

# Reading Preferences of Middle School Students

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## Abstract

Four fundamental language skills interact with each other. Developing reading skills will also develop listening, speaking, and writing skills. Reading comprehension, using what is understood on new subjects and learning new words during reading can influence listening comprehension as well as oral and written self-expression. General complaints of teachers and parents regarding middle school students are that the students do not read enough. Increasing love for reading in middle school students can only be possible by determining the interests and needs of those students and guiding the students towards those needs and interests. When the literature was reviewed, there were no functional researches regarding the reading preferences of middle school students. In this regard, this study was necessary to contribute to the literature.

The purpose of this study was to determine the reading preferences of middle school students. The pattern of this research was created based on qualitative case study and under the scope of this study, 25 participants were selected for each class level including 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. Data was collected with the semi-structured interview technique. Data was themed by two experts using content analysis. Similar answers were converted into numerical data and presented in the form of tables. Examples from student statements were given to support the tables. The results of the research indicated that a majority of students preferred reading on printed resources, selected novels as genre, read texts with 300 or more pages, and preferred adventure as subject. Additionally, students expressed that unknown words in reading texts should be low, they voluntarily spend 1-2 hours per day reading, and preferred silent reading.

**Keywords:** reading, Turkish education, reading preferences, language skills, Turkish

## 1. Introduction

Reading, which is one of the four fundamental language skills and a determinant of the social, cultural, and psychological dispositions of an individual against life is defined as “a mental activity related with perceiving printed words with sense organs, understanding those words, comprehending, and interpreting,” (Özdemir, 1976:11). According to Yalçın (2006:47) reading is defined as “...a process of interpreting and evaluating symbols pre-determined by humans using sense organs.” Sever (2004:14) explained reading as “...a thinking process that is beyond seeing and vocalising words, sentences, paragraphs, and texts that requires intellectual effort, and interpreting.”

According to the construction approach, reading is an active process where preliminary information in the text combines to form new meanings. Information collected by eyes from texts are interpreted with preliminary information and structured in the mind. These operations applied in reading are also valid for screen reading. In screen reading, reading processes such as sight, perception, identifying words, understanding, structure in mind operations are conducted on screen (Güneş 2010: 3). With the Digital Era, it is clear that printed media such as books, magazines, and newspapers have shifted to computers, tablets, and even to mobile phones. Because of the availability of these technologies, with the support of internet connection, people have instant access to an unlimited amount of information, and this enables spreading produced information/ideas instantaneously. Such circumstances created screen literacy.

Reading skills are required not only for Turkish or Turkish language and literature classes but also for physiological

and cognitive elements such as success in all other branches, increasing awareness, adding meaning to life, organising information, and developing analysis-synthesis-interpretation-evaluation skills. “Speed of eye movement and range of field of view are supportive elements of reading. For eyes to read objects that the eyes focus on, certain stages and reflection of the object is created (Başusta, 2009: 37). “Symbols transferred to the brain via eyes and sense organs are deciphered in the reading centre of the brain and gains meaning. In the reading process, eyes are only tools. “In reality, reading occurs in the brain” (Ruşen, 1995: 132). Reading that occurs in the brain is related with creating semantic patterns. Real meaning can be defined as creating a neural connection between preliminary information and new information to interpret signals sent to the vision centre and organising such connections in the brain to use when needed.

The development level of societies is proportional with how well reading habits are established in a culture. Reading culture requires consciousness regarding quality of reading. There are various factors that determine the quality of reading. Başusta (2009: 41) considered factors affecting reading under three fundamental topics. These are:

1. *Physical factors* can be stated as repetitions during reading, reading word by word, reading with vocalisation, hypokinesia in eye muscles, condition of physical environment, physical stance, eye diseases, sleeping conditions, and breathing.

2. *Psychological factors* can be given as laziness, impatience, unwillingness.

3. *Social and environment factors* can be stated as social factors that have an effect on reading status which include family conditions and education conditions like school.

Coşkun (2002: 28) considered factors affecting reading comprehension under two groups. The first of these factors is *factors related with the reader*, and second one is *factors related with text*.

<b>Factors related with reader</b>	<b>Factors related with text</b>
Vocabulary of reader	Type of text
Interest of reader for text	Plane of expression, structure of text
Attention and concentration of reader during reading the text	Language and style of text
Preliminary information of reader regarding text	Physical properties of text
Reading purpose of reader	

### 1.1 Reading Types

Developing reading comprehension levels of individuals has brought development of various strategies, methods, and techniques that could be used before, during, and after reading. Topuzkanamış (2009: 30) explained reading strategies under three topics:

*Strategies before reading:* These strategies are related with determining reading purpose, analysing general structure of text, remembering preliminary information about text, trying to guess the topic from headers and images in text, and deciding which points to focus.

*Strategies during reading:* Reader will evaluate the text according to pre-determined purposes at before reading stage, controls comprehension level, and tries to correct mistakes or deficiencies if the reader is unable to understand.

*Strategies after reading:* Reader audits whether reading occurred according to reading purposes, if there are things are missed in text, and how accurate were guesses about text.

It could be stated that “reading comprehension strategies are cognitive tools to develop academic performance of students when comprehension becomes harder” (Piloneita, 2006:27). Demirel (2002: 78-80) evaluated reading types under two topics namely silent and vocal reading. Accordingly, vocal reading is telling the words or group of words that are seen by eyes and perceived with mind with the help of speech organs. On the other hand, silent readings are reading only with eyes without any movement of speech organs.

Gains regarding application of reading strategies in 2018 Turkish teaching Program included strategies such as *vocal reading, silent reading, reading as group, reading by asking questions, word choir, reading by memorising, speed reading, reading by taking notes, reading theatre, reading by glancing, reading by summarising, reading by marking, reading by guessing, reading by discussing, and reading by criticising*. The purpose of all those strategies was interpreting i.e. structure in mind.

## 1.2 Reading Preferences

In terms of meaning, preference can be evaluated as selecting one thing over another, emphasising dominant, good, or important properties of one thing. Factors that determine preference can be evaluated as internal and external factors. Internal factors include desire for self-development, feeling happy/enjoying doing something, and awareness to be beneficial to the surrounding of an individual or to society in more general sense. External factors include meeting expectations of family, social environment, and society, preparing a solid future, and material opportunities. These factors are valid for academic life as well as social life. When reading skills are considered as main pillars of academic life, it is clearly seen how preferences related with reading guides lives of individuals.

In education regarding development of reading skills, prioritising preferences is important to make reading something attractive and increase reading quality. "Reading event should be organised by considering interests and needs of students, and an environment that is attractive and charming should be created rather than dictation environment. Once a reading habit develops in an individual, this habit will become a part of the life of the reader. To do that, before simply giving a book to students, it is important to prepare them for reading in terms of saving, patient, and energy. This could only happen with love towards reading" (Aytaş, 2005: 467).

Reading preferences directly affect selection of books. Urgan (2008: 225) emphasised the importance of book selection by referencing to 2005 Turkish Teaching Program. Accordingly, when children books are selected, four elements should be considered. *In terms of education*, content of children books should be suitable for the level of students. Interest of the students should be considered. *In terms of sociology*, students should be able to make a connection between what is read and real life. *In terms of language*, words in children books should be easy, vivid, and simple. *In terms of print*, page number of book, layout, font, type size, word and line margins, colour of paper and ink, types of pictures, ratio, and placement of pictures, how the book looks, easiness to carry, durability of cover, relatedness of pictures with topic, and approach of children to book has positive effect.

General complaints of teachers and parents regarding middle school students are about reading less. Increasing love for reading in middle school students can only be possible by determining interests and needs of those students and guiding the students towards those needs and interests. When literature was reviewed, there were no functional researches regarding reading preferences of middle school students. In this regard, this study was regarded necessary to determine reading preferences of middle school students and answers to following questions were investigated in this research:

1. What are the views of students in terms of reading preferences from printed resources or from screen?
2. What are the views of students in terms of type of text?
3. What are the views of students in terms of number of pages in preferred books?
4. What are the views of students in terms of ratio of unknown words in those books?
5. What are the views of students in terms of selecting reading texts?
6. What are the views of students in terms of elements determining reading preferences?
7. What are the views of students in terms of time spend for reading per day?
8. What are the views of students in terms of type of vocal-silent reading preferences?

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research Model and Pattern

The purpose of this study is to determine reading preferences of middle school students. Under this framework, *qualitative research method* was adopted, and interviews were made with middle school students in 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. "Qualitative research is research where qualitative data collection tools such as observation, interview, and document analysis were used, and processes regarding realistic and holistic results were used" (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006: 39). Pattern of this study was selected as case study. Case study is defined as "pattern to analyse one or multiple cases, environment, program, social groups, or other connected systems in detail" (Yin, 1994: 185). It is believed that this pattern is the most suitable pattern for the purpose of the study.

## 2.2 Participant

Participants of this study were determined with easy *accessible sampling* method among *purposeful sampling*. In purposeful sampling, sample is determined according to previous theoretical knowledge regarding the universe, present information, and based on specific research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). Purposeful sampling enables deep analysis opportunities under conditions which are believed to have rich information resource (Patton, 1997). In easily accessible case sampling, the researcher selects close and accessible cases. This method will offer speed and practicability to research. Although this sampling method is commonly used, results are less generalisable (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). Under this scope, the sample of this research consisted total of 100 students studying in 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade of Aydın city centre Dr. Fevzi Mürüvvet Middle School during 2017-2018 term. Equal number of students was selected at each class level. Class level and gender distribution of participants can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Class Level and Gender Distribution of Participants

Class Level	Female	Male	N
5th grade	13	12	25
6th grade	14	11	25
7th grade	13	12	25
8th grade	11	14	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

As given in Table 1, the participant group consisted of 25 students in each class level. Data were collected from a total of 100 students, which were distributed as 13 females, 12 male students in 5th grade, 14 females, 11 male students in 6th grade, 13 females, 12 male students in 7th grade, and 11 females, and 14 male students in 8th grade.

When participants were selected, reading habits was excluded. In this sense, research included participants with and without reading habit. Table 2 shows student distribution based on reading habit.

**Table 2.** Distribution of Participants Regarding Reading Habit

Class Level	Yes		No		N
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
5th grade	12	9	1	3	25
6th grade	10	6	4	5	25
7th grade	13	6	-	6	25
8th grade	8	6	3	8	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>

As seen from the above table, 5th grade students that expressed they have reading habits were higher than students without reading habit. While the same situation was valid for 6th grade students, number of students with and without reading habit was equal in 7th grade. Among 8th grade students, most of the male students expressed that they have no reading habit. Table showed that female students had reading habits at all class levels.

## 2.3 Data Collection

Research data was collected with the *semi-structured interview technique*. In semi-structured interviews, "...researchers prepare interview protocol that contains questions that will be asked" (Türnüklü, 2000: 547). "However, this method offers partial flexibility to researches and questions could be edited or discussed. In such interview, it is possible to talk about control of interviewee on research," (Ekiz, 2009: 63).

The data collection tool of this research was selected as "Reading Preference Identification Form for Middle School Students". To determine purpose and applicability of the form, views of 3 experts other than researchers were considered. The form was edited based on the views and consisted of two sections. First section consisted of personal information (gender, class level, reading habit) and second section consisted of 8 questions regarding reading preferences. Answers were collected in written form and certain questions included "Why?" for participants to explain the reasons.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

The data of this study was analysed with *content analysis*. "Content analysis is a systematic and repeatable technique

to summarise certain words of a text with smaller content categories based on coding with certain rules” (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, and Demirel, 2012: 240). Accordingly, each question in interview form were coded based on similarity/correspondence, or differentiation of answers with each other. Similar answers were grouped together, and themes were formed. Repeating items under these themes were converted into numerical data and presented as tables. It was determined that data read and themed by two different experts were similar. Each table contained samples from student sentences in interview form without any intervention.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Views of Students in Terms of Reading Preferences from Printed Resources or from Screen

**Table 3.** Views of Students in Terms of Reading Preferences from Printed Resources or from Screen

Class Level	Screen		Printed resource		N
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
<i>5th grade</i>	1	5	12	7	<b>25</b>
<i>6th grade</i>	3	5	11	6	<b>25</b>
<i>7th grade</i>	-	2	13	10	<b>25</b>
<i>8th grade</i>	3	8	8	6	<b>25</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>

As seen from table, both male and female students in all class level preferred reading from printed resource rather than screen. Only male students in 8th grade preferred reading from screen rather than printed resourced.

Sample sentence of students that preferred printed resource were as follows:

5th grade S.4: *Printed resource; because it is fun, and I love feeling the book.*

5th grade S.5: *Printed resource; because I am used to reading from printed books and it is preserved better and it is good to turn the pages.*

5th grade S.7: *Technological devices make my eyes tired and decrease my concentration. So, I prefer reading from books, magazines, and newspapers.*

5th grade S.9: *Printed resource; because when we read from electronic devices, it is like there is power pushing us to play games, So, I am reading from printed resource.*

5th grade S.11: *Printed resource, because I think reading book is staying away from technology.*

6th grade S.1: *Printed resource; because technological devices have negative effect on my eye health and decreases excitement of book.*

6th grade S.3: *Printed resource; because I love choosing books and read with touching. I have never read book from electronic devices.*

6th grade S.10: *Printed resource; because some texts on internet are not real. I choose books etc.*

7th grade S.1: *Printed resource; because I love collecting books.*

7th grade S.3: *Printed resource; because I have respect for what is written on computer screen. But I won't change the sound of turning the page of a book with anything else.*

7th grade S.21: *Printed resource; because I love touching to a book and reading.*

8th grade S.6: *Printed resource; because when I read from books or magazines, I can remember them more.*

8th grade S.11: *Printed resource; because I think you should touch the book while reading.*

Sample sentence of students that preferred screen was as follows:

5th grade S.11: *Screen; because I don't have reading habit.*

5th grade S.21: *Screen; because I don't have much books and it is faster and easier on internet.*

6th grade S.8: *Screen; because I feel irritated when turning the page of a book.*

7th grade S.24: *Screen; because it is easier.*

8th grade S.3: *Screen; because technological devices attract my attention.*

8th grade S.20: *Screen, because I like it that way and understand more.*

### 3.2 Views of Students in Terms of Type of Text

**Table 4.** Views of Students in Terms of Type of Text

Class Level	Gender	Novel	Story	Travel texts	Fairy Tale	Scientific Book	Encyclopaedia	Comics	Doesn't make any difference	N
5th grade	Female	4	3	-	2	3	1	-	-	13
	Male	3	8	-	-	-	-	1	-	12
6th grade	Female	10	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
	Male	6	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	11
7th grade	Female	9	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	13
	Male	1	6	1	4	-	-	-	-	12
8th grade	Female	7	2	1	-	-	-	-	1	11
	Male	5	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>45</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>

When the table was analysed, it is seen that female students in 5th grade mostly preferred reading books. Male students in 5th grade mostly preferred stories. When 6th grade was considered, both female and male students preferred novels. In terms of 7th grade students, while female students preferred novels, male students preferred stories. In 8th grade level, female students preferred reading novels where male students preferred reading short stories.

Sample sentences of students that preferred novel as genre:

5th grade S.4: *Novel; because they are more exciting, fun, and have emotions.*

6th grade S.8: *Novel; because these types of books are exciting.*

7th grade S.6: *Novel; because they influence me more.*

8th grade S.5: *Novel; because I can have more information, or I believe I can develop my ideas.*

8th grade S.16: *Novel; because I am more curious about details of events.*

8th grade S.23: *Novel; because I hate when what I read ends fast.*

Sample sentences of students that preferred scientific writing as genre:

5 grade S.10: *Scientific, because I learn more.*

Sample sentences of students that preferred stories as genre:

5 grade S.16: *Stories; because my imagination will develop.*

6th grade S.4: *Stories; because they are more fluent. You learn real things.*

7th grade S.12: *Stories; because it is more fluent, and it is more fun to read.*

8th grade S.11: *Stories; because I am bored with long texts. So, I love story books.*

Sample sentences of students that preferred travel writing as genre:

6th grade S.18: *Travel writing because they have beautiful and fun things.*

8th grade S.6: *Travel writing because I enjoy reading travel writing more.*

Sample sentences of students that preferred fairy tales as genre:

7th grade S.20: *Fairy tale; because there are amazing creatures.*

7th grade S.24: *Fairy tale; because I like reading what is impossible and imagining.*

Sample sentences of students that preferred comics as genre:

5 grade S.24: *Comics; because comics are fun.*

### 3.3 Views of Students in Terms of Number of Pages in Preferred Books

**Table 5.** Views of Students in Terms of Number of Pages in Preferred Books

Class Level	Gender	Less than 50	50-100	100-150	150-200	200-250	250-300	300 and more	N
5th grade	Female	-	1	3	1	1	4	3	13
	Male	-	2	3	4	1	-	2	12
6th grade	Female	-	-	1	1	3	2	7	14
	Male	-	-	1	3	3	3	1	11
7th grade	Female	-	-	-	3	-	2	8	13
	Male	-	-	2	3	6	-	1	12
8th grade	Female	-	-	-	3	1	3	4	11
	Male	-	2	3	4	2	3	-	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100</b>

When table was analysed, female students in 5th grade mainly preferred reading texts with 250-300 pages, where male students preferred texts with 150-200 pages. When 6th grade students were considered, female students preferred texts with 300 or more pages where male students mostly preferred texts with 200-300 pages. In 7th grade students, female students preferred texts with 300 or more pages where male students mostly preferred texts with 200-300 pages. When 8th grade students were considered, female students preferred texts with 300 or more pages where male students mostly preferred texts with 150-200 pages.

Sample sentences of students who preferred texts with 100-150 pages:

6th grade S.5: *100-150; because books with high and low number of pages are boring.*

7th grade S.7: *100-150; because it is suitable for my age.*

Sample sentences of students who preferred texts with 150-200 pages:

7th grade S.22: *150-200; because I get bored with books that have more pages.*

7th grade S.24: *150-200; because reading less is not beneficial. Reading much is not good for me. Best is average.*

8th grade S.1: *150-200; because I don't understand books with high number of pages.*

8th grade S.19: *150-200; because when the book is thick, I don't want to read.*

Sample sentences of students who preferred texts with 200-250 pages:

5th grade S.9: *200-250; because stories of these books are longer and more exciting. With this way, people have the desire to read more.*

6th grade S.1: *200-250; because the book should not be thick. Otherwise, it is scary.*

6th grade S.23: *200-250; because when the number of pages is less, I can read faster.*

Sample sentences of students who preferred texts with 250-300 pages:

5th grade S.4: *250-300; because they have texts suitable for our age.*

5th grade S.7: *250-300; because I don't like short books. Reading long books develops more.*

8th grade S.18: *250-300; because books with fewer pages are not explanatory.*

Sample sentences of students who preferred texts with 300 or more pages:

6th grade S.3: *300 or more; because when it is short, it just ends and there are few events. When it is long, it is both attractive and there are more events.*

7th grade S.3: *300 or more; because I think as the number of pages of a book increases, content of books is more realistic.*

7th grade S.10: *300 or more; because as the book is thicker, my desire to read increases.*

8th grade S.8: *300 or more; because I have opportunity to read books and even if it is thick, I complete it in 2 days. It will be more beneficial if I read more.*

8th grade S.11: *300 or more; because I don't like books less than 300 pages.*

### 3.4 Views of Students in Terms of Ratio of Unknown Words in Those Books

**Table 6.** Views of Students in Terms of Ratio of Unknown Words in Those Books

Class Level	Gender	No Unknown Words					N
		No Unknown Words	Slightly	Medium	High	No idea	
5th grade	Female	2	11	-	-	-	13
	Male	1	9	-	2	-	12
6th grade	Female	2	11	1	-	-	14
	Male	-	8	1	2	-	11
7th grade	Female	1	12	-	-	-	13
	Male	-	9	-	2	1	12
8th grade	Female	1	7	-	1	2	11
	Male	2	8	1	1	2	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>

When table was analysed, without any difference for genders, students in all class levels expressed that number of unknown words in a text should be low. Instead of selecting “no unknown words”, this could be interpreted as students are worried about learning new words.

Sample sentences of students who believe that texts should have no unknown words as follows:

8th grade S.6: *No unknown words; because I can't understand what I read if there is any.*

Sample sentences of students who believes that texts should slightly have unknown words as follows:

5th grade S.6: *Slightly, so we can understand the book more.*

6th grade S.11: *Slightly; because I don't want to read unknown words.*

6th grade S.13: *Slightly; because when I don't know multiple words, the book becomes boring.*

7th grade S.6: *Slightly (9-10); because if there are words that I cannot understand the whole text, that book will make me tired and I cannot look for all words.*

7th grade S.9: *Slightly; because searching unknown words makes me tired.*

7th grade S.22: *Slightly; because when there is high number of unknown words I don't want to read after a while.*

8th grade S.3: *Slightly; because when there is high number of unknown words, I lost my interest to read.*

8th grade S.18: *Slightly; because they are high, I don't believe I will understand.*

Sample sentences of students who believes that texts should have unknown words at medium level as follows:

8th grade S.24: *Medium level; because when there is much it will be boring, when there is less we will learn nothing.*



Sample sentences of students who believes that texts should have unknown words at high level as follows:

5th grade S.7: *High; because as the number of unknown words increase, my vocabulary develops.*

6th grade S.22: *High; because it is good to have high unknown words, I can learn unknown words and develop my vocabulary.*

7th grade S.20: *High; because it will develop vocabulary.*

### 3.5 Views of Students in Terms of Selecting Reading Texts

**Table 7.** Views of Students in Terms of Selecting Reading Texts

Class Level	Gender	Adventure	Emotional	Instructive	Science Fiction	Horror	Doesn't make any difference	Fashion and English	N
5th grade	Female	8	1	3	-	-	-	1	13
	Male	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
6th grade	Female	11	2	-	1	-	-	-	14
	Male	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
7th grade	Female	6	3	2	-	1	1	-	13
	Male	11	1	-	-	-	-	-	12
8th grade	Female	5	4	-	1	-	1	-	11
	Male	11	1	2	-	-	-	-	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>

When table was analysed, without class level and gender difference, students preferred adventure. This answer was followed by texts with emotional content at second place, and instructive content at third place. It is striking that emotional texts were mainly preferred by female students.

Sample sentences of students who preferred adventure type were as follows:

5th grade S.1: *Adventure; it is more excited, and I love adventure.*

5th grade S.9: *Adventure; because I love books with adventure and it increases my desire to read.*

6th grade S.10: *Adventure; because when I read adventure books, I got lost in the story.*

6th grade S.11: *Adventure; because I love when there is action.*

7th grade S.24: *Adventure; because when I read adventure, I can be part of the story.*

8th grade S.16: *Adventure; because I love exciting books.*

Sample sentences of students who preferred emotional type were as follows:

6th grade S.5: *Emotional; because when I read them, I enjoy the book.*

7th grade S.25: *Emotional; because I love crying.*

8th grade S.4: *Emotional; because I love them more, it is better.*

Sample sentences of students who preferred instructive type were as follows:

5th grade S.3: *Instructive; because they have more information and entertaining.*

7th grade S.11: *Instructive; because I believe this type of book is more beneficial for me.*

8th grade S.15: *Instructive; because I love when what I read teaches me something.*

### 3.6 Views of Students in Terms of Elements Determining Reading Preferences

**Table 8.** Views of Students in Terms of Elements Determining Reading Preferences

Class Level	Gender	Physical properties	Subject	Type	Author	All	N
5th grade	Female	-	9	2	-	2	13
	Male	1	5	2	1	3	12
6th grade	Female	-	11	2	-	1	14
	Male	-	4	-	1	6	11
7th grade	Female	1	4	1	-	7	13
	Male	1	10	-	-	1	12
8th grade	Female	-	7	1	-	3	11
	Male	3	7	2	-	2	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

When Table 8 was analysed, when students selected reading texts, they were mainly interested in the subject of the text, after that they evaluated the text in holistic way, type of book was important for reading preferences which was followed by physical properties of text, and author.

### 3.7 Views of Students in Terms of Time Spend for Reading Per Day

**Table 9.** Views of Students in Terms of Time Spend for Reading per Day

Class Level	Gender	I never read	Less than 30 minutes	Between 30-60 minutes	Between 1-2 hours	Between 2-3 hours	Between 3-4 hours	Between 4-5 hours	N
5th grade	Female	-	-	1	8	2	1	1	13
	Male	-	-	7	2	3	-	-	12
6th grade	Female	-	-	6	8	-	-	-	14
	Male	-	-	7	2	1	-	1	11
7th grade	Female	-	-	3	9	1	-	-	13
	Male	-	-	7	5	-	-	-	12
8th grade	Female	-	-	5	5	1	-	-	11
	Male	2	1	9	2	-	-	-	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>

As seen from the table, while female students in 5th grade read between 1-2 hours per day, male students spend 30-60 minutes per day for reading. In 6th grade level, female students had similar values with 5th grade students, and male students had similar values with 5th grade male students. In 7th grade, the similar situation was observed regardless of gender. In 8th grade, equal number of female students selected 30-60 minutes per day and 1-2 hours per day. Male students expressed reading time per day as 30-60 minutes.

### 3.8 Views of Students in Terms of Type of Vocal-Silent Reading Preferences

**Table 10.** Views of Students in Terms of Type of Vocal-Silent Reading Preferences

Class Level	Gender	Vocal reading	Silent reading	Both	N
5th grade	Female	-	13	-	13
	Male	1	11	-	12
6th grade	Female	-	13	1	14
	Male	2	9	-	11
7th grade	Female	-	13	-	13
	Male	2	10	-	12
8th grade	Female	-	11	-	11
	Male	1	13	-	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>

When Table 10 was analysed, at each class level and without gender differences, most of the students preferred silent reading.

Sample sentences of students who preferred silent reading were as follows:

5th grade S.3: *Silent reading; because when I read aloud, I don't understand what I read.*

5th grade S.5: *Silent reading; because I can understand easier and I won't disturb anyone.*

6th grade S.4: *Silent reading; because when I read without voice I can understand book, text better.*

6th grade S.11: *Silent reading; because I can focus on the book better.*

7th grade S.1: *Silent reading; because when I read with voice, I don't understand, and I get tired while reading.*

7th grade S.10: *Silent reading; because the emotions are better when I read silently.*

7th grade S.15: *Silent reading; because I can imagine it while I am reading.*

8th grade S.5: *Silent reading; because I can read faster, I can understand better, and if there are people around me, I don't disturb them.*

8th grade S.8: *Silent reading; because reading aloud will cause me read slowly and I can't understand what I am reading.*

8th grade S.20: *Silent reading; because I am disturbed from my own voice.*

Sample sentences of students who preferred vocal reading were as follows:

5 grade S.18: *Vocal reading; because when we read aloud, we can both understand what we are reading, and our reading skills will strengthen.*

6th grade S.15: *Vocal reading; because I like it that way.*

6th grade S.25: *Vocal reading; because reading aloud is more beneficial.*

7th grade S.11: *Vocal reading; because it will strengthen your speech.*

7th grade S.20: *Vocal reading; because it is more permanent.*

## 4. Discussion

When reading preferences of middle school students were determined, this research had following results:

Without class level or gender difference, students preferred reading from printed resources rather than screen. It was determined that only male students in 8th grade preferred reading from screen rather than printed resourced.

It was seen that female students in 5th grade mostly preferred reading books. For male students, 5th grade level mostly preferred reading stories. When 6th grade was considered, both female and male students preferred novels. In terms of 7th grade students, it was expressed that while female students preferred novels, male students preferred stories. In 8th grade level, female students preferred reading novels where male students preferred reading short stories.

Female students in 5th grade mainly preferred reading texts with 250-300 pages, where male students preferred texts with 150-200 pages. When 6th grade students were considered, female students preferred texts with 300 or more pages where male students mostly preferred texts with 200-300 pages. In 7th grade students, while female students preferred texts with 300 or more pages, male students mostly preferred texts with 200-300 pages. When 8th grade students were evaluated, female students preferred texts with 300 or more pages where male students mostly preferred texts with 150-200 pages.

Without any difference for genders at all class levels, students expressed that number of unknown words in a text should be low. Instead of selecting “no unknown words”, this could be predicated as students are worried about learning new words.

Without gender difference among students, they mostly preferred adventure texts. This answer was followed by texts with emotional content at second place, and instructive content at third place.

When students selected reading texts, they were mainly interested in the subject of the text, after that they evaluated the text in holistic way, type of book was important for reading preferences which was followed by physical properties of text, and author.

In terms of time spend for daily reading, female students in 5th grade level were reading between 1-2 hours per day, where male students were reading between 30-60 minutes per day. When 6th grade level was considered, both female and male students showed similar pattern as 5th grade level. In 7th grade, the similar situation was observed regardless of gender. In 8th grade, equal number of female students selected 30-60 minutes per day and 1-2 hours per day. Male students expressed reading time per day as 30-60 minutes.

Regardless of gender and class level, students preferred silent reading, while there were few students who preferred vocal reading.

Can et al. (2010) emphasised that readers should be able to define themselves with their selection for effective reading and for the reader to determine a purpose. This research emphasised importance of reading preferences of readers. Batur et al. (2010: 35) claimed that age and interest levels of students should be considered in reading education which provides a support for this research. Hence, if an event that had no contribution to social and academic life of children as well as interests and needs will fail to turn into a habit. Karakuş (2002: 78) stated education-related reasons for lack of reading skills as unsolid structure of texts due to pedagogically interesting content, language, and narration; inappropriate methods and techniques applied to students for learning skills and levels; failing to organise planned and programmed events by teachers.

Aytaş (2003: 158) explained that selection of books is one of the most important problems when working on reading development processes. Because, it is observed that incorrect books recommended for reading caused laziness and reaction towards reading in children. In this sense, importance of this study is further emphasised. Because for children, in book selection preferences in terms of genre, subject, number of pages, number of unknown words, author, and physical properties of book, personal/internal dynamics are determinative rather than recommendation. Macit and Demir (2016: 331) determined that screen preference levels had no significant difference for gender. In this research, there was difference for female and male students at each class level in terms of screen reading preferences.

According to Gürel, Temizyürek and Şahbaz (2007: 20), creating literature for children requires observing, learning and analyzing the characteristics of the world from different perspectives. To Yalçın and Aytaş (2008: 15), the concept of literature for children not only consists of contextual and pedagogical features, but also is a combination of various notions such as designing, illustration and animating. In this sense, creating a text for children’s literature depends on the perception levels, interests and age of the target group. The result of both studies also indicates the importance of the current study in terms of emphasizing the reading preferences of a target group.

Under the scope of findings of this study, reading preferences of students, screen or printed resource selection, genre selection, length of text, ratio of unknown words, subject selection, selection of determinative element for book selection, daily average reading time, and silent-vocal reading selections were presented. Findings of this study emphasised things to be considered in reading teaching based on target audience relativity principle in education.

Findings of this study could be used for developing reading skills of middle school students and selecting texts that will provide those students reading habit. Within Turkish classes, reading education based on interest, needs, and desired of students would certainly be beneficial. It is believed that this research will guide Turkish educators, and reading education experts in more specific terms, and open a new path to future studies.

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