içerik analizi.

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## INTRODUCTION

Supporting the development and learning of children in the preschool period is essential. Providing an enriched learning environment not only increases their readiness but also enables them to make sense of life. While creating this environment, different methods and materials can be used. According to Eliason and Jenkins (2003), those who are responsible for the education of preschoolers should know how to use their potential at the highest level by offering quality activities and tools to children. One of these tools is books. Books greatly affect the developmental level of the child (Yavuzer, 2003). Introducing children to books at an early age helps enrich their experience (Konar, 2004). The first interaction with the book of preschool children who have not yet learned to read and write occurs when a literate parent or sibling reads a book to them (Parlakıyıldız & Yıldızbaş, 2004). Picture books are important tools that make children love books from early ages, support language development and prepare a substructure by offering them different perspectives (Raikes et al., 2006; Luo, Tamis-LaMonda, Kuchirko, Ng & Liang, 2014). However, reading a book alone is not enough, it should be supported the ability to grasp the main idea in the book, as well as to understand the event and the properties of the characters in the book (Snow, Tabors, & Dickinson, 2001). Thus, the dialogue with the adult gains importance. The performance of the adult while reading the book is effective in the child's understanding of the book and listening with interest. In this process, the effective interaction between the adult and the child causes the process to be more efficient and the learning to be permanent (Sawyer, 2009). The main purpose of reading a book is to enable the child to gain concepts and skills, to give the child the opportunity to communicate and to keep the child's attention during reading. In addition to the high level of interaction with children who meet these goals, it is clear that the interactive book reading technique is the most effective reading (Whitehurst, Epstein, Angell, Payne, Crone, & Fischel, 1994).

Interactive book reading is a method in which the reader is an active listener and at the same time asks questions to children to become active participants rather than passive listeners (Flynn, 2011). In other words, it is a planned book reading method that is designed by Whitehurst et al. in 1988. Children are informed about the words they have not heard before, the meaning of which is unknown, they are encouraged to share their ideas and their answers are expanded (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). In addition, children are asked to complete an event in the story, to describe what is told with pictures, to predict events, and to make a connection between the event in the story and their own experiences (Justice & Pullen, 2003; Whitehurst et al., 1994). In this regard, the main purpose of this method is to encourage the child to talk about the story in the book, to ensure his active participation, and ultimately to support the child's ability to tell the story from the pictures of the book (Whitehurst et al., 1994).

Interactive reading supports the listener to affiliate with the reading process and reinforces the excitement of reading by ensuring perpetual feedback (Morgan & Meier, 2008; Pillinger & Wood, 2014). The interactive reading process allows students to talk, make detailed descriptions and interpret what they see. Therefore, preventing students from being passive in the reading process reinforces students' desire to read and increases their curiosity (Ganotice, Downing, Mak, Chan & Lee, 2017). Thus, children find out that reading is a fun and enjoyable way of learning (Er, 2016). This process assists students to expand their vocabulary and enhance their reading comprehension skills (Beschorner & Hutchison, 2016; Mol, Bus, de Jong & Smeets, 2008; Sperling & Head, 2002). The reader asks the children questions, gives hints and additional information, so interactive reading is provided (İşıtan, 2015). The adult guides the child to tell the story using certain questioning techniques. The child, on the other hand, can cease to be the listener of the story and become the narrator of the story. The answers given by the child are again expanded within a systematic framework. In this process, words with unknown meanings are emphasized, and children are informed by explaining these words (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). The adult reassures, supports, accompanies and motivates the child while ensuring the active participation of the child. During reading, the child is given time to answer the questions asked and make comments, and unknown words are defined in a way that the child can understand (Er, 2016; Schaughency, Riordan, Reese, Derby & Gillon, 2020).

Interactive book reading is based on three basic practice methods that aim to develop children's receptive and expressive language skills. These are getting the child to participate in the reading activity, giving feedback to the child about what he/she is talking about, and selecting the books that are relevant to the child's interest and determining the topics to be discussed (Hargrave & Senechal, 2000; Justice & Ezell, 2002; Justice & Pullen, 2003; Morgan & Meier, 2008). These applications support children's interest in stories, listening comprehension, vocabulary development and language development. The adult uses different techniques to enable the child to

participate actively in the reading activity. It is recommended to use the techniques identified by Whitehurst et al. (1994) as CROWD (Completion - Recall Open ended -Wh-questions- Distancing) and PEER (Prompt- Evaluate-Expand - Repeat) in order to ensure active participation of children in interactive book reading activities and to initiate and maintain their conversations. CROWD: consists of asking children to complete a statement or sentence in the story (C); asking children about the characters and events in the story (R); asking children open-ended questions about the event described in the picture or making predictions about what might happen next (O); asking 5Wh questions about the characters and events in the pictures (W); asking the child to associate the story with himself (D). PEER, which refers to techniques such as giving constructive feedback to the child and expanding their answers, includes adult behaviors: It includes starting the conversation (P); assessing the accuracy of the children's answers (E); asking the child to repeat the corrected and expanded responses (R). According to Dolunay Sarica (2016), "the techniques expressed as CROWD and PEER should be used by adults in three stages of reading the story: before reading, during reading, after reading" (p.11). Some examples of conversation techniques used in the interactive book reading are given in Table 1 (Akoğlu, 2016).

**Table 1.** Conversation Techniques Used During Interactive Reading

Starting the Conversation Techniques	How is it applied?	Example	Effect
Completion	The child is asked to complete a sentence or phrase in the story.	Adult: "The mouse ..... to catch the apple on the branch" Child: "Jumped"	Supports child's listening comprehension and language skills
Recall	The child is asked questions about the events in the story and the characters in the book.	Adult: "When the mouse couldn't catch the apple, who did he first ask for help?" Child: "From the Rabbit"	It increases the child's interest in the story and makes her/him pay attention to details
Opened-Ended questions	For example, the child is asked to describe the picture in the book.	Adult: "Why did he take the stick?" Child: "To reach the apple on the branch."	It gives the child an opportunity to express herself
Wh-questions	The child is asked to name an object or event in the picture.	Adult: "What season is this happening in?"	It supports vocabulary
Distancing	The child is asked to associate the event in the story with events from her/his own life.	Adult: "What are you doing to get something you can't stretch out on?"	It enables the child to establish a connection between her/his own life and the story and to express herself/ himself

As seen in Table 1, with the starting conversation techniques used during interactive reading, children's ability to understand what they listen to and use the language, their interest in the story, their ability to notice details and their vocabulary are supported, and they are provided with the opportunity to use the language. In addition, it is ensured that they establish a connection between the story in the story and their own lives. Conversation maintenance techniques used during interactive reading are given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Conversation Maintenance Techniques Used During Interactive Reading

Conversation Maintenance Techniques	How is it applied?	Example	Effect
Prompt	The child is asked to name what s/he sees in the picture, or a question is asked about the character	Adult: "What is this?" Child: "Octopus"	It increases the child's attention and vocabulary. It makes him interested in the story.
Evaluate	The child's response is evaluated. If it is not correct, the information to be given in order to teach the appropriate word is considered	The adult thinks about the child's response and thinks about new words s/he might add	The adult gives feedback on the child's response and encourages him/her to add more information.
Expand	The child's response is expanded by adding new words	Adult: "Yes, an eight-armed purple octopus"	Encourages the child to say a little more than they can
Repeat	The child is asked to repeat his/her answer	Child: "Eight-armed purple octopus"	It supports the language development of the child

As shown in Table 2, with the conversation maintenance techniques used during interactive reading, children's knowledge of the story, their vocabulary knowledge and an increase in their interest are provided. The adult gives feedback on the child's response and encourages him/her to expand his/her response. Thus, children are encouraged to say more than they want to say, and their language use skills are supported.

The interactive book reading practice was evaluated by Akoğlu (2016) in three separate steps: before reading, during reading and after reading. In order for the interactive book reading practice to be successful at the desired level, it is important to do the pre-reading steps appropriately: These are: (a) The first of the pre-reading practices is the selection of a qualified children's picture book in which adults can practice interactive book reading. It is of great importance to choose books that are suitable for the developmental level of the child and that match the age group of the children in terms of form and content features. It is important to pay attention to include words that children have not learned yet, as well as words that children have just learned in the specified books. (b) The second step is to determine the target words and phonemes. The selection of target words and phonemes should be determined by considering the developmental characteristics of the child and/or child group as well as the calendar age. The number of words aimed to be learned in the selected book should be determined by considering the learning capacity. The person who will do the application should plan the emphasis on phonemes, the explanations s/he will make about the target words and the questions s/he will ask during the interactive book reading before reading the story to the children. The rehearsal of the plan will facilitate the implementation. (c) The last step before the application is to plan the layout of the children during reading. During interactive book reading practices, children should sit in a comfortable position and can easily see the pictures of the book.

During the interactive reading practice, child-friendly terms should be used while explaining the meanings of the unknown words in the story. The targeted words should be supported with pictures or different materials. It has been summarized as: (a) giving examples that will enable children to make connections between target words and their own lives, (b) associating newly acquired information with children's own lives, (c) repeating the meanings of target words, (d) supporting the content of the story and target words with past experiences, (e) supporting phonological awareness by emphasizing the targeted phoneme, (f) asking open-ended questions and Wh questions, (g) repeating and expanding the answers of the children and, (h) completing the sentence.

After reading steps are summarized as (a) asking open-ended questions that would enable them to use the target words and phonemes with their information about the flow and outcome of the story, and (b) ensuring the permanence of the achievements with different activities.

This study aims to examine the use of interactive book reading technique of preschool teachers. There is an increase in studies on interactive book reading in Turkey (i.e., Akoğlu, Ergül & Duman, 2014; Yıldız Bıçakçı, Er & Aral, 2017; Çelebi Öncü, 2016; Ergül, Akoğlu, Sarıca & Karaman, 2017; Gölcük, Okur & Berument, 2015; Kotaman, 2008; Acar Şengül, 2019; Yurtbakan, 2020). The results of these studies have revealed the contribution of interactive book reading to many areas. For example, in the study conducted by Kotaman (2008), the interactive

book reading practice of the parents was included for 7 weeks and it was revealed that there was a significant increase in children's receptive language vocabulary and positive attitudes towards interactive reading in parents. Gölcük et al. (2015) aimed to develop receptive language and story comprehension skills of socio-economically disadvantaged children attending pre-school education. For this purpose, an interactive book reading practice was applied to 6 children in line with the intervention program for 5 weeks. As a result, it was concluded that the book reading intervention program was effective in increasing the language development of children. In the study conducted by Akoğlu et al. (2014), an interactive book reading program was applied for six weeks to children aged 4-5 years in need of protection and it was found that interactive book reading was effective on children's expressive language skills. The study by Acar Şengül (2019) was carried out with 13 children with developmental language retardation. The interactive book reading was applied to the children in the experimental group and the result of the study yielded an increase in the expressive vocabulary acquisition of the children in the experimental group. In the study of Yıldız Bıçakçı et al. (2018), mothers were given a seminar on interactive book reading and in line with the information obtained from the seminar, they read 27 books, 3 books a week, in 9 weeks. As a result of the study, it was concluded that the process carried out with the interactive book reading had a positive effect on the development of children and the interactive book reading skills of the mother. With the results of these studies, the importance of placing interactive book reading practices especially in preschool education programs becomes more evident. Therefore, this study is also important in terms of revealing a conceptual framework related to interactive book reading by preschool teachers and contributing to the field with the findings.

### **Research Questions**

Within the scope of the research, the question “To what extent do preschool teachers use the interactive book reading?” has been addressed. The following questions were also included:

1. How often do preschool teachers include interactive book reading in their book reading activities?
2. What are the views of preschool teachers about the interactive book reading?

## **METHOD**

In this mixed-methods study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to reveal preschool teachers' interactive book reading. In the quantitative dimension, due to “its practicableness and high level of representability” (Polit & Beck 2004, p.50), the survey method was employed. On the other hand, in the qualitative dimension, a case study design that allows the “investigation of a phenomenon in depth and in real life with a holistic approach” (Yin, 2009, p.18) was used. Illustrative case study that relies on interpreting data about the situation used to provide information about a situation, especially if there is a reason to believe the reader has little knowledge of a program (Davey, 2009) was included for the qualitative part.

### **Participants**

The participants of the quantitative dimension consisted of preschool teachers (N =51) selected by convenience sampling method, one of purposive sampling methods, from preschool teachers working in different provinces and districts of Turkey (See Table 3). Among these teachers, preschool teachers (N =36) who volunteered to participate in the qualitative dimension of the research were made up of the study group of the qualitative dimension within the framework of the convenience sampling method.

**Table 3.** Descriptive Data of the Participants

Variables	N	%	Variables	N	%
Gender	Male	-	1-5 years	10	19.6
	Female	51	6-10 years	7	13.7
Age	20-25	6	11-15 years	31	60.8
	26-30	7	16-20 years	3	5.9
	31-35	23	21 and upper	-	
	36-40	10	36-48 months	5	9.8
	41 and above	5	16-20	18	36
Age group	49-60 months	25	21-25	6	12
	61-69 months	21	26 and upper	1	2
	5-10	7			
	11-15	18	Total	51	100

As given in Table 3, all the participants were female. With regard to age variable, it was observed that 11.28% of the preschool teachers were between the ages of 20-25; 13.7% were between 26-31; 19.6% were between 31-40 and; 9.8% were at the age of 41 and over. In terms of professional seniority, 19.6% of the participants had 1-5 years of seniority; 13.7% had 6-10 years; 60.8% had 11-15 years and; 5.9% had 15- 20 years of seniority. In terms of the age group they teach, 9.8% were 36-48 months; 49% were 48-60 months and; 49.1% were 60-69 months. Regarding the class size, 14% were between 5-10; 36% were between 11-15; 36% were between 16-20; 12% were between 21-25 and; 2% were 25 or more sizes.

#### Data Collection

A 22-item “Interactive Book Reading Questionnaire” was developed by the researchers based on the literature review and expert opinions (2 Associate Professors and 1 Assistant Professor of Preschool Education, 3 Pre-school teachers). After required changes were made, a pilot study was conducted on a small group of volunteers (N=15 preschool teachers). They were asked to revise all items and, if possible, re-word, shorten or discard all unnecessary, difficult or ambiguous items that would not be answered as expected. After piloting, the final form of the questionnaire was obtained in three dimensions as Before Reading (N= 6 items), During Reading (N= 14 items), and After Reading (N= 2 items). Content validity ratios (CVRs) of the items are given in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Questionnaire Items with Content Validity Ratios (CVR)

Item No		NR	CVR	CVI	
Before Reading	1	I select books that are appropriate for the developmental level of children	10	1.00	0.83
	2	I select books by paying attention to the interests of children	10	1.00	
	3	Before reading the book, I choose target words from the book that I think the children have not heard before	8	0.6	
	4	I show the cover of the book to the children before reading it	10	1.00	
	5	I give information to children about the author, illustrator and publisher of the book	8	0.6	
	6	I listen to children's opinions about the subject of the book	9	0.8	
During Reading	7	I read the title of the book aloud			0.84
	8	When I read the title of the book, I go over the words with my finger	9	0.8	
	9	I read by holding the pages of the book in a way that children can see	9	0.8	
	10	I read the book with intonation so that children can hear	10	1.00	
	11	I read the book by paying attention to the punctuation marks	10	1.00	
	12	I use different materials to attract children's attention while reading a book	8	0.6	
	13	I explain the words in the book that I think the children do not know	10	1.00	
	14	I use images to explain the words in the book that I think the children do not know	9	0.8	
	15	I ask questions that will connect the story in the book with their own experiences	10	1.00	
	16	I ask Wh questions while reading a book	10	1.00	
	17	I ask open-ended questions while reading a book	10	1.00	
	18	While reading a book, I leave some sentences unfinished and let the children complete them	10	1.00	
	19	While reading a book, I do some exercises to help children gain phonological awareness skills	9	0.8	
	20	When answering children's questions about the book, I explain with child-friendly words	10	1.00	
After Reading	21	After reading the book, I want the children to summarize the story	10	1.00	0.80
	22	After reading the book, I plan different activities about the words in the book	8	0.6	

Number of Expert: 10

NR: The number of expert to say *Required*

Content Validity Ratio (CVR): 0.62

Content Validity Index (CVI): 0.836

[(0.83&gt;0.62) CVI&gt; CVR]

Content Validity Ratios (CVR), developed by Lawshe (1975) are “factors that reveal the content or construct validity of a measurement tool” (cited in Yurdugül, 2005, p.2). Each item in the questionnaire used within the scope of the study was evaluated in accordance with expert opinions (N = 10) in terms of whether it measures the targeted structure or whether it is unnecessary. The formula used to calculate the CVRs was  $CVR = (N_e - N / 2) / (N / 2)$ . “ $N_e$ ” is the number of experts specifying what is “primary” and “ $N$ ” indicates the total number of experts. According to the content validity criteria table of Veneziano and Hooper (1997), the statistical significance of the obtained CVRs was tested. The Content Validity Index (0.84) calculated for the items was compared with this value (0.62). In this regard, it is implicated that the questionnaire is statistically significant [(0.84>0.62) CVI> CVR]. On the other hand, a 5-point Likert-type rating scale identified as 1- 1.80 (Never); 1.81- 2.60 (Rarely); 2.61- 3.40 (Sometimes) 3.41- 4.20 (Frequently); and; 4.21-5 (Always) was used in the questionnaire.

In the qualitative part, data were collected through a semi-structured interview form. The semi-structured interview allows the participants to answer the questions as broadly as they want and to examine the research in depth (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Three preschool teachers and two academicians working in preschool education department were consulted for the draft form. Following expert opinions, a pilot study was conducted with 5 preschool teachers and after piloting, the final form was developed. Some of the questions in the form are as follows:

- What do you usually pay attention to when selecting a book for reading activities? Why?
- What kind of methods do you use in book reading activities? Why?
- How do you evaluate book reading activities in preschool education?
- What do you say about the aims of book reading activities in preschool education?
- What are the most important characteristics that you think are necessary for preschool teachers to carry out effective book reading activities? Why?
- What kind of suggestions would you like to make for more efficient book reading activities? Why?

The validity and reliability criteria of Guba and Lincoln (1986) were used as a base. In this regard, for internal validity, the strategy of member checking was applied. For this, some participants for whom data were provided or interviewed were contacted a second time and asked whether the study findings accurately reflect their own thoughts to provide feedback. For external validity, as stated by Guba and Lincoln (1986), purposive sampling method was employed in this study. In addition, for transferability of the results to situations in similar participants and environments, direct quotations of the participants were included. The purpose of transferability is to help the readers of the study apply the results in their own work by describing the experiences of the participants in detail (Guba & Lincoln, 1986). For, dependability, both quantitative and qualitative data were included. Furthermore, two researchers took part in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data. For confirmability, the methods and stages used in the research were defined clearly and in detail, and the raw data of the research were stored in a way that could be examined by others.

### **Research Ethics**

Ethics committee approval was obtained for the study. The participants were included in the study on a volunteering basis, and they were ensured that their names and data would be kept confidential. They were informed about the purpose and stages of the study. It was also explained that the research findings could be shared with them, and they could provide feedback if they wanted to.

### **Data Analysis**

Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately. Frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used in the statistical analysis of the data obtained from the Interactive Book Reading Questionnaire. In the qualitative part of the study, each participant's answer was coded as P1-T (P: Participant; 1: Participant No; T: Preschool Teacher). The codes and themes obtained from the data were generated by using the content analysis that involves “interpreting similar data by bringing them together within certain concepts and themes and arranging them in a way that the reader can understand” (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011, p. 227).



## FINDINGS

### Quantitative Findings

The arithmetic mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentages for the interactive book reading questionnaire items were calculated and given below.

**Table 5.** Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, Frequency and Percent Values Obtained from the Items in the “Before Reading” Sub-dimension of the Interactive Book Reading Questionnaire

Items			A	F	S	R	N
	Mean	SD	f %	f %	f %	f %	f %
1.I select books that are appropriate for the developmental level of children	4.73	.451	37 72.5	14 27.5	-	-	-
2.I select books by paying attention to the interests of children	4.51	.612	29 56.9	19 37.2	3 5.9	-	-
3.Before reading the book, I choose target words from the book that I think the children have not heard before	3.88	.816	12 23.5	24 47.1	12 23.5	3 5.9	-
4.I show the cover of the book to the children before reading it	5.00	.000	51 100	-	-	-	-
5.I give information to children about the author, illustrator and publisher of the book	3.69	1.41	21 41.2	10 10.6	10 10.6	5 9.8	5 9.8
6.I listen to children's opinions about the subject of the book	4.57	.575	31 60.8	18 35.3	2 3.9	-	-

*A: Always; F: Frequently; S: Sometimes; R: Rarely; N: Never*

As given in Table 5, in terms of the “Always” range, while the item with the highest percentage was “I show the cover of the book to the children before reading it” ( $f=51;100\%$ ), the item with the lowest percentage was: “Before reading the book, I choose target words from the book that I think the children have not heard before” ( $f=12; 23.5\%$ ). In terms of the “Never” range, only the item “I give information to children about the author, illustrator and publisher of the book” ( $f=5; 9.8\%$ ) were scored in this part of the questionnaire by the participants.

The items with the highest mean were the items “I show the cover of the book to the children before reading it” (Mean=5.00;  $SD=000$ ), “I select books that are appropriate for the developmental level of children” (Mean=4.73;  $SD=.451$ ), “I listen to children's opinions about the subject of the book” (Mean=4.57;  $SD=.575$ ) and, “I select books by paying attention to the interests of children” (Mean=4.51;  $SD=.612$ ) respectively while the items with the lowest mean were “I give information to children about the author, illustrator and publisher of the book” (Mean=3.69;  $SD=1.41$ ) and, “Before reading the book, I choose target words from the book that I think the children have not heard before” (Mean=3.88;  $SD=.816$ ).

**Table 6.** Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, Frequency and Percent Values Obtained from the Items in the “During Reading” Sub-dimension of the Interactive Book Reading Questionnaire

Items			A	F	S	R	N
	Mean	SD	f %	f %	f %	f %	f %
7.I read the title of the book aloud	4.82	.518	45 88.2	3 5.9	3 5.9	-	-
8.When I read the title of the book, I go over the words with my finger	3.51	1.50	21 41.2	8 15.7	8 15.7	7 13.7	7 13.7
9.I read by holding the pages of the book in a way that children can see	4.86	.401	45 88.2	5 9.8	1 2	-	-
10.I read the book with intonation so that children can hear	4.88	.325	45 88.2	6 11.8	-	-	-
11.I read the book by paying attention to the punctuation marks	4.76	.473	40 78.4	10 19.6	1 2	-	-
12.I use different materials to attract children's attention while reading a book	3.80	.980	14 27.5	18 35.3	15 29.4	3 5.9	1 2
13.I explain the words in the book that I think the children do not know	4.43	.700	27 52.9	20 39.2	3 5.9	1 2	-
14.I use images to explain the words in the book that I think the children do not know	3.49	1.01	11 21.6	10 19.6	24 47.1	5 9.8	1 2
15.I ask questions that will connect the story in the book with their own experiences	4.31	.735	24 47.1	18 35.3	9 17.6	-	-
16.I ask Wh questions while reading a book	4.12	.683	15 29.4	27 52.9	9 17.6	-	-
17.I ask open-ended questions while reading a book	4.27	.666	20 39.2	25 49	6 11.8	-	-
18.While reading a book, I leave some sentences unfinished and let the children complete them	3.55	.966	10 19.6	14 27.5	22 43.1	4 7.8	1 2
19.While reading a book, I do some exercises to help children gain phonological awareness skills	3.86	.960	16 31.3	15 29.4	18 35.3	1 2	1 2
20.When answering children's questions about the book, I explain with child-friendly words	4.25	.796	21 41.2	21 41.2	8 15.7	1 2	-

A: Always; F: Frequently; S: Sometimes; R: Rarely; N: Never

Table 6 indicates that with respect to the “Always” range, while the items “I read the title of the book aloud”, “I read by holding the pages of the book in a way that children can see and, “I read the book with intonation so that children can hear” had the items with the highest percentages ( $f=45$ ; 88.2%), the items “While reading a book, I leave some sentences unfinished and let the children complete them” ( $f=10$ ; 19.6%) and “ I use images to explain the words in the book that I think the children do not know” ( $f=11$ ; 21.6%) had the lowest ones. The item “When I read the title of the book, I go over the words with my finger” had the highest percentage ( $f=7$ ; 13.7%) scored by the participants at the “Never” range while the items “I use different materials to attract children's attention while reading a book”, “I use images to explain the words in the book that I think the children do not know”, “While reading a book, I leave some sentences unfinished and let the children complete them” and, “While reading a book, I do some exercises to help children gain phonological awareness skills” had the lowest percentages ( $f=1$ ; 2%).

In terms of arithmetic mean, while the items with the highest mean were “I read the book with intonation so that children can hear” (Mean=4.88;  $SD=.325$ ), “I read by holding the pages of the book in a way that children can see” (Mean=4.86;  $SD=.401$ ) and, “I read the title of the book aloud” (Mean=4.82;  $SD=.518$ ), those with the lowest mean were “I use images to explain the words in the book that I think the children do not know”

(Mean=3.49;  $SD=1.01$ ), “When I read the title of the book, I go over the words with my finger” (Mean=3.51;  $SD=1.50$ ) and, “While reading a book, I leave some sentences unfinished and let the children complete them” (Mean=3.55;  $SD=.966$ ).

**Table 7.** Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, Frequency and Percent Values Obtained from the Items in the “After Reading” Sub-dimension of the Interactive Book Reading Questionnaire

Items	Mean	SD	A	F	S	R	N
			f %	f %	f %	f %	f %
21.After reading the book, I want the children to summarize the story	3.82	.910	13 25.5	19 37.5	17 33.3	1 2	1 2
22.After reading the book, I plan different activities about the words in the book	3.61	.896	10 19.6	16 31.3	23 45.1	5 9.8	-

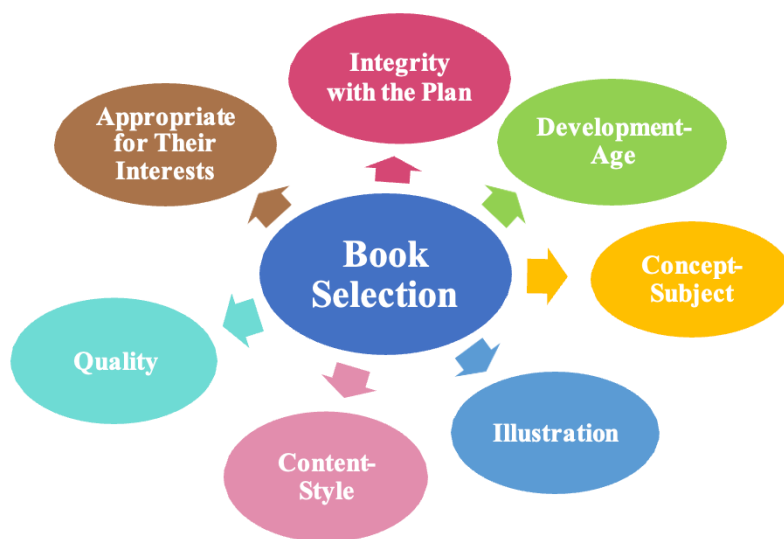
A: Always; F: Frequently; S: Sometimes; R: Rarely; N: Never

As seen in Table 7, the item with the highest percentage ( $f=45$ ; 88.2%), was “After reading the book, I want the children to summarize the story” in terms of the “Always” range, the same item was also scored at the “Never” range ( $f=45$ ; 88.2%). None of the participants scored the “Never” range for the item “After reading the book, I plan different activities about the words in the book.” On the other hand, the arithmetic mean of both items was “Often” at Likert rating level.

### Qualitative Findings

The emerging themes were “Book Selection”, “Method” and, “Suggestions” from the analysis of qualitative data. The relevant codes took part under these themes.

According to the results obtained from the opinions of the participants, the theme “Book selection” and the codes under this theme were given in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Views of Participants on Book Selection for Reading Activities

As given in Figure 1, when the data obtained from participants’ views were analyzed, the codes emerging in the “Book Selection” theme were *Development-Age*, “Quality”, “Concept-Subject”, “Illustration”, “Content and Style” and, “Appropriate for interests.” Some direct quotations of the participants were given below:

*I pay attention to the concept to be taught during the day, whether this concept is suitable for the age level, the flow of events and its illustration. It is necessary for their development, and important in terms of endearing the book to children (P4).*

*I pay attention to the integration of the book I selected with the plan, because I think that the subject we learned is better understood with the book (P5).*

*In order to attract more attention of the children and to reinforce the subject of that day, I make sure that it is appropriate for the age level of the children, that it is relevant to the topic of the day and that is of interested to children (P9).*

*I review which concept I will teach in which month, whether it is suitable for the developmental level of the children and I make sure that the pictures of the book are too much and the texts are less. I examine the book to see if I can obtain activities such as drama, art activity or music activity and I do a reading activity by integrating these review criteria (P30).*

Most of the participants stated that the quality of the book is important. Some of these views were:

*I pay attention to the quality of the paper, whether the pictures match the subject, the colors, whether the language used is appropriate, and whether the sentences match the content. Since children are illiterate, they read visually, so I pay attention to the details I mentioned. The style should also be age-appropriate (P11).*

*I pay attention to the quality of the book, its pictures, whether it is suitable for the level of children, whether the book contains insults or not (P12).*

*I check that there are no signs of neglect and abuse, that they are thought-provoking, that the content and pictures are compatible (P24).*

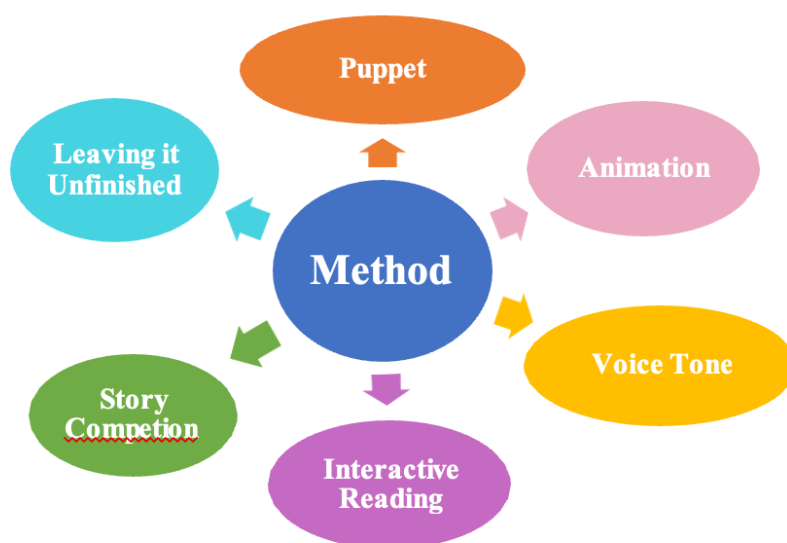
*I try to choose quality books. Thus, the subjects I want to give to the children and the process are very enjoyable (P31).*

*I pay attention to the author, the illustrator, the cover design and the quality of the paper. In the book I selected, there should be less text and more pictures. The traces it will leave on us and the children should be high. That's why a quality book is important (P29).*

*I pay attention to their quality because there are a lot of children's books, but sometimes the content can be very wrong and ridiculous (32).*

Considering the opinions of the participants, they stated that they have selected books for reading activities according to the age and developmental level of children, and they have also preferred quality children's books because there are too many children's books and some of them have not suitable contents. They also stated that the children are illiterate yet. Because of children's doing visual reading, they have paid attention to the illustrations of the books and whether the subject and the illustration overlap. The participants also stated that they paid attention to the fact that the selected book was related to the concept and the topic to be given during the day, and that the book could be integrated with different activities. Some of the other factors that the participants paid attention to in the selection of the book were that the style used in the book was suitable for the age level of the children, did not contain insults, and there was no evidence of neglect and abuse.

In line with the views of the participants, the "Method" theme was generated as the second theme and the codes under this theme were given in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Views of Participants on the Methods They Use in Book Reading Activities

Figure 2 illustrates the codes that emerged in the “Method” theme. They were “Animation”, “Puppet”, “Interactive reading”, “Voice tone”, “Leaving unfinished” and, “Story completion.” Some views of the participants were given below:

*I use interactive book reading because it is much more effective on children (P3).*

*I choose puppets, changing the voice tone, books that include a lot of visuals in order to attract the attention and interest of children more (P9).*

*I pay attention to doing interactive book reading activities because the class dynamics and my students form the center and core of my studies in my teaching (P15).*

*I use voice changes to keep their attention alive (P17).*

*I use methods such as puppets, voice tone changing, story completion, animation and leaving it unfinished and I try to involve children actively by asking questions while reading (P28).*

*I pay attention to my vocalizations so that it can be a more effective expression, and sometimes we do animations. Furthermore, I use my facial expressions to attract the attention of children (P32).*

In line with the views of the participants, it was revealed that they chose the methods used in the book reading activities to attract the attention of the children. In this direction, they stated that they have used interactive book reading activities, changed their voice tones, used puppets, and animated the books they read.

Considering the opinions of the teachers, they stated that they used interactive book reading to attract children's attention, changed the tones of voice, used puppets, and animated the book as the methods they used in book reading activities.

The suggestions given by the participants to make their reading activities more productive took place under the theme of “Suggestion”. The codes of this theme were “Integrated Activity”, “Short Story”, “Ritual”, “Eye contact”, “Reading by Imitation”, “Selecting Short Stories” and, “Tone of Voice” (See Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Views of Participants on Making Book Reading Activities More Efficient

The theme of “Suggestions” given in Figure 3 was formed from the analysis of the data attained from the views of the participants on making the book reading activities more efficient. Some views of the participants under this theme were given below:

*It is absolutely necessary to make eye contact with children, to pay attention to the tone of voice, gestures and facial expressions while telling or reading a story, and to support the integration of children with the story (P3).*

*Integrated activities should be used to make learning more efficient (P13).*

*I suggest choosing the right book and method suitable for the age of the student, determining a ritual to make the reading hours special (I close the curtains and say a nursery rhyme while doing this), giving parents an interactive book reading seminar to support reading at home and reading a book at least 3 times (P16).*

*The priority should be the selection of qualified books, the children should get out of the monotonous narrative and participate actively in the reading moment, and books should be integrated with the activities (P27)*

*Long stories should not be preferred; they can get bored quickly (P30).*

*I think pre- and post-reading rituals work, and doing different activities related to the book increases the interest in the book-reading process (P31).*

*Using the tone of voice well and reading by imitation attract the attention of children more (P33).*

In line with the views of the participants, it was emphasized that short stories should be preferred so that the book reading activities would be more efficient and the children would not get bored quickly. The tone of voice should be used efficiently to attract the attention of the children. Rituals should be generated for the book reading activities and the activities integrated with the book should be planned.

## DISCUSSION

This research was carried out with the aim of determining the preschool teachers' use of interactive book reading. It was concluded that the preschool teachers participated in the current study included book reading activities in their daily education flow, they have used the interactive book reading to increase the attention of the children and to reinforce the desired concept, but they did not have enough knowledge about the interactive book reading and did not apply the steps of the interactive book reading sufficiently.

According to the quantitative results, it is noteworthy that while all of the participants always show the cover of the book to children before reading the book, there were preschool teachers ( $f= 45$ ; 88.2%) who stated that they always hold the pages of the book in a way that children can see while reading a book. However, it was expected that all preschool teachers would respond to this item at the "Always" range. In a study conducted by Işıkoğlu Erdoğan et al. (2016), it was yielded that the child's seeing the pictures, hearing the text and speaking during reading has supported the permanence of learning. In this study, most of the participants ( $N=24$ ) stated that they always ask questions that can establish a connection between the story in the book and the child's own experience. However, Ward (2007) stated in his study that how different characters solve similar problems in different environments can guide children and adults in finding a solution to a problem they face. In the results of the research, the item with the highest frequency of "Never" option ( $f= 7$ ; 13.7%) was the item "When I read the title of the book, I go over the words with my finger." It was concluded that the teachers did not implement one of the important steps of interactive book reading efficiently. Ezell and Justice (2000) in their study to increase print awareness, found that children's awareness of writing concepts, letters, words, and the relationship between writing and speech increased by enabling adults to point to writing in different ways while reading a book. Ün Başaran (2006) stated that if children are active, it increases the permanence of learning. While most of the participants chose target words before reading the book, it was concluded that the number of teachers who stated that they always used visuals while explaining these words decreased ( $f= 11$ ; 21.6%). However, it has been remarked that concepts can be learned more easily with definitions, visuals and conversations (Cameron, 2001). In a study that argued that there was a significant increase in children's understanding of the story with the book reading intervention program, an increase was observed between the answers given by the children to the questions asked about the book and the ability to sort the story arc according to the order in which the book that was read (Gölcük et al., 2015). In this regard, the majority of the participants stated that they wanted the children to summarize the story after the book reading activity.

Considering the qualitative results, it was stated that the participants have selected the books for reading activities according to the age and developmental level of the children. They also stated that there were too many children's books. However, they tried to prefer qualified children's books. In parallel with the findings of the study, Yükselen, Yumuş, and Işık (2016) conducted a study on the criteria of preschool teachers for selecting children's books and stated that preschool teachers have a high awareness of the physical characteristics of the books and their suitability for children's development when selecting children's books. As another finding, it was found that the participants paid attention to whether the subject and the illustration overlap in the selection of the book due to the fact that children do visual reading because they are not literate yet. In the study by Kılınçcı (2019) in which the effects of interactive and traditional book reading methods on the storytelling and illustration skills of children in the preschool period were examined, an improvement was observed in the use of figures in space, expression-story skills, shape-form and color use in illustration skills after the interactive book reading and it was observed that the children used the paper surface in a more planned way while drawing. Vukelich, Christie, and Enz (2014) emphasized that facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures and mimics should be adjusted while reading the text for qualified interaction. Parallel to this result, the participants of the current study stated that they used interactive book reading to attract children's attention as the method they used in book reading activities, and they changed their tones of voice. The participants stated that they have used puppets to attract the attention of the children and

that they have done the animation of the book. Aktaş (2021) stated that the dramatization, playing games and art activities after book reading may have facilitated the better understanding of the plots in the book by the children. According to Önder (2002), children perceive animation as a game. Animation activities allow children to enjoy the process and have fun (Gasparro & Bernadette, 1994).

## CONCLUSION

This study addressed to reveal preservice teachers' use of interactive book reading. The findings yielded that although preschool teachers have given importance to the selection of books in terms of content, suitability for age and child development level, they have not used interactive book reading efficiently. Especially, they are unable to put into practice the stages of effective book reading.

This study has some limitations. First, the number of the participants for the quantitative part of the study was small. Although the questionnaire was delivered to many preschool teachers, several of them did not complete and send the questionnaire back. However, studies with a broader scope and with a larger number of participants will provide more precise results. Second, a questionnaire was employed as a data collection tool developed by the researchers. However, a more robust quantitative evaluation requires studies using multidimensional analyzes of interactive reading across different variables. Last, in the qualitative part of the study, the data were collected through a semi-structured interview form. Data triangulation was not possible due to the COVID-19 process. However, data triangulation is important in increasing the internal validity of a study. Including observations as well as interviews makes the results stronger. In this regard, the current study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods together to increase internal validity and complementary findings were reached.

In line with the findings and limitations of the study, it is suggested that future researchers employ multiple data collection tools, conduct research on more samples, and include different methods in their research. It is also suggested to include interactive book reading in preschool education programs, and to organize interactive book reading seminars for preschool teachers and parents.

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### Statements of Publication Ethics

Sivas Cumhuriyet University Ethics Committee issued a certificate of approval for the current research with the decision no. 27 on 03 February 2022 (E-60263016-050.06.04-136514)

### Conflict of Interest

The authors of the current article declare that there is not conflict of interest.

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