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Beyond the Story Structure: Qualitative Aspects of Retelling

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Abstract

In this study particular practices in story retelling ware examined, these improved children's comprehension of story structure and enabled them to made comments within and beyond the story. One hundred fifteen (115) kindergarten children composed the treatment and alternative condition. For 8 weeks and for one time per week, 8 well-structured as following: Before reading a brief discussion was carried out, while after reading children were trained in story retelling. The intervention program in retelling consisted of five levels, which began from total teacher's assistance to the point where children were able to retell the story freely and completely. The same 8 books were simply read to the control group and after the readings children made drawings from the story.. Children's retellings were taped and analyzed according to a series of quantitative and qualitative measures. Results indicated that guided practice in retelling enhance children's ability for deeper comprehension and thus resulted in further comments about and beyond the text.

Introduction

Retelling stories is a widely used technique that helps young children develop a sense of story structure, story comprehension and oral language complexity (Gambrell Kapinus & Koskinen, 1991; Morrow, 2005). Through story retelling young children recall what they have listened to from a story and try to organize and express this information in an understandable way (Paris and Paris, 2003). By reconstructing a story young children think about the sequence of story events and build an internal representation of the story which leads to the comprehension of story structure (Morrow, O'Connor, & Smith, 1990).

Retelling is a valuable cognitive and linguistic task and a useful tool to find out how children interpret and understand stories that they have listened to (de Sà, 2012). Preschool children face difficulty in this task because of the general problems in the process of recall and from explanatory immaturity rather than inability to understand and remember the ordered sequence of events/relations (Brown, 1975). Children's retelling ability presupposes thought reversibility too, by which events can be "projected" back and forth, mental processes that are difficult for preschool children (Piaget, 1972). An important factor that also operates against reconstruction of story events, by younger children is their working memory weakness to efficiently process a large amount of information (Gathercole & Alloway, 2007).

Practice and especially guided practice in retelling helps children internalize the structural context of the stories and thus provide "space" for a deeper and more meaningful understanding of implied information from the story text (Dunst, Simkus, & Hamby, 2012; Morrow, 1985, 1986). In addition, the use of illustrations from a story or general visual aids (dolls, icons, pictures, animated images, miniatures, etc.) during reading and storytelling enhances children's thoughtfulness and understanding resulting in more coherent retellings (Kaderavek & Sulzby, 2000; Kim, 1999; Morrow and Cambrell, 2004; Spencer & Slocum, 2010). In addition, a variety of models, such as dolls, dramatic play and pantomime, help children reproduce the story more completely and comprehensively (Nicolopoulou, 2017; Pellegrini & Galda, 1982). These findings can be seen in a study by Pesco and Gagne (2015) which reviewed instructions from fifteen studies chronologically arranged from 1980 to 2013 that were designed to foster children's narrative skills in preschool and kindergarten settings and examined the effects using meta-analysis. This meta-analysis data showed that verbal scaffolding, when combined with story enactment or use of story props, supports children's story grammar knowledge, literal recall and inferencing. In addition, when teachers use a question-answer task they provide children with a guide of what is valued and what must be included within the story (Stevens, Van Meter, & Warcholak, 2010). Silva, Strasser and Cain (2014) suggest that when children completed a set of questions about narrative components, their narrative productions are more coherent and of higher structural quality than those produced before this task.

The implementation of a multilevel instructional method utilizing a series of verbal and visual aids had positive results in learning the structural elements of the stories by kindergarten children who had delayed language skills and additional factors that put them at risk for developing reading problems (Spencer & Slocum, 2010). During this intervention program, black-and-white pictures that represented the story elements (characters, initial problem, main character's internal reaction, actions and consequences), and a variety of receptive language games (cubes, bingo, sticks, face expressions) were used to enhance children's active listening and participation. Most of the children showed significant improvement in retelling and some improvement in narration of personal stories, as well. However, in this study, these practices were implemented in small group settings (5 children) and the intervention design aimed to serve the particular needs of the sample children.

Studies suggest that verbal interaction that takes place between the teacher and the children around the content of the story influences children's ability to construct meaning from the text (Moschovaki & Meadows, 2005; Moschovaki, Meadows, & Pellegrini, 2007). In these studies, teacher's affective presentation of the story related to young children's affective reactions. Furthermore, teacher's personal comments and voice intonations influenced children's comments. Through this interaction teachers should emphasize the story structural elements and guide children to understand that each story has a setting, a theme, plot episodes that take place in sequence, and resolution (Morrow, 2005). This affective reading condition when followed by elaborative questions, -techniques that emphasize the sequence of story events and the expansion of children's responses- helps children understand the story structure and thus results in enriched retellings with judgments, personal comments and references to the character's mental state and dialogues (Lever and Sénéchal, 2011; Zevenbergen, Whitehurst and Zevenbergen, 2003).

With time, the teacher´s guidance should be reduced (Pentimonti and Justice, 2009). Teachers initially assist and encourage children to reach the maximum of their abilities and then reduce their help so that children reach the point where they can retell the story by focusing on the sequence of story elements. Morrow (1990) suggests that children's retellings must be assessed quantitatively and qualitatively. Particularly, the qualitative assessment should focus on the children's deeper understanding of a story (Irwin & Mitchell, 1983). She revealed that qualitative analysis takes into account children's generalizations, beyond the text (e.g., interpretive remarks, children's personal comments about text information e.tc.). In addition, the Curenton and Lucas (2007) study showed that children's narratives can be assessed in favor of a story pyramid level which includes micro-structure features (language structure), macro-structure features (story structure) and psychological structure features. The presence of the last characterizes the most complex type of story pyramid because children link the story events in terms of psychological causation (there is mention of the characters' motives, goals and internal states). Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to examine:

- If the intervention program in story retelling helped children understand the story structure and enabled them to retell the story structural elements in sequence.
- If the children in the intervention program understood the story structure and thus enabling them to further comment and judge story content and beyond.

Method

Sample

A quasi-experimental design of two phases (pre-test, post-test) was implemented to investigate the effect of a retelling intervention program in enhancing children's retelling skills. The sample consisted of 115 children aged 4-6 years (M=61.20 months). Eight classes were randomly selected from which 4 classes (N=59) constituted the experimental and 4 (N=56) the control group. All sample children were native Greek speakers, came from middle to low-income families. According to the teachers' judgments and the verbal ability pre-tests all children had typical development, without language disorders.

Measures

Before the Intervention Program

Children's nonverbal ability was assessed by the the *Raven's Coloured Progressive Matrices,* recently standardized in Greek language by Sideridis, Antoniou, Mouzaki and Simos (2015). Test reliability coefficient Cronbach's *a* was .87 and concurrent validity .97 was high too. Children's verbal ability was assessed by two subtests – Vocabulary and Verbal Analogies – of the Athena Diagnostic Test of Learning Disabilities, a Greek standardized cognitive-abilities test (Paraskevopoulos Kalantzi-Azizi and Giannitsas 1999). On the Vocabulary subtest children were asked to define a list of orally presented words (e.g., children were asked: "what is an apple?"). On the Verbal Analogies subtest children were asked to find an appropriate word to complete an orally presented incomplete sentence (e.g. Leaves are green, sugar is …..). Kuder – Richardson and Cronbach a reliability coefficient ranged from .80 to .90 for all ages (5-9 years old).

Children's narrative skill was assessed by the subtest Narration with Pictures of the Greek standardized Word and Speech Test (Ikonomou et al. 2008). Children were asked to narrate a story according to a series of pictures. Each story was recorded and assessed for the presence of concrete morphologic/syntactical elements of the children's narrative speech. This test is standardized in Greek and used by the researchers in order to detect language disorders in children aged 3-6 years. The internal reliability Cronbach's α was estimated .85, .82, and .83 for the corresponding age groups (3-4, 4-5, and 5-6).

Before and after the Intervention Program

Children's retelling ability was assessed by the Morrow's 10-point Scale (1990). This scale measures the number of story structural elements that children refer during the story retelling, as well as the sequence of these elements. This scale is based on story grammar abstract structural components of the plot and on the Stein and Glenn (1977) and Thorndyke (1977) scale. In particular, the scale assesses the presence of the story structural elements (introduction, main character, other characters, setting, theme or problem of the story, the plot episodes, problem solution, story ends, and sequence of the story elements. According to Morrow's research (1986), to verify the reliability of the scale, six evaluators independently analyzed for inclusion of structural elements (setting, theme, plot episodes, resolution, end and the sequence of the story elements) and they scored the same 12 story retellings. Morrow (1986) reported that "mean correlation among evaluators was .93 for setting scores, .88 for theme scores, .90 for plot episodes scores, .90 for resolution scores, .86 for sequence scores, and .90 for total retelling scores" (p. 144).

Beyond quantitative data, children's retellings were analyzed by a series of criteria so as to record any additional element that emerged from children's efforts to reconstruct the whole story in a meaningful way for them. The unit of coding was the utterance (sentence level), with all children's utterances being coded. Coding was based on the studies by Curenton and Lucas (2007), Morrow (1990), Moschovaki, and Meadows (2005) and Moschovaki, Meadows and Pellegrini (2007). Coding was conducted at five levels: the first level, included utterances which indicated children's cognitive engagement (level of cognitive demand), the second level, included utterances comments of story characters, the third level, included utterances about narrative elements, the fourth level, included children's personal remarks and the fifth level concerned the degree of the retelling completeness. The total score of each child was the number of utterances per category in the child´s retelling. Inter-rater reliability was conducted for 10% of the data and resulted in a Cohen´s kappa statistic of 0.88. Rates of agreement per coding category ranged from 0.61 to 0.92.

Books

For the purpose of this study 10 story books were read to the children. One book was read to children before the training program and one after it, while 8 books were read during training. All books had almost the same story episodes (about 5), number of characters (about 5), number of pages (about 12 pages) and the same number of words (about 600 words). The criteria for selecting the books were: a) the text had to be interesting and attractive to children, b) the story plot had to be enjoyable and appropriate for children´s age, c) the story

structure had to be clearly presented, d) the illustrations had to correspond to the story events, and e) the story length had to be appropriate for the children´s age.

Cards of the Structural Elements

For the children's training program 7 words cards were used. These 7 words functioned as keywords and reminded the children of the structural elements of the story. The first two cards were labeled with the keywords "where" and "when" and referred to the story setting. The third card was labeled with the key word "who" and referred to the story's main character, the fourth card was labeled with the key word "which" and referred to the initial problem or theme of the story, the fifth card with the key word "what" referred to what was actually happening in the story. The sixth card was labeled with the key word "how" and referred to the story's resolution and the last card with the key word "end" referred to the end of the story. We intentionally put the resolution and the end of the story on separate cards because of the children's inability to understand the different functions of these structural elements.

Story-path

In addition to the cards, a narrow carpet named the "story path" was also used. The carpet, with the dimensions of 0.40X2.50 cm was divided into seven parts. Each part had one of the four key words posted on it.

Intervention Program

First Level: Explanation of the Story Structure

At the first level, before the story reading, the researcher presented the children with seven key-word cards, and connected them with the story structural elements. For instance, she explained that each story included setting information (in the text or/and pictures), a main-character who faces a problem etc. and she located on the board the cards with the keywords "Who", "Where" and "Who" stating that these will remind them of the story main character and setting. She continued the same procedure with all the seven structural elements and referred to relevant examples from well-known stories.

Second Level: Story Reading with the Use of Cards and Pictures

At the second level, the researcher read the story. During the reading the researcher dramatized her voice and used pauses and intonation so that the children would concentrate on the story content. While reading, she posted underneath each card the corresponding book picture, in a colored photocopy, in order to help children to connect each event with the corresponding story structural element. For example, when the researcher mentioned the story setting, she posted underneath the card with the key words "When" and "Where" a colored photocopy from the story. When she read the part that referred to the main story character and the initial story event, she posted underneath the card with the key words "Who" and "Which" the corresponding-colored photocopies from the story e.tc. After the affective presentation of the story the researcher held a brief

discussion to establish all children had understood the content of the story. Specifically, she asked the children to answer six questions about implicit and explicit information of the narrative text. The explicit questions were associated with the story structure while the implicit, open ended questions, with the internal states of the story's characters and children's thoughts within and beyond the text.

Third Level: Story Retelling with the Use of Cards and Pictures

At the third level, the researcher and the children retold the story that was just read, with the use of cards and pictures. The researcher's support was crucial to help children properly perceive the sequence of the story structural elements. She started retelling by citing the story introduction (e.g., "Once upon a time on a big tree in the "heart" of the forest lived .....") and showing the picture that was under the card with the key word ´Where´. Then she prompted children to continue talking about the setting and the story main character. In the course, when needed, she helped children's retelling by pointing to the relevant picture underneath each card.

Fourth Level: Story Retelling with the Use of Cards

At the fourth level, photocopied pictures were removed from the board and children retold the story only with the use of cards. In this level, the researcher´s support was limited. She intervened only when it was absolutely necessary.

Fifth Level: Story Retelling with the "Story Path"

At the fifth level, the "story path" was used. Children were formed in groups of 3 or 4 and moved to a quiet place in the school. Each child retold the story, by walking on the "story path". At the beginning, the researcher modeled the process. For example, when she stopped on the first part of the "story path" labeled with the key word "Where", she retold the place that the story took place, when stopped in the part with the written word "Who" she referred to the main character of the story, when she stopped in the part with the written word "Which" she referred to the initial story event and so long. It is worth mentioning that when she moved to the next part in which the key word "What" was written she retold the story episodes in sequence and said: "Let's see what happened in the story" "First ..." and she showed her thumb while she was retelling the first story episode. While she was retelling the second one, she showed the index and so on. The demonstration of her fingers during story retelling helped children to remember how many story episodes there were in the story.

After the Intervention Program

After completing the intervention program and for the purpose of assessing children's retellings, a new story was read to them. Each child gave an audio-taped oral retelling immediately after story reading in a quiet place in the school. Before reading children were told that after reading they would be asked to retell the story as they would retell it to a friend who had not listened to it. Only few prompts were used for the retelling. For example: if the child stopped during the retelling, the researcher would asked: "What happened next? or "Anything else?".

Each child's transcript was scored. Inter-rater reliability was conducted for 10% of the data and resulted in a Cohen´s kappa statistic of 0.92.

Control Group

In the control group, children heard the same stories in the same order but did not receive any specific training program. Specifically, before the story reading the researcher gave some information that was essential for the children's understanding, then she read the story without particular interruptions and a brief discussion followed after the story book reading and then children drew interesting parts from the story.

Results

Before the intervention program and for internal validity reasons, a series of tests were administered for the equivalence of the two group of this study, the experimental and control group. No significant differences were found between the two groups in children's scores. In particular, the compared data in the Raven test was $t(1)=-0.98$ $p>0.05$, in the subtest Vocabulary of the Athina test it was $t(1)=-0.12$ $p>0.05$, in the subtest Verbal Analogies of the Athina test it was $t(1)=-0.67$ $p>0.05$, in the Word and Speech Test it was $t(1)=-1.05$ $p>0.05$ and in the Morrow's retelling scale was $t(2)=-1.12$ $p>0.05$. Following these results, no significant differences were found between the two groups in the children's pre-test scores.

The basic goal of the present study was to examine and compare the impact of the retelling intervention program on children's narrative skills. The Univariate analysis showed that the main effect of the participation group F (1. 115) = 40.401, $p<.000$, partial $\eta^2=.35$ was significant. These results were confirmed by children's improvement from the pre to post-test phase F (1. 115) = 20.009, $p<.01$, partial $\eta^2 =.18$ (Descriptive statistic in Table 1).

Table 1. Experimental and Control Group Total Post-test Scores in the 10-point Morrow Scale

Groups	***Experimental***		**Control**			
	M	***SD***	***M***	***SD***	***t-test***	
Pre test	6.98	1.58	6.33	1.38	-1.32	$p>.05$
Post test	9.05	1.89	6.38	1.92	-5.81	$p<.01$
Improvement	**2.10**	**.30**	**.13**	**.28**	**-4.52**	***p*<.01**

Table 2 presents children's total post-test scores in the 10-point Morrow scale. As it is shown, there is a significant difference in story retelling in favor of children in the experimental group ($t(1)= -5.39$, $p<.001$). It has been pointed out above that this scale, apart from the total children retelling score, provides scores for the various structural elements that children refer to in their retellings. In this scale the story's structural elements were classified for analysis as ordinal and continuous variables. Therefore, in Table 2 the first results concern the continuous variables (characters and plot episodes) and then the ordinal variables are listed (introduction, character's goal, setting, theme, resolution, end and the sequence of the story element). Children in the experimental group achieved significantly higher post-test scores than those in the control group in the structural

elements concerning the story characters F (1. 115) = 6.289, p<.001 and the story plot F (1. 115) = 3.412, p<.001. In addition, after retelling training, the post-test children's percentage in the experimental group was significantly higher than those in the control group regarding the story introduction, the main character, the setting, the theme, as well as the resolution and the story end. Furthermore, after training, children's percentage in the experimental group was higher than that in the control group as far as the retelling sequence of the story elements was concerned.

Table 2. Post-test Experimental and Control Group Scores in the 10-point Morrow Scale

Story grammar elements	**Experimental** *M*	*SD*	**Control** *M*	*SD*	***t-test* (df)**
Characters	.89	.18	.68	.30	*t(2)*=-3.58, *p*<.001
Plot	.86	.19	.62	.29	*t(2)*=-3.28, *p*<.001
		Experimental %	**Control %**		**x^2 (df)**
Introduction		98	53.1	$X^2(1)$=26.58	*p*<.001
Character's goal		92.5	79.9	$X^2(2)$=8.17	*p*<.001
Setting (time/place)		55.9	22.3	$X^2(1)$=12.01	*p*<.001
Theme		100	78.1	$X^2(1)$= 10.05	*p*<.001
Resolution		98.9	77.8	$X^2(1)$= 5.38	*p*<.001
End		52.9	29.8	$X^2(1)$= 7.28	*p>.001*
Sequence		**83.3**	**48.7**	**$X^2(2)$=26.32**	***p*<.001**

Apart from children's retelling assessment with the Morrow's 10-point scale, each child's transcript was coded by specific kind of talk. Table 3 shows that in the experimental group post-test children's utterances mean scores were significantly higher than those in the control group as regards children's ability to clarify (t(3)=4.61,*p*<.01), to predict (*t*(2)=-3.02, *p*<.01), to make statements (*t*(2)=-3.08, *p*<.01) and to evaluate text information (*t*(2)=-3.16, *p*<.01). On the other hand, there were no significant differences between groups regarding children's post-test utterances mean scores concerning generalizations and clarifications for the story characters' behavior and reactions (middle level). However, the total post-test utterances mean scores between the two groups were significant in favor of the children in the experimental group in the middle and high-level retelling criteria, but not in the low level one.

Table 3. Experimental and Control Groups' Scores in the Post-test Retelling Criteria

Post test							
Levels of cognitive demands		***Experimental***		***Control***		*t*-test	
Low level	Total	0.73	.98	1.02	1.07	*t*(2)= 1.27,	*p*>.05
Middle level	Total	2.38	1.70	0.89	1.17	*t*(2)= - 4.64,	*p*<.001
High level	**Total**	**1.87**	**1.70**	**0.47**	**0.86**	***t*(2)= - 4.81,**	***p*<.001**

According to Table 4, children's post-test utterances scores in the experimental group were significantly higher than those in the control group only as far as their comments for story characters' reactions ($t(2)= -2.59$, $p<.05$) and thoughts ($t(2)= -2.42$, $p<.05$) and feelings $t(2)=- 2.13$, $p<.05$ were concerned.

Table 4. Post-test Scores concerning Comments for Story Characters, Narratives Techniques and Personal Remarks

Post test					
	Experimental		***Control***		***t-test***
	M	***SD***	***M***	***SD***	
Comments about characters	4.92	1.15	3.40	1.17	$t(2)= - 2.68$ $p<.05$
Narrative techniques	6.02	2.35	3.32	2.82	$t(2)= -4.22$ $p<.001$
Personal remarks	2.76	1.65	1.13	1.96	$t(2)= - 3.20$ $p<.001$
Retelling completeness	3.25	.48	1.38	1.52	$t(2)= - 3.68$ $p<.001$

In addition, experimental group's mean scores concerning their ability to use narrative techniques, compared to those in the control group were significantly higher regarding traditional phrases used for story beginning and ending ($t(2)= -3,92$, $p<.001$), for dramatizing their voice ($t(2)= -2.79$, $p<.05$), for accurately retelling characters´ dialogues ($t(2)= -2.92$, $p<.05$) and for using direct and indirect speech ($t(2)= -2.81$, $p<.05$). In other words, children in the experimental group enriched their retellings with narrative techniques and personal remarks and, additionally, their retellings were more organized and complete than those of the control group ($t(2)= -5.08$, $p<.001$).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine whether kindergarten children's training in story retelling through the use of verbal scaffolding techniques and visual mediators helped them to understand the story better and able to retell the story in the correct sequence, while also making comments and judgments about the story plot, beyond the text information. The children's high performance in the retelling group in which verbal scaffolding techniques took place showed that the intervention program was very effective and helped children comprehended stories' specific structural frame. In particular, verbal interactions before, during and after storybook reading which emphasized story grammar elements improved children's understanding about story structure (Silva et al., 2014). Internalization of story structure enabled children to include more comments about characters' mental states and dialogues. This evidence is in line with the findings of Lever and Sénéchal (2011) and Zevenbergen, et al. (2003) which indicated that post reading verbal interactions between teachers and children help them to enrich their retellings/narratives with judgments, personal comments and references to the character's thoughts, feelings and beliefs. Additionally, the researcher's instruction in specific story elements that focused on the fact that they are universal and must be included to make a story comprehensible helped children produce well organized retellings (Morrow, 86, 2005; Stevens et al., 2010).

Furthermore, teachers' and children's cognitive engagement during the story book reading assists children's

development of representational abilities, resulting in retellings that include high cognitive demand utterances (reasoning, predictions, inferences) which are crucial for children's later school success (Moschovaki and Meadows, 2005). Additionally, the questionnaire that was used as a post reading activity enhanced children's understanding about story grammar elements and strengthened their retelling abilities (Silva et al., 2014).

As regards the usage of visual mediators, namely illustrated story book pictures during reading and cards with keywords that represented the story elements, it helped children to link the abstract story components (setting, initial problem, resolution…) with the corresponding portion of the story. The usefulness of visual mediators has been pointed out by many researchers when they engaged children in story generation tasks. Thus, all standardized tests in story retelling are composed of a series of illustrated pictures and many intervention programs utilize many types of visual mediators (cards, pictures, puppets, small toy figures etc.) to enhance children's efforts to retell complete and comprehensible stories (Adlof et al., 2014; Kaderavek and Sulzby, 2000; Ralli and Sidiropoulou, 2012).

Combining verbal scaffolding techniques and visual mediators focused on story grammar elements increases children's cognitive and emotional engagement dramatically (de Sà, 2012). In the present study, a variety of verbal and visual scaffolding techniques was utilized that aimed at children's internalization of story structure, as a mental frame, and enabled them to reproduce any story they have heard in a comprehensive manner. It must be taken into consideration that in many intervention programs in which children are at risk of developing reading problems or come from disadvantaged environments, researchers suggested enriched instructional activities in which children are motivated by many relevant visual and verbal mediators (Adlof et al., 2014; Spencer and Slocum, 2010; Stevens et al., 2010). This consolidates their positive effect on children's cognitive and linguistic abilities/skills.

Children's participation in this multilevel intervention program in which they were engaged cognitively (thinking about which information from the story corresponding to each story element), linguistically (expressing themselves comprehensibly) and physically (following the story path) enhanced children's cognitive and emotional involvement. The children's multilevel engagement lays the foundation for deeper comprehension which, according to researchers (de Sà, 2012; McGee and Morrow, 2005; Moschovaki and Meadows, 2005), fosters children's understanding not only of the explicit, but also of the implicit information from the text. In contrast, children in the control group due to the absence of the intervention phase included few elements and comments in their retellings. This evidence agrees with the results of the studies by Moschovaki, Meadows and Pellegrini (2007) which indicated that when teachers interacted with and engaged children during reading in various ways, children's understanding was improved and that was obvious from children's reactions and personal comments.

Conclusions

The present study has significant implications for educators. It seems that retelling is a useful instrumental tool for boosting children's narrative competency. Furthermore, the reconstruction of a story is a "strong cognitive

instrument" therefore, teachers should use various methods and techniques to encourage children's active participation as demonstrated by the present methodological design of this study (Pinto et al. 2016). The role of teachers is complex too, since they must be facilitators, reflective practitioners, and mediators and they should encourage children's efforts in any way they could. All these literacy programs presuppose classes in which children love reading books, love to discuss books and participate in many activities around the books, because background knowledge and children's initial competency in narrative skills are the strongest variables that have a crucial impact on children's further enhancement and later academic success (Vretudaki & Tafa 2017; Melzi & Caspe 2017).

Limitations and Future Directions

The quasi-experimental design of this study was utilized because it was necessary for children's recordings to find a quiet room near their classrooms. It would be desirable in a future study to gather the participating children with randomly selected procedures so that the results would be more representative. In the present study, the children's narratives were evaluated based on the number of structural elements that each retelling included and on a series of qualitative elements that emerged in children's narrative speech. In a future study, it would be useful if children's narratives were also analyzed by a series of microstructure elements (literate language features, cognitive verbs, cohesive and referential device etc.). The intervention program was held by the researcher for internal validity reasons. It would be more useful and for ecological validity reasons if the intervention program was carried out by trained kindergarten's teachers.

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