

*Full Length Research Paper*

# The children's book selection criteria: Evidence from preschool and primary school teachers

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The aim of this study is to comparatively examine the views of the preschool and primary school teachers about the criteria that qualified children books should have. The research group is comprised of 297 teachers (130 preschool teachers and 167 primary school teachers—of the first graders). The views of the teachers concerning the criteria that qualified children books should have were collected through the “*Principle of Suitability for Children Scale*”. The obtained data were analyzed in two stages. During the analyses, initially the general distributions of the answers of the teachers to the items of the scale were examined, and subsequently, it was examined how these answers differed based on certain personal and professional properties. In order to examine the general distributions of the answers of the teachers to the scale, item-based percentages and frequencies were calculated. For investigating how these answers differed based on certain personal and professional properties, a series of the Mann-Whitney U and the Kruskal Wallis tests were conducted. The findings demonstrated that the teachers are generally responsive to the basic criteria that qualified books children should have. In more detail, it was observed that there were statistically significant differences among the views of the teachers according to their professional teaching branch, age, and work experience. In light of the recent developments of children’s literature, these findings were discussed in detail concerning the importance of children’s literature for the preschool and primary school periods.

**Key words:** Children’s literature, children books, book selection criteria, preschool teachers, primary school teachers.

## INTRODUCTION

Children’s literature is a notion, which is comprised of two notions such as child and literature that have an important relationship and which bring to mind the works produced for children. The children’s literature, which is stated as the general title of the art products appropriate to the levels of children, is defined, for the period starting from the early childhood until the end of the adolescence,

as the general name of all verbal or written books that are enriched with qualified visual and linguistic messages concerning the period that the sensations and thoughts of children are shaped (Lynch- Brown et al., 2011; Sever, 2015). Children’s literature is an art branch aiming to help the child recognize and understand oneself, immediate surroundings, the society and culture that he/she lives in,

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and different aspects of life. In line with this purpose, it provides countless achievements to the child such as learning the native language and its particulars, developing the vocabulary, and gaining reading habit (Aslan, 2013a, b; Dickinson and Tabors, 2001; Saracho and Spodek, 2010; Sever, 2013, 2015).

It depends on their positive relationship with the literature for the children to become individuals, who can express themselves well, have the sensitivity to understand the interlocutor, can think and interpret about events and opinions, and recognize the diversity and beauty of the world (Kiefer, 2004; Landt, 2006; Louie, 2006; Saracho and Spodek, 2010). The main tool in this relationship is the children books. By means of the books, children will not only improve their knowledge about the world but also develop their sensitivity, imagination, creativity and communication skills (Aslan, 2013a; Dickinson and Tabors, 2001; Kiefer, 2004; Saracho and Spodek, 2010; Sever 2015). For the children's books to fulfill these important tasks, it is necessary to equip them with certain structural and educational properties (Dwyer and Neuman, 2008; Lukens et al., 2013; Sever, 2013). These are the pedagogic principles that the books involve through their inner and outer structural properties. Children books are a whole with their formal structures (size, paper quality, page layout, images, etc.), internal structures (theme, subject, hero, fluency, language, narration, etc.), and the pedagogic principles based-on (supporting the curriculum, relevant to the reality of life, supporting the emotional and cognitive development of the child, etc.). The holism and consistency of these properties and the principles are the most fundamental factors determining the quality of the children books (Lukens et al., 2013; Rudman, 1994; Russell, 1991; Sever, 2015).

In fact, the relationships of children with the literature start at very early ages. In this period, which starts as early as the early childhood period, children establish their relationships with the literature through the individuals in their family and relatives such as mother, father, sibling, and immediate surroundings (Bus and van IJzendoorn, 1997; Shoghi et al., 2013). In this period, with the existence of family members reading books, magazines and newspapers at the home environment, exposure of the child to these objects and acts at home, picture books are provided for the child appropriate to his/her age, stories told to the child, and encouraging the child to tell stories as well will be of importance for the child to develop an awareness for the literature and the literacy behaviors of the child will start to get off the ground (Hammett et al., 2003; Sénéchal and Young, 2008; Whitehurst and Lonigan, 1998). In this period, since the books provided for the child should compete with the attractive, colorful, and moving toys, the books should be at least as aesthetical as the toys, so attractive as to make the child prefer the books instead of the toys, and at the same time they should be artistically

qualified, visually and linguistically enriched, in other words, they should be in line with the "for-children" principle (Sever, 2013, 2015). The children books prepared in accordance with the "for-children" principle for the childhood period, which starts from early childhood until the end of the adolescence period, support the linguistic, cognitive, and personality development of children in a positive manner.

Another key period for the development process of literacy is regarded as the preschool period (Morrow, 2009). This period coincides with another important process, in which children are met with the early literacy skills that are defined as the whole set of skills and prerequisite knowledge concerning literacy and that is the basis of reading, and in which positive attitudes concerning reading start to become a part of the life of the children (Mccathren and Allor, 2002; Kelman, 2006; Lefebvre et al., 2011; Shoghi et al., 2013; Whitehurst and Lonigan, 1998). At the beginning of the preschool education, if the children meet with teachers, who are aware of the relationship between the child and literature, it becomes possible to speak about a lifetime powerful bond between the children and literature (Morrow, 2009; Sever, 2015). In this period, the preschool teachers have important responsibilities such as knowing, selecting, and following the books appropriate to the ages and development characteristics of the children, creating a class library, introducing the books that should be read, supporting the early literacy of children by getting in touch with the families, and getting the children adopt the library habit. In order to fulfill these responsibilities, preschool teachers should be extremely conscious and equipped about children's literature in general, and in particular, about the preference of literature works of quality for children and bringing these books to them (Morrow, 2009).

The child, who learns how to read and write in the primary school and whose literacy process officially starts, now gains the opportunity to get in touch with the books without needing anyone else. This period is an important transition phase, which is efficient throughout the lifetime literacy of the child, and in which the future literacy behaviors of the child are shaped. Considering its content, this is a period, in which the reading culture in children is started to be formed and the awareness about literacy turns into a reading habit in the short period, and the reading habits turn into reading culture in the long period (Black and Young, 2005; Mckinlay, 1990; Temple et al., 2005; Sever, 2013, 2015). The relationship between the child and the literature in the preschool period should be fed and empowered by the primary school teacher during the education in the primary school, and it should be consolidated as a reading culture rather than a habit (Sever, 2013). The aim of this phase is to help the child understand that the book has an important place in the life and it opens the doors of different worlds to the reader, and it is aimed that the

child accepts the book as an indispensable need, giving it an important place in his/her life (Aslan, 2013a; b). However, if the child has not experienced a qualified preparation period for literacy both at home and at preschool environments, a heavy task waits for the primary school teacher such as closing the gap created in the first six years, establishing the relationship between the child and literature, and turning this relationship into an indispensable habit. Most of the time, this heavy task turns into an inextricable problem for the primary school teachers. However, among the fundamental objectives of the education programs/curriculums, from the very first steps, is to help the children have a high-level awareness about reading, turn it into a habit, and bring it into a universal literacy level. In order to reach this objective, the curriculum allocates a wide place for the lessons, applications, and activities with children's literature from the very first steps. The success in putting this rich content into practice is completely dependent on the competence of the teachers about the children's literature implementations. This fact, in return, brings forth the competence of the teachers both in the selection of qualified children's literature books that will support the development of children in all aspects and, after selection, to introduce them to the children with efficient implementation methods.

### Rationale of the study

In light of the abovementioned information, it is obvious that both the preschool teachers and primary school teachers have a key role in bringing up qualified literate individuals. Considering the fact that, in the first school years, children attribute high value to their teachers and they take the teachers as a model, the meaning teachers assign to the children's literature books in the classroom environment and their criteria will be internalized by the children without any questioning. Starting from the preschool period, it is observed that, if the children have an opportunity to access to qualified children's literature books, it will be helpful for them to gain the reading habit in the short term, and to subsequently turn this habit into a learning tool (Black and Young, 2005; Mckinlay, 1990; Temple et al., 2005). Therefore, it is important that these teachers should have the competence to select the qualified children's literature books and to introduce them to the students efficiently, since these teachers give the first opportunity to the children in their formal education process to meet with the books and since they have the responsibility to be a role model for the children in an important phase which, starting from early literacy skills, paves the way leading to becoming individuals with reading culture. When previous studies conducted on children's literature field in Turkey were examined, they were observed to be numerous; however, it was also determined that, rather than the book selection

criteria/behaviors of teachers, the majority of these studies were conducted on how should be the style and the content properties of the qualified children's literature books and quality/suitability description of children's literature books printed in Turkey (Aslan, 2006, 2007a, b, 2013a, b, c; Dilidüzgün, 2003, 2007a, b; Oğuzkan, 2001; Sever, 1995, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2013, 2015; Sever et al., 2011). The previous studies provided important pieces of information to the literature for creating the children's literature domain and determining the criteria of the qualified children books. However, when the studies are examined, a separate and primary research subject arises that there is vagueness about how to implement these pieces of information concerning the children's literature, in other words, to what extent are the teachers aware of these pieces of information and to what extent do they prioritize these criteria in determining the qualified children books. Based on this obligation, in this study, it was aimed at both closing an important gap in Turkish children's literature and comparatively examining the views of preschool and primary school teachers, who are in a key position in raising literate individuals, concerning the basic criteria of the qualified children books based on their professional and personal properties. The findings of this study will make contributions to the Turkish children's literature field and to its implementations in both theoretical and practical terms.

### METHODOLOGY

This research, aims at comparatively examining the views of the preschool and primary school teachers about the criteria that qualified children books should have, is a descriptive study conducted on survey model.

#### Participants

The participants of the study were 297 teachers (130 preschool teachers and 167 primary school teachers-of the first graders) working in Ankara province. Two main criteria were considered in the selection of the teachers. The first criterion was the voluntary participation and the second one was working as a tenured staff in the public schools. Detailed information concerning the teachers volunteered to participate in line with these criteria is given in Table 1.

As is seen in Table 1, 230 female (77.4%) and 67 male (23.6%) teachers participated in the study. Among the teachers, 134 (45.1%) were in the 24-35 age group, 102 (34.4%) were in 36-45 age group, and 61 (20.5%) were 46 years old and over. 220 teachers (74.0%) were graduates of faculty of education, while 77 of them (26.0 %) were graduates of institute of education or teacher's training school. 56 participants (18.8 %) had been working as a teacher for 1-5 years, 66 of them (22.2%) for 6-10 years, and 175 (59.0 %) for 11 years and over. Among the teachers, 222 (74.7 %) stated that they had never participated in a training concerning children's literature, while 75 of them (25.3 %) stated that they participated. Among the ones who participated in a training, 27 (36.0 %) participated in the in-service training held by the Ministry of National Education (MNE), while 30 of them

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of participants.

<b>Preschool teachers</b>			
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Levels</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Gender	Female	124	(95.3)
	Male	6	(4.7)
Age group	24-35	102	(78.4)
	36-45	27	(20.7)
	46>	1	(0.9)
Graduation	Faculty of Education	128	(98.4)
	Teacher's Training School	2	(1.6)
Working experiences	1-5	46	(35.3)
	6-10	50	(38.4)
	11>	34	(26.3)
Training in children's literature	Yes	95	(73.0)
	No	35	(27.0)
	a) In-service training (MNE)	7	(20.0)
	b) Workshop, seminar etc.	19	(54.2)
	c) MA on children literature	4	(11.5)
	d) Unknown	5	(14.3)
<b>Primary school teachers</b>			
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Levels</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Gender	Female	106	(63.4)
	Male	61	(36.5)
Age group	24-35	32	(19.2)
	36-45	75	(44.9)
	46>	60	(35.9)
Graduation	Faculty of education	92	(55.0)
	Teacher's training school	75	(45.0)
Working experiences	1-5	10	(6.0)
	6-10	16	(9.5)
	11>	141	(84.5)
Training in children's literature	Yes	127	(76.0)
	No	40	(24.0)
	a) In-service training (MNE)	20	(50.0)
	b) Workshop, seminar etc.	11	(27.5)
	c) MA on children literature	2	(5.0)
	d) Unknown	7	(17.5)
<b>Total</b>			
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Levels</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Gender	Female	230	(77.4)
	Male	67	(23.6)
Age Group	24-35	134	(45.1)
	36-45	102	(34.4)
	46>	61	(20.5)

Table 1. Contd.

Graduation	Faculty of education	220	(74.0)
	Teacher's training school	77	(26.0)
Working experiences	1-5	56	(18.8)
	6-10	66	(22.2)
	11>	175	(59.0)
Training in children's literature	Yes	222	(74.7)
	No	75	(25.3)
	a) In-service training (MNE)	27	(36.0)
	b) Workshop, seminar etc.	30	(40.0)
	c) MA on children literature	6	(8.0)
	d) Unknown	12	(16.0)

participated in a trainings such as workshop, seminar, or program, and 6 of them (8.0%) had a masters' degree on children's literature. Twelve teachers (16.0%), stated to have a training, did not answer the type of their training.

#### Data collection tool

The data of this study were collected through the "Principle of Suitability for Children Scale (PSCS)", which was developed by the researcher. PSCS is a five point Likert scale, which presents the criteria that the qualified children books should have fewer than two headings and aims at determining the extent those teachers prioritize these criteria while selecting the children books. During the course of developing the PSCS, first of all, a wide literature review was employed to identify the elements of internal and formal structural features of books. Secondly, based on this literature review, all the related research were grouped according to their testing procedures (like using tools, scales, interviews, questionnaires, etc.) and all the items used in these studies for examining the structural features of books were listed. Third, the listed items were categorized with regards to their contents under two main factors (internal and formal structural features) and their expressions were corrected in terms of the linguistic features of the language. Lastly, all the potential items (n: 58) were written in a table format and sent to three independent experts, who were working as professors in the field of children's literature, to evaluate the content validity of the PSCS. The evaluators were asked to assess the form in terms of the content validity, fitness for the purpose of the language, style and expressions used. With regards to the content validity of the PSCS, majority of the items (84 %) in the scale were found to be very important by all three experts; according to their evaluations, only the items (n: 49), which were regarded as necessary by all of them, were included in the PSCS. Subsequently, data were collected from 245 teachers and reliability and validity tests of the scale were conducted. Before conducting the factor analysis of the PSCS, firstly, the Kaiser-Mayer Olkin (KMO) measurement of sample adequacy and Barlett's test were employed to determine the fitness of the data for the factor analysis. The results obtained from the KMO (0.88) and Barlett's test ( $p < 0.01$ ) showed a strong indication of sampling adequacy and suggested that the data supplied by the scale was appropriate for the factor analysis.

In order to test the factor structure of the PSCS, the explanatory factor analysis was conducted. Firstly, the principal component factor analysis and then the varimax rotation were administered

orderly to determine the number of separate components under the appropriate number of factors. Based on an examination of the scree plots and rotation matrices for each item, a two-factor structure was determined to be the best overall descriptor of the PSCS. The explanatory factor analysis was started with 49 items in total. Then the 14 items were subsequently removed either for having low factor loading values or high factor loading values in multiple factors. As a result of these analyses, it was revealed that the PSCS consists of 35 items under two independent factor structures named as *Internal Structural Features* (17 items) and *Formal Structural Features* (18 items). The values of the factor loadings of 35 items under two independent factors varied ranging from 0.72 to 0.34.

*Internal Structural Features* (factor 1) consist of 17 items regarding *subject/message, character, language, conflict, coincidence, sentimentality, and curiosity* used in books and aim at evaluating the views of the teachers with regard to these internal structural features of books. On the other hand, *Formal Structural Features* (factor 2) consist of 18 items regarding *visualizations, consistency of front, book and back pages of books, images and the paper quality of books* and aim at evaluating the views of the teachers with regard to these formal structural features of books.

The reliability of the PSCS was evaluated by calculating (a) the internal consistency of the whole scale and its sub-factors, (b) split-half reliability score, and (c) test-retest reliability score of the PSCS. Initially, the Cronbach's Alpha and split-half scores of the PSCS were calculated. The Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the total (0.91) and sub-dimensions of the scale (0.90, 0.84 respectively) and split-half score (0.90) were found to be greater than 0.70. This result demonstrated that both the full scale and the sub-dimensions of the scale are highly reliable. Secondly, the test-retest reliability scores of 52 participants, who volunteered to fill the scale again two weeks after the first application, were calculated via the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The test-retest reliability score was found 0.66. Thus, the calculated reliability scores demonstrated that the scale has a high level of reliability.

The highest possible score is 175 that can be gained from the PSCS, in which each item is scored between 1 and 5, while the lowest possible score is 35, and the average is 105. The highest possible score is 85, which can be gained from the 1st Factor, *Internal Structural Features*, while the lowest possible score is 17, and the average is 51. The highest possible score is 90 that can be gained from the 2nd Factor, *Formal Structural Features*, while the lowest possible score is 18, and the average is 54. High scores gained demonstrate that the teachers attribute importance to the relevant dimensions in the selection of children books.

**Table 2.** Averages concerning the whole scale and both the sub-scales.

	Max.	Min.	Mean of scale	Mean score	
				Preschool teachers	Primary school teachers
ISF	85	17	51	77,90	76,04
FSF	90	18	54	81,10	79,22
Overall	175	35	105	159,07	155,32

ISF: Internal Structural Feature; FSF: Formal structural feature.

### Procedure

In the data collection phase, initially, the schools that the data would be collected from were decided. Subsequently, the researcher visited the schools; met with the management of the schools concerning the content, objectives, and discourse of the study, and gained necessary permissions to conduct the study. Eventually, the process of handing in the scales to the teachers started. All the scales were individually introduced to all teachers by the researcher. During the distribution of the scales, the researcher briefed the objective and content of the study to all the teachers, asking them to answer all the items of the scale frankly and completely. After the distribution of the scales, the teachers were asked to fill the scales in one week, all the schools were visited by the researcher after the prescribed time (one week), and all the scales were individually collected from the teachers.

### RESULTS

The data obtained from this research were analyzed in two phases. The first one of these was to determine the distribution of the answers given to the items of the PSCS by the teachers, while the second one was to examine whether the answers of the teachers to the PSCS varied based on their personal and professional properties. Before the analyses of the study, the averages of the teachers concerning the PSCS were calculated (Table 2). When the average scores of the teachers were examined, it was observed that, from both sub-scales, the preschool and primary school teachers gained scores that are quite close and over the average.

In the study, secondly, in order to determine the distribution of the answers of the teachers to the PSCS scale, frequencies and percentages were calculated on an item basis, and the results are demonstrated in Table 3.

When the distributions of the answers of the teachers to the PSCS scale were examined in Table 3, it was understood that they agreed with the majority of the items of the scale and they regarded these items as important in the selection of children books. When the inter-group distributions of the answers of the preschool and primary school teachers were comparatively examined, it was observed that the distribution of the Internal Structural Feature sub-dimension was similar for both groups; however, it was also observed that the items of the Formal Structural Features sub-dimension were

accepted/adopted more by the preschool teachers.

In the second phase of the analyses, it was examined that the PSCS answers of the teachers varied according to their certain personal or professional properties. Before the analyses, it was examined whether the data met the test of normality criterion (Table 4). When Table 4 was examined, it was observed that the PSCS scores of teachers in both groups did not demonstrate a normal distribution ( $p < .05$ ). Therefore, it was decided to use the non-parametric tests in the analyses to be conducted for determining whether the PSCS answers of the teachers varied according to their certain personal or professional properties (Landau and Everitt, 2004).

### Comparative examination of the PSCS answers of teachers concerning certain variables

In this phase, whether the PSCS answers of the teachers statistically differed according to their professional teaching fields was analyzed through the Mann-Whitney U test (Table 5). When Table 5 was examined, it was observed that there were statistically significant differences among the scores of the teachers ( $z = -2,67$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ;  $z = -2,05$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ;  $z = -2,71$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , orderly). When the mean ranks of the teachers from the PSCS were examined, it can be stated that preschool teachers agreed more with the items in both factors compared to the primary school teachers. Second, the gender variable was examined in the study and it was analyzed through Mann-Whitney U test whether the PSCS answers of the teachers statistically significantly differed according to the gender variable (Table 6).

When the results were examined, it was observed that there was statistically no significant difference between the PSCS scores of the teachers based on the gender variable ( $p > 0.05$ ). Although there was statistically no significant difference between the groups, when the PSCS mean ranks of the teachers were examined, it can be stated that the female teachers agreed more with the items in both factors compared to the male teachers (Table 6).

In this study, another variable examined subsequent to the gender variable was the age group of the teachers. It was analyzed through three different Kruskal Wallis

**Table 3.** Frequency and percentage distributions of the PSCS items.

<b>Internal structural feature</b>										
<b>Items</b>	<b>Preschool teachers</b>					<b>Primary school teachers</b>				
	<b>1 n(%)</b>	<b>2 n(%)</b>	<b>3 n(%)</b>	<b>4 n(%)</b>	<b>5 n(%)</b>	<b>1 n(%)</b>	<b>2 n(%)</b>	<b>3 n(%)</b>	<b>4 n(%)</b>	<b>5 n(%)</b>
M1	-	-	-	16 (12.3)	114 (87.7)	-	-	1(6)	40 (24.4)	<b>126 (75.4)</b>
M2	-	-	2(1.5)	8(6.2)	120 (92.3)	-	-	2(1.2)	46 (27.5)	<b>119 (71.3)</b>
M3	-	1(.8)	2(1.5)	17 (13.1)	110 (84.6)	-	1(6)	3 (1.8)	58 (34.7)	<b>105 (62.9)</b>
M4	1(.8)	8(6.2)	4(3.1)	41 (31.5)	76 (58.5)	-	8 (4.8)	13 (7.8)	64 (38.3)	<b>82 (49.1)</b>
M5	-	20 (15.4)	14 (10.8)	<b>54 (41.5)</b>	42 (32.3)	3 (1.8)	23 (13.9)	18 (10.8)	<b>64 (38.6)</b>	58 (34.9)
M6	-	-	2(1.5)	34 (26.2)	94 (72.3)	-	1(6)	5 (3.0)	62 (37.1)	<b>99 (59.3)</b>
M7	-	-	2(1.5)	31 (23.8)	97 (74.6)	-	1(6)	6 (3.6)	72 (43.1)	<b>88 (52.7)</b>
M8	-	-	2(1.5)	53 (40.8)	75 (57.7)	-	1(6)	6 (3.6)	64 (38.3)	<b>96 (57.5)</b>
M9	-	-	3(2.3)	38 (29.2)	89 (68.5)	-	-	2 (1.2)	42 (25.1)	<b>123 (73.7)</b>
M10	-	-	4(3.1)	27 (20.8)	99 (76.2)	-	1(6)	-	46 (27.5)	<b>120 (71.9)</b>
M11	-	3(2.3)	7(4.4)	48 (36.9)	72 (55.4)	-	5 (3.0)	8 (4.8)	73 (43.7)	<b>81 (48.5)</b>
M12	1(.8)	1(.8)	1(.8)	29 (22.3)	98 (75.4)	-	4 (2.4)	2 (1.2)	52 (31.1)	<b>109 (65.3)</b>
M13	3(2.3)	1(.8)	4(3.1)	36 (27.7)	86 (66.2)	1 (.6)	5 (3.0)	6 (3.6)	63 (37.7)	<b>92 (55.1)</b>
M14	1(.8)	3(2.3)	3(2.3)	54 (41.5)	69 (53.1)	-	5 (3.0)	7 (4.2)	<b>91 (54.8)</b>	63 (38.0)
M15	-	8(6.2)	13 (10.0)	<b>58 (44.6)</b>	51 (39.2)	-	12 (7.2)	12 (7.8)	<b>88 (52.7)</b>	54 (32.3)
M16	-	-	-	23 (17.7)	107 (82.3)	-	1(6)	2 (1.2)	50 (29.9)	<b>114 (68.3)</b>
M17	-	1(.8)	6(4.6)	47 (36.2)	76 (58.5)	-	2 (1.2)	11 (6.6)	<b>87 (52.7)</b>	67 (40.1)
<b>Formal structural features</b>										
<b>Items</b>	<b>Preschool Teachers</b>					<b>Primary School Teachers</b>				
	<b>1 n(%)</b>	<b>2 n(%)</b>	<b>3 n(%)</b>	<b>4 n(%)</b>	<b>5 n(%)</b>	<b>1 n(%)</b>	<b>2 n(%)</b>	<b>3 n(%)</b>	<b>4 n(%)</b>	<b>5 n(%)</b>
M18	1(.8)	-	2(1.5)	38 (29.2)	89 (68.5)	-	-	3 (1.8)	67 (40.7)	<b>97 (58.1)</b>
M19	-	1(.8)	5(3.8)	37 (28.5)	87 (66.9)	-	-	4 (2.4)	71 (42.5)	<b>92 (55.1)</b>
M20	-	2(1.5)	2(1.5)	33 (25.4)	93 (71.5)	-	1(6)	5 (3.0)	70 (42.2)	<b>90 (54.2)</b>
M21	-	-	2 (1.5)	30 (23.1)	98 (75.4)	1(.6)	1(6)	3 (1.8)	59 (35.3)	<b>103 (61.7)</b>
M22	3(2.3)	10 (7.7)	15 (11.5)	42 (32.3)	60 (46.2)	2 (1.2)	9 (5.4)	27 (16.2)	<b>72 (43.1)</b>	57 (34.1)
M23	2 (1.5)	1 (1.8)	11 (8.5)	39 (30.0)	77 (59.2)	-	4 (2.4)	12 (7.2)	<b>76 (45.8)</b>	74 (44.6)
M24	1(1.8)	2(1.5)	2(1.5)	36 (27.7)	89 (68.5)	-	-	3 (1.8)	75 (44.9)	<b>89 (53.3)</b>
M25	1(1.8)	6(4.6)	10 (7.7)	47 (36.2)	66 (50.8)	1 (.6)	-	9 (5.4)	76 (45.8)	<b>80 (48.2)</b>
M26	-	2(1.5)	5(3.8)	45 (34.6)	78 (60.0)	-	-	4 (2.4)	75 (45.2)	<b>87 (52.4)</b>
M27	1(1.8)	5(3.8)	3(2.3)	44 (33.8)	77 (59.2)	-	2 (1.2)	10 (6.0)	75 (44.9)	<b>80 (47.9)</b>
M28	1(.8)	4(3.1)	17 (13.1)	53 (40.8)	55 (42.3)	2 (1.2)	6 (3.6)	23 (13.9)	<b>69 (41.6)</b>	66 (39.8)

**Table 3. ContD.**

M29	-	6(4.6)	3(2.3)	39 (30.0)	82 (63.1)	-	1(0.6)	-	71 (42.5)	<b>95 (56.9)</b>
M30	1(.8)	10 (7.7)	7(5.4)	45 (34.6)	67 (51.5)	1 (.6)	5 (3.0)	8 (4.8)	74 (44.3)	<b>79 (47.3)</b>
M31	1(.8)	1(.8)	5(3.8)	44 (33.8)	79 (60.8)	-	7 (4.2)	12 (7.2)	<b>81 (48.5)</b>	67 (40.1)
M32	1(.8)	2(1.5)	3(2.3)	42 (32.3)	82 (63.1)	1 (.6)	5 (3.0)	10 (6.0)	75 (44.9)	<b>76 (45.5)</b>
M33	2(1.5)	3(2.3)	1(.8)	39 (30.0)	85 (65.4)	-	2(1.2)	8(4.8)	74 (44.3)	<b>83 (49.7)</b>
M34	-	1(.8)	1(.8)	41 (31.5)	87 (66.9)	-	4 (2.4)	10 (6.0)	<b>80 (47.9)</b>	73 (43.7)
M35	-	-	3(2.3)	40 (30.8)	87 (66.9)	-	4 (2.4)	-	68 (40.7)	<b>95 (56.9)</b>

**Table 4.** Test of Normality Scores of the PSCS.

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	p	Statistic	df	p
Overall	Preschool teachers	0.157	130	0.000	0.920	130	0.000
	Primary school teachers	0.109	162	0.000	0.948	162	0.000
ISF	Preschool teachers	0.135	130	0.000	0.909	130	0.000
	Primary school teachers	0.100	162	0.000	0.939	162	0.000
FSF	Preschool teachers	0.158	130	0.000	0.919	130	0.000
	Primary school teachers	0.086	162	0.005	0.966	162	0.001

ISF: Internal structural feature; FSF: Formal structural feature.

**Table 5.** Mann-Whitney U test results concerning the professional teaching field.

		Mean rank	Sum of	U	p
ISF	Preschool Teachers (n:130)	162,96	21185,00	8780,00	0.00
	Primary School Teachers (n:165)	136,21	22475,00		
FSF	Preschool Teachers (n:130)	158,92	20660,00	9175,00	0.04
	Primary School Teachers (n:164)	138,45	22705,00		
Overall	Preschool Teachers (n:130)	161,46	20989,50	8585,50	0.00
	Primary School Teachers (n:162)	134,50	21788,50		

ISF: Internal structural feature; FSF: Formal structural feature.

**Table 6.** Mann-Whitney U test results concerning the gender variable.

		<b>Gender</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Sum of</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
Preschool teachers	ISF	Female (n:124)	65,44	8114,00	364,00	0.92
		Male (n:6)	66,83	401,00		
	FSF	Female (n:124)	63,93	7927,00	177,00	0.06
		Male (n:6)	98,00	588,00		
	Overall	Female (n:124)	64,47	7994,50	244,50	0.15
		Male (n:6)	86,75	520,50		
		<b>Gender</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Sum of</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
Primary School teachers	ISF	Female (n:106)	85,51	9064,00	2861,00	0.36
		Male (n:59)	78,49	4631,00		
	FSF	Female (n:105)	87,04	9139,50	2620,50	0.10
		Male (n:59)	74,42	4390,50		
	Overall	Female (n:105)	84,92	8917,00	2633,00	0.20
		Male (n:57)	75,19	4286,00		
		<b>Gender</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Sum of</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
Total	ISF	Female (n:230)	152,63	35104,50	6410,50	0.07
		Male (n:65)	131,62	8555,50		
	FSF	Female (n:229)	151,55	34705,00	6515,00	0.12
		Male (n:65)	133,23	8660,00		
	Overall	Female (n:229)	150,81	34535,00	6227,00	0.09
		Male (n:63)	130,84	8243,00		

ISF: Internal structural feature; FSF: Formal structural feature.

tests whether the answers of the teachers to the PSCS statistically differed according to the age group variable (Table 7). When Table 7 was examined, considering the teachers as one group, it was observed that there was statistically significant difference among the PSCS mean ranks of the teachers based on their age groups ( $\chi^2 = 9,18, p < 0.05$ ;  $\chi^2 = 12,75, p < 0.05$ ;  $\chi^2 = 14,12, p < 0.05$ ).

When their professional teaching fields were examined one by one, it was observed that there was statistically no significant difference among the PSCS answers of the preschool teachers based on the age variable ( $\chi^2 = 1,53, p > 0.05$ ;  $\chi^2 = 4,54, p > 0.05$ ;  $\chi^2 = 3,47, p > 0.05$ ); however, it was observed that there was a statistically significant difference in the 2nd Factor for the primary school teachers based on the same variable ( $\chi^2 = 6.81, p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, for the next analysis, it was decided to determine between which levels these differences were. In this purpose, the Mann-Whitney U test and the inter-level paired comparisons were conducted, and the findings of these analyses are presented in Table 8.

When the results of the analyses were examined, considering the teachers as one group and disregarding their teaching fields, it was observed that the teachers in the 46-and-over age group agreed with the PSCS items is statistically significantly different compared to the teachers in other age groups ( $p < .05$ ). When the mean ranks were examined, it was observed that the teachers in the 46-and-over age group agreed with the PSCS items less compared to the teachers in other age groups (Table 8). When the PSCS answers of the teachers in the 24-35 age group and 36-45 age group were compared, it was observed that there was statistically no significant difference between the groups ( $p > 0.05$ ).

When the source of the significant difference of the primary school teachers based on the age variable was examined, it was observed that the results were consistent with the results obtained from the entire group. More clearly, it was observed that the agreement level of the primary school teachers in the 46-and-over age group concerning particularly the items in the second factor of

**Table 7.** Kruskal wallis test results concerning the age group variable.

		<b>Age group</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b><math>\chi^2</math></b>	<b>p</b>
Preschool Teachers	ISF	24 - 35 (n:102)	67.49	1,53	0.464
		36 - 45 (n:27)	58.87		
		46 >... (n:1)	41.50		
	FSF	24 - 35 (n:102)	69.14	4.54	0.103
		36 - 45 (n:27)	52.65		
		46 >... (n:1)	41.00		
	Overall	24 - 35 (n:102)	68.67	3.47	0.176
		36 - 45 (n:27)	54.44		
		46 >... (n:1)	41.00		
		<b>Age group</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b><math>\chi^2</math></b>	<b>p</b>
Primary School Teachers	ISF	24 - 35 (n:32)	89.61	2.07	0.35
		36 - 45 (n:74)	85.64		
		46 >... (n:59)	76.10		
	FSF	24 - 35 (n:31)	88.65	6.81	0.03
		36 - 45 (n:75)	90.05		
		46 >... (n:58)	69.46		
	Overall	24 - 35 (n:31)	88.24	5.55	0.05
		36 - 45 (n:74)	87.75		
		46 >... (n:57)	69.72		
		<b>Age group</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b><math>\chi^2</math></b>	<b>p</b>
Total	ISF	24 - 35 (n:134)	162.76	9.18	0.01
		36 - 45 (n:101)	142.67		
		46 >... (n:60)	124.01		
	FSF	24 - 35 (n:133)	162.66	12.75	0.00
		36 - 45 (n:102)	146.35		
		46 >... (n:59)	115.32		
	Overall	24 - 35 (n:133)	163.60	14.12	0.00
		36 - 45 (n:101)	142.46		
		46 >... (n:58)	114.32		

ISF: Internal structural feature; FSF: Formal structural feature.

the PSCS statistically significantly differed compared to those of other age groups ( $p < 0.05$ ), and it was also observed that the answers of teachers in the 24-35 age group were similar to those of the teachers in the 36-45 age group ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Another variable examined in the study concerning the book selection of the teachers was their working experience. It was analyzed through three different Kruskal Wallis tests whether the PSCS answers of the teachers statistically significantly differed according to the working experience variable, and the findings of these

analyses are presented in Table 9. Considering the participants as one group, it was observed in Table 9 that there was a statistically significant difference among the PSCS mean ranks of the teachers based on their working experience ( $\chi^2 = 7.62$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ;  $\chi^2 = 5.00$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ;  $\chi^2 = 7.66$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, for the next analysis, it was decided to determine between which levels these differences were. In this purpose, the Mann-Whitney U test and paired comparisons were conducted between the working experience figures, and the findings of these analyses are presented in Table 10.

**Table 8.** Mann-Whitney U test results concerning the paired comparisons of age groups.

<b>Overall</b>					
	<b>Age group</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Sum of</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
ISF	24-35 (n:134)	124.94	16742.50	5836.50	0.07
	36-45 (n:101)	108.79	10987.50		
FSF	24-35 (n:133)	123.72	16454.50	6022.50	0.14
	36-45 (n:102)	110.54	11275.50		
Overall	24-35 (n:133)	124.99	16624.00	5720.00	0.05
	36-45 (n:101)	107.63	10871.00		
	<b>Age group</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Sum of</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
ISF	36-45 (n:101)	84.89	8573.50	2637.50	0.16
	46-... (n:60)	74.46	4467.50		
FSF	36-45 (n:102)	87.30	8905.00	2366.00	0.02
	46-... (n:59)	70.10	4136.00		
Overall	36-45 (n:101)	85.83	8668.50	2340.50	0.03
	46-... (n:58)	69.85	4051.50		
	<b>Age group</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Sum of</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
ISF	24-35 (n:134)	105.31	14112.00	2973.00	0.00
	46-... (n:60)	80.05	4803.00		
FSF	24-35 (n:133)	105.94	14090.00	2668.00	0.00
	46-... (n:59)	75.22	4438.00		
Overall	24-35 (n:133)	105.61	14046.00	2579.00	0.00
	46-... (n:58)	73.97	4290.00		
<b>Primary School Teachers</b>					
	<b>Age group</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Sum of</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
ISF	24-35 (n:32)	55.38	1772.00	1124.00	0.67
	36-45 (n:74)	52.69	3899.00		
FSF	24-35 (n:31)	52.63	1631.50	1135.50	0.85
	36-45 (n:75)	53.86	4039.50		
Overall	24-35 (n:31)	52.94	1641.00	1145.00	0.98
	36-45 (n:74)	53.03	3924.00		
	<b>Age group</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Sum of</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
ISF	36-45 (n:74)	70.45	5213.50	1927.50	0.24
	46-... (n:59)	62.67	3697.50		
FSF	36-45 (n:75)	74.19	5564.00	1636.00	0.01
	46-... (n:58)	57.71	3347.00		
Overall	36-45 (n:74)	72.22	5344.50	1648.50	0.03
	46-... (n:57)	57.92	3301.50		
	<b>Age group</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Sum of</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
ISF	24-35 (n:32)	50.73	1623.50	792.50	0.20
	46-... (n:59)	43.43	2562.50		
FSF	24-35 (n:31)	52.02	1612.50	681.50	0.05
	46-... (n:58)	41.25	2392.50		
Overall	24-35 (n:31)	51.31	1590.50	672.50	0.05
	46-... (n:57)	40.80	2325.50		

ISF: Internal structural feature; FSF: Formal structural feature.

**Table 9.** Kruskal Wallis test results concerning the working experiences.

		<b>Working Experiences</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b><math>\chi^2</math></b>	<b>p</b>
Preschool Teachers	ISF	1 - 5 (n:46)	75.05	6.42	0.05
		6 - 10 (n:50)	64.83		
		11 >... (n:34)	53.56		
	FSF	1 - 5 (n:46)	66.46	2.18	0.33
		6 - 10 (n:50)	69.92		
		11 >... (n:34)	57.71		
	Overall	1 - 5 (n:46)	70.53	3.93	0.14
		6 - 10 (n:50)	68.27		
		11 >... (n:34)	54.62		
Primary School Teachers	ISF	1 - 5 (n:10)	59.20	3.66	0.16
		6 - 10 (n:16)	95.91		
		11 >... (n:139)	83.23		
	FSF	1 - 5 (n:10)	74.55	0.69	0.70
		6 - 10 (n:15)	90.37		
		11 >... (n:139)	82.22		
	Overall	1 - 5 (n:10)	64.20	2.15	0.34
		6 - 10 (n:15)	92.27		
		11 >... (n:137)	81.58		
Total	ISF	1 - 5 (n:56)	168.68	7.62	0.02
		6 - 10 (n:66)	159.94		
		11 >... (n:173)	136.75		
	FSF	1 - 5 (n:56)	154.33	5.00	0.04
		6 - 10 (n:65)	165.04		
		11 >... (n:173)	138.70		
	Overall	1 - 5 (n:56)	161.38	7.66	0.02
		6 - 10 (n:65)	163.88		
		11 >... (n:171)	135.02		

ISF: Internal structural feature; FSF: Formal structural feature.

When the results of the analysis were examined, it was observed that the agreement levels of the teachers concerning the PSCS items were statistically significantly differed based on the working experience variable. When the P values obtained from the analyses were examined, it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the teachers with working experience of 11 years and over and the teachers with working experience of 1-5 years for the agreement levels of teachers concerning the items in the 1<sup>st</sup> Factor of the PSCS; similarly, it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the teachers

with working experience of 11 years and over and the teachers with working experience of 6-10 years for the agreement levels of teachers concerning the items in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Factor of the PSCS ( $p < 0.05$ ). When the mean ranks of the teachers were examined, it was observed that the averages of the teachers with working experience of 11 years and over had lower averages compared to the others for the items in both factors (Table 10). The last variable examined in the study was whether the teachers had previous training about children's literature. It was analyzed through three different Kruskal Wallis tests whether the PSCS answers of the teachers statistically

**Table 10.** Mann-Whitney U test results concerning the paired comparisons of the working experience figures.

	<b>Working experiences</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Sum of</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
ISF	1 - 5 (n:56)	62.80	3517.00	1775.00	0.70
	6 - 10 (n:66)	60.39	3986.00		
FSF	1 - 5 (n:56)	58.43	3272.00	1676.00	0.45
	6 - 10 (n:65)	63.22	4109.00		
Overall	1 - 5 (n:56)	59.91	3355.00	1759.00	0.75
	6 - 10 (n:65)	61.94	4026.00		
	<b>Working experiences</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Sum of</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
ISF	6 - 10 (n:66)	133.05	8781.00	4848.00	0.07
	11 >... (n:173)	115.02	19899.00		
FSF	6 - 10 (n:65)	134.82	8763.50	4626.50	0.03
	11 >... (n:173)	113.74	19677.50		
Overall	6 - 10 (n:65)	134.94	8771.00	4489.00	0.02
	11 >... (n:171)	112.25	19195.00		
	<b>Working experiences</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Sum of</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
ISF	1 - 5 (n:56)	134.38	7525.00	3759.00	0.01
	11 >... (n:173)	108.73	18810.00		
FSF	1 - 5 (n:56)	124.40	6966.50	4317.50	0.22
	11 >... (n:173)	111.96	19368.50		
Overall	1 - 5 (n:56)	129.97	7278.50	3893.50	0.03
	11 >... (n:171)	108.77	18599.50		

ISF: Internal Structural Feature; FSF: Formal Structural Feature.

significantly differed according to their previous training, and the findings of these analyses are presented in Table 11. When Table 11 was examined, it was observed that there was no statistically significant difference for the PSCS answers of the teachers concerning whether they had previous training about children’s literature (p>0.05).

**DISCUSSION**

This study aimed at determining the views of preschool and primary school teachers concerning the criteria that qualified children books and examining whether these views differed according to certain variables. To this end, initially, the general distributions of the answers of teachers given to the items of the scale of this study were examined, and subsequently, how these answers differed according to certain personal and professional properties was examined.

When the general distributions of the answers were

examined, it was remarkable that all the participants agreed with the majority of the items of the scale (they marked 4 “I agree” and 5 “I strongly agree”) and they regarded these items as important in the selection of children books. This is an important finding demonstrating that the teachers are responsive to the criteria that the quality children books should have (Tables 2 and 3). When the distributions of the answers were examined concerning the internal and formal structural features of the books, it was observed that, concerning the internal structural features of the books, the items that teachers mostly agreed on were *the subject / message should be appropriate to the interest and requirements of the child* and *the books should support the development of children in all aspects*. This finding is consistent with the literature and it is important since it demonstrates the positive views of the teachers concerning the content and the function that the children books should have. Based on the “for-children” principle of the literature for the children books, it is frequently

**Table 11.** Mann-Whitney U test results concerning whether the teachers had previous training about children's literature.

		<b>Training</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Sum of</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
Preschool Teachers	ISF	Yes (n:35)	70.74	2476.00	1479.00	0.33
		No (n:95)	63.57	6039.00		
	FSF	Yes (n:35)	71.81	2513.50	1441.50	0.24
		No (n:95)	63.17	6001.50		
	Overall	Yes (n:35)	71.84	2514.50	1440.50	0.24
		No (n:95)	63.16	6000.50		
		<b>Education</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Sum of</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
Primary School Teachers	ISF	Yes (n:39)	80.99	3158.50	2378.50	0.76
		No (n:126)	83.62	10536.50		
	FSF	Yes (n:39)	88.27	3442.50	2212.50	0.38
		No (n:125)	80.70	10087.50		
	Overall	Yes (n:38)	85.99	3267.50	2185.50	0.50
		No (n:124)	80.13	9935.50		
		<b>Education</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Sum of</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
Total	ISF	Yes (n:74)	152.93	11316.50	7812.50	0.56
		No (n:221)	146.35	32343.50		
	FSF	Yes (n:74)	159.29	11787.50	7267.50	0.16
		No (n:220)	143.53	31577.50		
	Overall	Yes (n:73)	156.97	11458.50	7229.50	0.22
		No (n:219)	143.01	31319.50		

ISF: Internal structural feature; FSF: Formal structural feature.

stated that the books should appeal to the imagination of the children, should involve a language and narration that children will simply read and enjoy, should discuss the subjects that are interesting for them, should feed them in terms of sense and opinion, should not have a complicated storyline so that the children can understand, and should be free from distracting details (Aslan, 2013a, c; Dilidüzgün, 2003; Sever, 2015; Sever et al., 2011). Becoming widespread, this view will ensure the production of qualified children books that appeal to the children, stir up their interest and encourage them to read, endear reading, and on the other hand, help them feel the meaning particulars of the native language. When the distributions of the answers of the teachers were examined, it was observed that, concerning the formal structural features that the books should have, the items that teachers mostly agreed on were *the images used in the text should be appropriate to the age of the child, should be original, should support them to visualize the content, and should be colorful to attract their interest*. These results reflect that, rather than regarding as

shapes that are easy on the eye, teachers regard these images as an important element that completes the content and meaning, opening a door for the child to imagine, so as to support and activate comprehension during reading. The views of the teachers are also observed in the literature, and in this period, since the books provided for the child should compete with the toys, which are at the center of attention for children, the books should be at least as colorful, aesthetical, and richened with qualified messages as the toys (Sever, 2013, 2015). On the other hand, the most remarkable detail is that the importance of preschool and primary school teachers attributed to the internal and formal structural features of books statistically significantly differed. In this regard, it was observed that the preschool teachers prioritized more the internal and the formal structural features of books compared to the primary school teachers (Table 5). Considering the teaching levels of the teachers (preschool and first grade) and the content of the curriculum of each level, this fact is regarded as a predictable finding although it is not ideal

for the primary school teachers.

Considering the preschool education, it is known to be a critical school period, in which an organized book reading activity is firstly experienced and books are firstly encountered not as a game, in Turkey, where this education is given within classrooms with a wide range of socioeconomic and cultural structures. In this period, introducing the children to qualify for children books that are prepared in line with their age, development features, interests, and requirements is an important start both for literacy skills and for future literacy behaviors of children (Aslan, 2013a, 2013c; Dilidüzgün, 2007b; Sever, 2015). As known, rather than learning how to read and write before primary school, early literacy is the whole set of prerequisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes that should be acquired by the child in the preschool period in order for a faster learning how to read and write in the primary school (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Whitehurst and Lonigan, 1998). Qualified children books are an indispensable element in this period to support the literacy skills of children (Whitehurst et al., 1988; Whitehurst et al., 1994a,b). Previous research emphasized that children, who were exposed to qualified children books in preschool period, are more successful than their peers particularly concerning expression style, vocabulary knowledge, and comprehension skills (Armbruster et al., 2003; Beck et al., 2002; Greene and Lynch-Brown, 2002; Hart and Risley, 2003; Huebner and Payne, 2010). These are the prerequisite skills that will support the children for the formal literacy process in learning how to read and write faster and easier, having a successful comprehension performance, and better expressing themselves both in written and verbal terms (National Reading Panel, 2000). In this process, the architects of success are the teachers who accurately select the qualified children books and introduce them to the children through efficient implementations (Hargrave and Senechal, 2000). With these views becoming widespread in recent years in Turkey, it is observed that, in the preschool education implementations, there is increasing importance attached to the selection of qualified children books, and with the help of these books children are supported starting from early literacy skills to all development aspects. This fact, in return, charged the preschool teachers in Turkey with certain responsibilities such as selecting qualified children books and introducing them to the children, and as a consequence, the awareness of teachers in this subject has increased in the last 15 years (Aslan, 2013a, b; Sever, 2015). Considering the results of the preschool teachers from this point of view, it is practical that the results are shaped in line with the development of children's literature studies conducted in Turkey, and it is also observed that the preschool teachers are responsive about the internal and formal structures that the qualified children books should have, which they prioritize in book selection.

On the other hand, from the standpoint of the primary school teachers, it is observed that the views of the primary school teachers about the criteria that the qualified children books should have are statistically significantly different from those of the preschool teachers. When the findings are examined, it is observed that the primary school teachers had lower scores in both factors compared to the preschool teachers, in other words, it was observed that they agreed less with the items under both factors compared to the preschool teachers. However, this finding should not be interpreted in a way that the primary school teachers are not responsive about the criteria that the qualified children books should have. When the general distributions of their answers to the scale were examined, it was observed that they answered the majority of the items as 4 (I agree) and 5 (I strongly agree); however, their general averages are less than those of the preschool teachers. In fact, the role of the children books are of vital importance in teaching the structure, rules, and narration alternatives of the native language to children during the literacy learning process starting from the first grade in the primary schools. This period, in which the sensitivity and love will be gained about the native language, is, at the same time, the first step in acquiring the reading habit for the children (Sever, 2004). When the reflections of language teaching processes to the primary school period in Turkey are examined, it is observed that there is a traditional teaching approach, in which the only source is the textbook sent to the schools from the Ministry of National Education. The objective of the traditional approach in this grade level is mostly to help the children learn how to read and write, and in this process, the texts in the official textbook are used as the only source. In this teaching, in which the one-sided/sourced approach is embraced, it is observed that the quality of the texts in the textbook, their suitability to children, in other words, the internal and formal structural features are not questioned by the primary school teachers. When the findings of the study are examined from this point of view, it can be stated that, due to the roughly non-flexible viewpoint, the general agreement averages of the primary school teachers concerning the criteria that qualified children books should have are lower compared to the preschool teachers, who have more flexible and creative viewpoints based on their teaching age level. However, the main objective of the first grade in the primary school is to simultaneously develop the linguistic skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) of students (Sever, 2004; Sever et al., 2011). It is known that the most important tool to use in this development process is the qualified children books. In this context, instead of limiting the children only to the official textbook, it is important to introduce qualified children books that are appropriate to the development levels of children in terms of both internal and formal structural features.

Another remarkable finding of the study is that the

views of teachers concerning the criteria that the qualified children books should have are statistically significantly different based on the age level and working experience (Tables 8 and 10). When the findings are examined, it is observed that as the age level and working experience of teachers increase, their agreement levels decrease. In fact, this finding is coherent with the developments in the children's literature in Turkey. As mentioned before, with the positive developments experienced in the last 15 years in the children's literature field and the increasing number of implementations, this subject is embraced with increasing interest by teachers studying in the field, Ministry of National Education, and particularly the academicians. When the importance of preschool education is frequently emphasized, with the support of studies on the development of early literacy skills, the requirement of child-book interaction from the early periods becomes prominent. In such an ambiance, it is an expected outcome that the teachers, who have been graduated in the last 15 years, have higher levels of responsiveness about the criteria that the qualified children books should have compared to their colleagues, who have been working in the field for longer periods. Additionally, it is considered that the teachers with younger ages and less working experience have higher agreement levels with the criteria that the qualified children books should have resulted from the fact that these teachers have more updated knowledge about children's literature and they follow the academic studies (articles, projects, conferences, etc.) conducted on children's literature field with more zeal and excitement. However, that there was statistically no significant difference among the answers of the teachers concerning the children's literature training they attended both in the undergraduate education and in-service training is an important subject that should be examined in further studies concerning the contents, functions, and implementations of the training.

## Conclusion

Considering the findings of this study, it should be stated that the teachers have a certain level of responsiveness about the criteria that the qualified children books should have. It is considered that the findings of the study provide important clues about the children's literature field in Turkey and its implementations in the schools. Although it is observed that the teachers have positive views about the criteria that the qualified children books should have, it is obvious that these views differ according to their professional teaching fields, age, and working experiences. In line with this result, it can be suggested that, initially, the content, function, and importance of the in-service training about children's literature given to the actively working teachers in Turkey should be revised, and subsequently, the children's literature training should be given as a compulsory

course to the prospective preschool and primary school teachers.

In this study, there are certain limitations that should be conveyed to the reader. Initially, considering the total population of Turkey, the study was conducted with a limited number (totally 297) of teachers. It is considered that conducting further studies on larger sample sizes and on teachers from fields and grade levels as diverse as possible, the generalizability of the findings will increase. Second, in this study, the scale used in data collection and the criteria that the qualified children books should have were presented to the teachers by the researcher, and they were asked to state their views concerning these criteria. Such an implementation might involuntarily have had a positive influence on the teachers concerning the criteria that the qualified children books should have. Therefore, for further studies, the views of the teachers concerning the criteria that the qualified children books should have can be evaluated with different measuring styles (that is, individual interview, etc.) without providing them any reminder or clue. Lastly, this study only focused on the criteria that the qualified children books should have. Therefore, it is considered that further studies focusing on examining how these criteria are reflected to the classroom environment by the teachers in the education life will make contributions to the children's literature field in Turkey and its implementations.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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