CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE TURKISH COURSEBOOKS FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN (50-74 MONTHS-OLD)

Banu Uslu
Selcuk University, Turkey

Aysel Cagdas
Selcuk University, Turkey

ABSTRACT: In the present study, the content of the vocabularies chosen for 50-74 months-old children were determined. In this context, 3 sets of Turkish coursebooks used in private schools were chosen depending on expert opinions and examined in terms of word distribution. In these three sets, criteria were formed for content scanning based on native word categories such as; nouns, verbs, pronouns, adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions, prepositions, spoken actions/ idiomatic verbs, question words, numbers, quantifiers/ quantifiers, interjections, colors, speech phrases and reduplication. In this way, the kind of the words used in the coursebooks and their frequency were determined. The words were determined via word counting program considering their categories, and the most frequent words were determined according to the relevant age group. The results of the 50-74 months-old children's foreign language concept table and its descriptive analysis conducted by the word counting program were examined by 3 academicians from child development department and 3 teachers working with this age group. According to the analysis, it is seen that most of the coursebooks in Turkish have respectively "Nouns", "Verbs", "Pronouns" and "Adverbs". The words that are least frequent were "Quantifiers", "Interjections", "Colors", "Reduplications" and "Speech phrases".

Keywords: pre-school period, Turkish, coursebook

INTRODUCTION

The preschool period is one of the fastest periods of children's mental, physical and language development. This period covering the 0-6 years is a period in which the child acquires basic knowledge and skills, prepared for life in the very best way and learns to adjust to his or her current situation (Oktay, 1999). For this reason, it is only possible for children to be able to learn social values such as belief, culture and citizenship and apply these in their lives via internalizing, carrying to future generations, possessing the living environment and national values through eligible and qualified education (MNE, 2013).

The goals of preschool education are as follows; to develop a common educational environment to disadvantaged children, to develop skills such as communication, creativeness and critical thinking, to help children speak their mother language properly and beautifully and to prepare them for primary education (MNE, 2014).

It is a common belief that children learn a language better when they encounter with it at an early age. However, this is not accepted by all researchers. The children are very successful in learning a language but there are disagreements over whether they are better at it or not. Considering the speed of learning a language, there is no evidence in favor of children. On the contrary, it is mentioned that adults and youngsters learn faster. In numerous researches, it is mentioned that adults are disadvantaged in speaking a second language like the first one since they are not exposed to it at a very young age. In this context, it is stated that the age of adolescence is determinant, and those who acquire the language before adolescence are evaluated as better than the ones who acquire it after adolescence. At least it is obvious that children are more successful than adults in foreign language learning but you cannot come to a conclusion that adults can not learn a foreign language or will never be successful at it (Gass & Selinker, 1994).

Everything that will facilitate and provide foreign language learning is material (in addition to original materials such as newspapers, promotional brochures prepared for tourists, magazines and posters; the real objects and flash cards). There is no specific technique or activity for content-based instruction, which is considered more as an approach than a method. The most important thing that can be said for these materials and activities is that they vary according to program and everything that provides learning is called a material, and every way to fulfill learning process is called a technique (Yaprak, 2015).

While learning the mother tongue, children learn the words they need. In the school environment, teaching vocabulary considering such need is unfortunately out of question. For this reason, it is not surprising that foreign language learning can not be as successful as first language learning. Teachers have a great task in this regard.

They need to make vocabulary learning a necessity with appropriate activities. For preschool children' learning vocabulary is about learning how to pronounce the word and understand what it means. Since preschool children cannot read and write, they are not expected to do it (Bekleyen, 2016). In Life-Focused Foreign Language Acquisition Program, the child learned "to listen to" first, and after that he related what he heard and what remained in his mind to people and objects. Here, the language teacher was careful to have a clear and fluent pronunciation. The teacher made a point of drawing children's attention and gaining their appreciation with his pronunciation which sounded like a perfect melody. The effort given has been recognized by children and this effort of the teacher has returned to him as children's effort to learn something.

According to Hymes (1972), while the child is learning his native language in a natural environment he uses the language as a tool. For example, he uses the tool to ask for something or to control others' behaviors, to interact with others or to express feelings, to learn or discover something and to exchange information. When the same natural goals are set while teaching a foreign language, language acquisition will be accomplished naturally (Cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

For teachers, selecting the words to be taught in language teaching is always the first and the biggest problem. Various criteria have been established in the choice of words, but the activity that is dominant throughout the process of systematic teaching of the English has always been the word choice. Vocabulary frequency is important in planning vocabulary lists for language teaching. However, frequency is not necessarily the same as usability as the frequency of words depends on the type of language samples that are analyzed. Basically, selected language samples or texts should be relevant to the needs of the students and words should be found frequently in a wide range of different language samples. Yet, it has quickly been understood that frequency and range are not basically sufficient to develop a vocabulary list, because the words in the written text often and in a wide range are not the most teachable words in the introductory language lessons. For example; words such as book, pencil, desk and teacher are not frequent but may be needed in the very beginning in language classes such as the word "class" brings to mind desk, chair and teacher so these words can therefore be referred earlier. Since 1920s-word frequency studies are popular and active in the field of language development as the vocabulary frequency and vocabulary distribution design are easy to handle on the computer. One of the most important lexical lesson programs in language teaching has been Michael West's General-Purpose English Words List, which includes a list of 2,000 general words that are considered as basically suitable for learning English as a foreign language. The General-Purpose Word List has been a standard reference for decades for deciding which words to use in textbooks, in step-by-step reading books and in other teaching materials. Hindmarsh is another important word list and contains 4,500 words grouped in 7 levels (Richards, 2001).

Language teaching is being able to understand the structure of the language, recognizing its rules behind it and using it correctly. For this reason, language teaching is possible with a well-planned teaching program, equipped with rich materials and with teachers who can use and conduct them in the very best way. Instead of considering the foreign language as a barrier to mother tongue, we should focus on its benefits and keep on mind that learning a foreign language helps us not only to understand our native language better but also increases our awareness of our mother tongue while acquiring. The sound basis and structure of native language and the rich vocabulary support learning another language. It is difficult, even impossible, to learn something in another language if the learner does not know it in his native language (Gass and Selinker, 1994).

In general, within the researches carried out up to now, three different variables were used to measure the content of a native language book. These are; the number of syllables (averages), the number of words and sentences (averages). Among these variables, many different proportional values were determined by the researchers. Goldbort (2001) used the following variables in a text; the number of sentences, words and syllables.

There are two important principles in native language books regarding content:

    a. Grammatical principles: Includes principles such as the choice and the type of words used in children's books, the numbers of the letters and syllables and the length of the sentences used.
    b. Educational principles: The choice of content, to be interesting to learners, to give educational messages, to be appropriate to student's level, etc.

The present study is more of a linguistic knowledge one. The type, number and length of the words used are discussed extensively.

Native (Turkish) language textbooks should be studied very carefully in terms of both the language used and the narrative features. Books that are written correctly and properly and according to the developmental characteristics

of the children are very important in acquiring native language consciousness. The concepts and rules used are important in conveying and acquiring the richness of the native language to the students. For this reason, the present study will contribute to those who are writing children books and those who are teaching young learners with a criterion-based approach. Within this scope, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What is the distribution of the "Words" in 50-74 moths-old children's Turkish language books?
2. What is the distribution of "Nouns" in the books by age?
3. What is the distribution of the "Verbs" in the books by age?
4. What is the distribution of the "Adjectives" in the books by age?
5. What is the distribution of the "Adverbs" in the books by age?

METHOD

In the present study, the content analysis of 50-74 months-old children's native language course books in Turkey was done and for this reason, the research was carried out in descriptive survey model. Document review method from qualitative research approach was used. "Survey models are research approaches that aim to describe an existing situation in the past or at present in the way it existed or exists. The event, the individual or the object that is subject to the research is tried to be defined in its own conditions" (Karasar, 2011). Methods such as observation, interview and document analysis are used in qualitative researches in data gathering; perceptions and events are examined and revealed in a natural and realistic manner (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011). Document analysis includes analysis of written materials that contains information about the facts or events to be examined (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011). "It can be done in five major stages: 1. Accessing the documents, 2. Controlling the originality, 3. Understanding the documents, 4. Analyzing the data and 5. Using the data" (Foster, 1995, qtd. Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2011: 193).

In this context, the books used were examined in terms of word distribution. Based on expert opinions, for 4-year-olds 12 books, for 5-year-olds 25 books and for 6-year-olds 23 books were determined. The books include also the publications of Ministery of National Education for this age group. In the sets, criteria were drawn based on expert opinions for content scanning. These criteria are based on the main word categories. These are; nouns, verbs, pronouns, adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions, prepositions, spoken actions, question words, numbers, quantifiers, interjections, colors. In this way, it has been tried to be determined which words are used in the books regarding the categories and how often these words are used. Considering the categories, the words were loaded on the word counting program and the most relevant and frequent words have been identified for each age group. The documents were analyzed in the following four steps, which were specified by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2011) Selecting the verbal sample to be analyzed, 2) Developing the categories, 3) Determining the analysis unit and 4) Digitizing.

The results of the 50-74 months-old children's foreign language concept table and descriptive analysis conducted by the word counting program were examined by 3 academicians from preschool and child development departments and 3 preschool teachers working in these age groups. In the evaluation of the expert opinions, the rate of the content validity of each book was calculated. Then, the content validity index was determined by taking the average of the calculated content validity ratios (Başol et al 2008, Çepni et al., 2009; Yurdagül, 2005). The content validity of the results obtained in the descriptive analyzes was found to be 0.79.

FINDINGS

Table 1. The Range of the Words in 50-74 Months-old Children's Course books

Word range	Total Word Number	F	The Number of Books	Average Word Number
NOUNS	3274	21340	60	355.6
VERBS	1060	12361	60	206.1
ADJECTIVES	553	3489	60	58.2
ADVERBS	343	1403	60	23.4

When the books are examined in whole, the average number of nouns per book was found as 355.6. This number was 206.1 for verbs, 58.2 for the adjectives and 23.4 for the adverbs. Besides, it is also seen that 3274 nouns were repeated 21340 times, 1060 verbs were repeated 12361 times, 553 adjectives were repeated 3489 times, and 343 adverbs were repeated 1403. It has been observed that about 90% of the words are composed of noun and verb constructions.

Table 2. The Range of the Nouns in 50-74 Months-old Children's Course books by Age Group

NOUNS	Word Type	Total Word Number	The number of Books	Average Word Number
AGE 4	518	2590	12	215.83
AGE 5	1206	7230	25	289.2
AGE 6	1550	11520	23	500.87

In Table 2, the range of nouns in the books are examined according to children's age groups. According to this, there is an average of 215.83 nouns in the 4-year-old group, 289.2 nouns in the 5-year-old group and a 500.87 noun in the 6-year-old group. In the books of age groups 4 and 5, the number of the nouns was close, but in age 6 the number of the nouns is doubled.

Table 3. The Most Frequet Nouns Used in The Books by Age Groups

AGE 4	F	%	AGE 5	F	%	AGE 6	F	%
Benekli	135	5.21%	Circle	181	2.50%	Picture	607	5.27%
Child	71	2.74%	Picture	159	2.20%	Color	419	3.64%
Page	63	2.43%	Sound	153	2.11%	Circle	261	2.26%
Picture	59	2.28%	Line	147	2.03%	Number	255	2.21%
Book	55	2.12%	Animal	146	2.02%	Line	191	1.66%
Piece	54	2.08%	Page	129	1.78%	Piece	189	1.64%
Color	51	1.97%	Child	129	1.78%	Digit	187	1.62%
Sticker	45	1.74%	Number	115	1.59%	Name	163	1.41%
Activity	42	1.62%	Box	113	1.56%	Being	155	1.35%
Ali	40	1.54%	There's/There're	110	1.52%	Box	151	1.31%

The 10 most frequently repeated nouns in the books examined are described in Table 3 by age groups. According to the document analysis, the most repetitive noun in the 4-year-old group was dotted, in 5-year-old it was circle and in 6-year-old it was picture. In all three age groups, the concepts of color and picture were the most repeated names.

Table 4. The Range of Verbs in the Books in terms of Age Group

VERBS	Word Type	Total Word Number	The Number of Books	Average Word Number
AGE 4	219	1367	12	113.92
AGE 5	423	4372	25	174.88
AGE 6	418	6622	23	287.91

In Table 4, the range of the verbs in the books was examined according to children's age groups. According to this, there were 113.92 verbs words per book in group age 4, 174.88 in 5-year-old group and 287.91 verbs in 6-year-old group. There are two important situations that stand out in table 4. The number of verbs is two times more in age group 6 compared to age group 4.

Table 5. The Range of Verbs in the Books in terms of Age Group

AGE 4	F	%	AGE 5	F	%	AGE 6	F	%
To say	95	6.95%	To be	337	7.71%	To color	642	9.69%
To draw	73	5.34%	To get	254	5.81%	To be	503	7.60%
To color	72	5.27%	To color	215	4.92%	To say	462	6.98%
To be	62	4.54%	To say	183	4.19%	To look	322	4.86%

To stick	47	3.44%	To circle	180	4.12%	To draw	320	4.83%
To do/make	46	3.37%	To put together	169	3.87%	To complete	225	3.40%
To love	41	3.00%	To draw	142	3.25%	To put together	200	3.02%
To see	41	3.00%	To complete	123	2.81%	To get	195	2.94%
To want	39	2.85%	To count	110	2.52%	To find	190	2.87%
To show	37	2.71%	To do/make	102	2.33%	To do/make	177	2.67%

The 10 most frequent verbs found in the books that were examined are described by age groups in Table 5. According to analyzes carried out, the most repetitive verb in the 4-year-old group was the verb "say", in 5-year-old group it was "to be" and in 6-year-old group it was "to color". In all three age groups, similar verbs were found to be intense. However, the verb "love" found in the 4-year-old group was not found in the other age groups. On the other hand, among the first ten words in age groups 5 and 6, such as "get/take", "complete" and "combine" were not very common in 4-year-old group.

Table 6. The Range of Adjectives in the Books in terms of Age Group

ADJECTIVES	Word Type	Total Word Number	The Number of Books	Average Word Number
AGE 4	116	393	12	32,75
AGE 5	196	1283	25	51,32
AGE 6	241	1813	23	78,83

The range of adjectives in the books that are examined according to age groups are given in Table 6. It is seen that age group 4 had 32.75 adjectives per book, age group 5 had 51.92 and age group 6 had 79.83. When age groups 4 and 6 are compared, the number of words in the upper age group was twice more.

Table 7. The Range of Adjectives in the Books in terms of Age Group

AGE 4	F	%	AGE 5	F	%	AGE 6	F	%
Tiny	42	10.69%	One	119	9.28%	One	148	8.16%
This	28	7.12%	Related	112	8.73%	This	70	3.86%
Empty	24	6.11%	This	69	5.38%	Off	70	3.86%
One	18	4.58%	Off	69	5.38%	Same	64	3.53%
Big	16	4.07%	Every	61	4.75%	Empty	64	3.53%
Very	14	3.56%	Upper	41	3.20%	Very	61	3.36%
Beautiful	11	2.80%	Same	34	2.65%	Suitable	60	3.31%
Colorful	11	2.80%	Different	33	2.57%	True/correct	52	2.87%
Little	10	2.54%	Big	32	2.49%	Every	52	2.87%
Short	9	2.29%	Small	32	2.49%	Related	39	2.15%

The 10 most frequent adjectives found in the books were analyzed by age groups in Table 7. According to analyzes, the most repetitive adjective in age group 4 was "tiny" and in age groups 5 and 6 it was "one". Similar adjectives were found in all age groups. However, the adjectives seen in 4-year-old group such as beautiful, colorful and short were not among the first ten adjectives in other age groups. On the other hand, the first ten words found in age group 5 and 6 were "cut" and "related". These adjectives were not among the first ten adjectives in age group 4.

Table 8. The Range of Adverbs in the Books in terms of Age Group

ADVERBS	Word Type	Total Word Number	The Number of Books	Average Word Number
AGE 4	43	135	12	11.25
AGE 5	142	534	25	21.36
AGE 6	158	734	23	31.91

The range of the adverbs in the books that were examined according to age groups are given in Table 8. According to this, the books in the age group 4 have an average of 11.25 adverbs, age group 5 had 21.36 and age group 6 had 31.91. When age groups are compared it is seen that the number of words found in the age group 6 is almost 3 times more.

Table 9. The Range of Adverbs in the Books in terms of Age Group

AGE 4	F	%	AGE 5	F	%	AGE 6	F	%
Many/much	27	20.15%	Very	64	11.99%	In	90	12.26%
Now	14	10.45%	Many/much	54	10.11%	Very	66	8.99%
After	9	6.72%	More	37	6.93%	More	51	6.95%
Very	8	5.97%	After	34	6.37%	Many/much	33	4.50%
More	8	5.97%	Above	18	3.37%	Into	32	4.36%
First	7	5.22%	First	17	3.18%	Together	28	3.81%
Together	6	4.48%	Sometimes	16	3.00%	After	26	3.54%
Towards	4	2.99%	Together	15	2.81%	About	25	3.41%
No longer	4	2.99%	Now	11	2.06%	Above	19	2.59%
Afterwards	4	2.99%	Never	10	1.87%	Along with	17	2.32%

The 10 most frequently repeated adverbs found in the books that are analyzed by age groups are examined in Table 9. According to analyzes, the most repetitive adverb in age group 4 was the "much/many" for age group 5 "most" and for age group 6 it was "into". It is seen that similar adjectives were found in all three age groups. However, the quality and quantity of the adverbs found in age groups 5 and 6 were more similar.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

According to the analysis performed via word counting program, it is seen that in Turkish books for preschool children "Nouns" are the most frequent words, then comes the "verbs", "pronouns" and "adverbs". The words that were least frequent were "Quantifiers", "Interjections", "Colors", "Reduplications" and "Speech phrases". Repetition of words is an important factor in vocabulary teaching and also in its development. Anılan and Genç (2011) stated in their research that there should be frequent repetitions in vocabulary teaching but this was not taken into consideration in the books. From this point of view, similar nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs were used intensively in all three age groups in the pre-school period. Based on the findings, the suggestions given are as follows;

1) Recognition of the words to be given during preschool period should be accepted as a general principle, and the textbooks and curricula can be prepared accordingly.
2) Determination of words based on expert opinions in mother tongue will bring positive contributions to children's learning process.
3) A list of vocabulary, which should be taught according to age groups or classes can be specified. Course books in the preschool period may consist of the words in this list.
4) No matter which age group it is, the books on language teaching should aim to acquire a certain vocabulary, and to do this first of all, by taking into consideration the child's needs, immediate and the cultural environment effective vocabulary must be determined correctly.
5) In the follow-up studies, it is possible to examine whether the words in the course books are appropriate with children's readiness or not, especially in preschool period.
6) The opinions of the teachers and experts on the appropriateness of the words can be examined.

7) Experimental studies may be conducted to test the effectiveness of curriculums based on children's everyday words.

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