

## **Multicultural Children Literature in Preservice Teacher Education: Responses through Literature Circles**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to analyze pre-service teachers' opinions about children books through a literature circle (LC) approach in multicultural learning environments. The data of the present study were collected from the children literature course offered for preservice classroom teachers during the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 spring semesters at Hacettepe University. The preservice teachers (PSTs) in children literature course read and responded to Newbery Award winning books both individually and in literature circle groups within a framework of critical literacy and reader response theories. The results of the current study revealed the deficiencies of the pre-service teachers in the process of critical reading and actualization in spite of their satisfactory interpretations of the events. In this study, the PSTs expressed their opinions for the "gaining an understanding of different perspectives on life in the world" and "the cultures of specific groups, developing the skills needed to take social action to eliminate social injustice" categories in all four children books. However, they did not share their opinions related to gain an awareness of own cultures and cultural backgrounds and obtain a recognition an understanding of global issues, learning how to reduce stereotyping, prejudice and racism within ourselves and within society" categories. This study may contribute to a variety of research fields including pre-service teacher education, multicultural education and literary studies.

**Keywords:** Multicultural literature, literature circles, newbery award, preservice teachers, children books.

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## INTRODUCTION

Teachers need to utilize various strategies in order to involve multicultural education in the classrooms when they enable their students having different ethnic backgrounds, cultures, gender and languages to raise their understandings about the world. Has been growing numbers of the studies (e.g. Aerila, Soininen, and Merisuo-Storm, 2016; Arifin and Hermino, 2017; Artiles and McClafferty, 1998; Gay and Kirkland, 2003; Hosoya and Talib, 2013; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 1992; Solomon, 1995; Van Hook, 2002) related to the preparation of teachers to work with multicultural education in teacher education programmes. However, little attention has paid to the needs of the preservice teachers (PSTs) about their practices of the multicultural education as an ongoing topic of educational research. In the recent years, education scholars including researchers, teachers, and administrators have opened a new gateway for multicultural education on both the preservice education programs and K-12 settings (McElroy, 2005). Larkin (1995) stated “as teacher preparation programs attempt to respond to the increasing cultural diversity of our society, the traditional preservice teacher education curriculum is one of a number of areas that will need to be broadly reconsidered (p. 1)”. In the same manner, Klassen-Endrizzi and Ruiz (1995) expressed “Proponents of multicultural education maintain that classroom teachers need occasions to consider the purpose and content of a multicultural approach to teachers is not adequate (p. 129)”. In addition, schools have a significant role in establishing social integration by allowing the students to perceive the diversities as richness of the society (Arslan, 2013). Especially in the teacher-led classroom atmospheres, teachers have the dominant roles on the opinions and values of their students and this lead to increase the importance of multicultural education in teacher education. In this sense, Sleeter and Grant (1999) illuminated its significance through these words:

“Theories of cultural transmission, social learning, and modeling provide guidance by alerting teachers to how children normally acquire society’s values and beliefs. Teachers who want their students to learn values and beliefs for a multicultural society will need to change the content of what is usually transmitted to make it congruent with the ideology of Multicultural Education (p. 162).”

### **Theoretical Perspectives: Multicultural Education Connections to Literacy Education**

Multicultural education is implemented to enhance tolerance, respect, understanding, awareness, and acceptance of self and others in the diversity of people’s cultures (Irvine, Arment and Causey, 2011). Multicultural education usually linked to the original culture and traditions of various student groups as well as the school’s goals and practices to meet the educational needs of the different groups (Hosoya and Talib, 2013). As the crucial teaching tool for multicultural education, literature education benefits from fictional and non-fictional works to support students’ thinking skills, values, and understanding of social structure. Moreover, Nieto and Bode (2004) point out that multicultural education is inclusive and is for everyone regardless of one’s background. According to Aerila, Soininen, Merisuo-Storm (2016), multicultural literature has many positive impacts upon the people coming from the different backgrounds such as including increasing cultural awareness, developing self awareness, and promoting intercultural understanding. The multicultural children’s literature courses in primary schools allow children to understand one another’s culture and reflect on their own culture. Dietrich and Ralph (1995) highlight that “when multicultural literature becomes an integral part of the curriculum and teachers act as models and guides, classrooms can become arenas for open exchange” (p. 1). In the scope of the multicultural literature, students can connect the experiences coming from other cultures with their own cultures by reading the literature texts and participating in the related discussions.

According to Dietrich and Ralph (1995), in the process of developing multicultural philosophy, cooperative and collaborative discussion should be particularly emphasized to enhance awareness of the literary works and create a true community of teacher-learners. As one of the most effective instructional approaches for multicultural reading programs, literature circles (LCs) can create discussion settings for creating learning communities to prepare students for living in

multicultural contexts through both fictional and non-fictional works in (LCs). In addition to the classroom environment created by teachers as the key factor in motivating students to read, teachers' modelling practices such as sharing their readings with the students also demonstrate the significance of the reading for the students (Decker, 1986). Effective teachers promote literature in their instructional programs, and one of the ways of these instructional approaches is designing Literature Circles. Klassen (1993) stated "Literature Circles were also a central vehicle for helping students consider multicultural issues (p. 132)." Literature Circles are discussion groups of students who have chosen to read the same text. To direct their attention in reading and ensure greater participation during group discussions, prompts called as "roles" direct the students' attention to the reading and ensure their increasing participation in group discussions (Daniels, 2002). Tompkins (2006) expresses that teachers organize a conversation based on the introduction of the books selected from five or six copies of each book. Furr (2004) underlines that successful literature circles lead to raising students' participations in "real life" meaningful discussions about the texts/stories that they've read; thus, it is important for the teacher to choose materials which promote reading fluency for use in literature circles. Tompkins (2006) describes the roles of group meetings as follows: one student use the *Discussion Director* and he/she assumes the leadership role and directs the discussion. *Passage Master* focuses on the literary merits of the book; *Word Wizard* is responsible for vocabulary, *Connector* makes connections between the book and the student lives, *Summarizer* makes a summary of the reading to convey the big ideas to share with the group, *Illustrator* draws a picture or diagram related to the reading, *Investigator* finds some information about the book, author, or related topic to share with the group.

Teachers have crucial responsibility based on teaching other people's children. The values, beliefs, dispositios, and practices of the teachers influence their working ability with the students effectively in the classrooms (Jackson, 1995). Teachers may select children's book to initiate discussion of living in a multicultural environment among their students. Rosenblatt (1978) underlines that there are varying features enable the students to create the meaning from the text: past experiences with language, past experiences with text, the reader's present situation, the reader's interests, and the reader's cultural, personal, and social history. Futhermore, encouraging critical reader response is an important approach facilitating the appreciation of multicultural children's literature. In terms of Rosenblatt's (1978) Reader Response Theory children tend to interpret text using their own life experience as a guide Tracey and Morrow (2006) express that "Transactional Theory (Rosenblatt 1978) extends the application of Schema Theory by arguing that all readers have unique responses to reading texts due to the unique nature of their background schemas (p. 74)." Moving away from the traditional evaluation of the authors' intentions in a piece of literature, Rosenblatt (1978) focused on the experiences that the reader brings to the reading situation and how this plays a role in the construction of meaning. Moreover, prior knowledge, life experiences, and personal preferences affect a reader's interpretation of text. This theory is constructivist in nature because it emphasizes the active role of the reader in meaning making. Rosenblatt's work adds the distinction of two kinds of responses that all readers have to texts. Because of its emhphasis on the active role of the reader in meaning making, this constructivist theory adds the distinction of two kinds: "efferent responses" and "aesthetic responses" (Tracey and Morrow, 2006). Rosenblatt (1988) referred to these kind of responses in the following way:

"In efferent reading, then, we focus attention mainly on the public "tip of the iceberg" of sense: The meaning results from an abstracting-out and analytic structuring of the ideas, information, directions, and conclusions to be retained, used, or acted on after the reading event. In aesthetic reading, the reader adopts an attitude of readiness to focus attention on what is being lived through during the reading event. (p. 7)

Rosenblatt (1991, 1995) emphasizes that every reading act is transactional involving the reader along with his/her past experiences and the text at a particular time and in a particular context. The meaning of what is being read is not already there on the page or in the reader's mind. The meaning occurs when the transaction takes place between the reader and the text. In other words, the text simply marks on a page until a reader transacts with it (Salisbury, 2010).

Children's literature classes are one of the first opportunities for (PSTs) to begin exploring their perspectives on; literature and reading, diversity and equity, and books and children. It is also important that these classes provide them an authentic resource that can be the foundation of a literacy program as well as a major resource for other curriculum areas. Klassen-Endrizzi and Ruiz (1995) mention that the PSTs are rarely active participants in the construction of a multicultural learning community in their university classrooms. Similarly, Dietrich and Ralph (1995) mention that "teachers need to make classrooms lively forums of open multicultural exchange. They must select materials that encourage a cultural revision so that the students can both understand another culture's point of view and see their own culture from an outsider's perspective (p. 6)". In this regard, this study attempts to explore the PSTs' opinions focuses on educating teachers in multicultural learning environments and analyzing their opinions in detail through a qualitative study, is considered to be an important contribution to the literature.

## METHODOLOGY

As the representative instance of the case study, qualitative content analysis is carried out in this study. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), "Case study provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles (p. 253)." Krippendorff (2004) also defines content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use (p. 18)".

### Setting and Participants

The setting was a children literature course offered for preservice classroom teachers during the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 spring semesters. Two separate sections of the children literature course were used in each semester. All of the students were at Hacettepe University in Turkey and they were proficient in Turkish. During the first session of the class, we asked our students sign up for a novel and provided them a guideline about how they need to respond the books. None of the PSTs has read these books before. They were free to choose any books. As a result, 66 students read "Number the Stars", 90 students read "The Giver", 51 students read "Holes" and 56 students read "The Graveyard Book" from four Children's Literature classrooms. Before reading the books, the students who would read the same books formed a group. In these groups, they also had the LC roles among themselves. For effective small-group discussion, group size need to be considered four to six role of LC, groups were allowed to have a maximum of four to six students. Each LC was composed four to six PSTs. As a result of the completion of each role, students had a greater understanding of the reading and much to share during discussions. After readings, they made a presentation about their readings and submitted their written responses.

### The Books

Newbery award/honour winning children's books were selected for the study. The Newbery Medal was named for eighteenth-century British bookseller John Newbery. It is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children. Since its founding in 1922, the Newbery Medal has been awarded annually by the American Library Association for the most distinguished American children's book published the previous year. "Newbery Award winning texts are worth looking at because they are among the most widely read titles in and out of school" (Friedman and Catalo, 2002, p. 102). There were fifteen Newbery award winner books translated into Turkish and some of them were hard to find in the bookstores because of single print. We connected with publishers and searched internet for used books to get them. We reached all, but purpose of the study we particularly emphasized on four of them which are shown on the Table 1.

**Table 1. Children Books**

Award Year	Title	Author	Publisher	Topic
1990	Number the Stars	Lois Lowry	Houghton Mifflin	It is about true-story of a 10-year-old girl who lived in Denmark during World War II, which was occupied by the Nazis.
1994	The Giver	Lois Lowry	Houghton Mifflin	A perfect society where a boy turns 12 receive special training from The Giver who holds the memories of the life.
1999	Holes	Louis Sachar	Bloomsbury	A boy who has been unjustly sent to a boys' detention center, must dig holes in the surface of a dry lake where he will explore his past and present.
2009	The Graveyard Book	Neil Gaiman	Harper Collins	A boy was a toddler when his family was murdered who grew up with the help of ghosts and ghouls.

### Data Collection and Analysis

We investigated that how PSTs in children's literature classes read and respond to multicultural children's literature both individually and in LC groups within a framework of critical literacy and reader response theories. Using varied genres of Newberry awarded fictional books translated into Turkish such as realistic (*Holes by Louis Sachar*), historical (*Number the Stars by Lois Lowry*) and fantasy (*Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman*, *The Giver by Lois Lowry*) multicultural children's books on a variety of issues will allow future teachers to explore many ways of looking at a given topic. The objectives of the LC activity are to the PSTs' literary understandings during discussions, use writing skill to respond to their readings, and complete each of the six literature discussion roles (Discussion Director, Word Wizard, Illustrator, Passage Master, Connector, and Summurizer). In general, we examined the responses of PSTs to describe how adult readers make sense of children's books? More specifically we tried to find answers to the following two questions;

- What meanings are constructed through Newbery award/honour winning books?
- How immersion in the children's literature of another culture, support the multicultural education for PSTs through literature circles?

It was observed that preservice teachers had different opinions for each book and some opinions overlapped after the analyzes made. The data were analyzed separately for each book, after holistic interpretations of the analytic findings. For ethical considerations, PSTs' names were anonymized.

### Results

When the cover illustrations and names of these books were examined; there are some differences in the original version and Turkish translation of the books. When "Number the Stars" is examined, there is a hexagon necklace which is an integral symbol of the Jewish faith, this symbol was not given on the cover of the Turkish edition. Besides, the original name of the book "Number the Stars" is translated into Turkish word by word (direct) translation. When the cover illustration of the original and the Turkish translation of "The Giver" is examined, it is seen that there is no difference. Besides that, it is seen that the name of the book is translated by interpreting, not word by word (direct) translation. It is seen that the book name, which is originally called "The Giver", has been translated as "Chosen Person" in Turkish. When the "Holes" is examined, it is seen that there are differences in the illustrations. The most important difference is, in the original form of the book in the lower part of the cover, it is seen the head of the character, but in Turkish edition there isn't a character's picture on the cover. In addition, in the Turkish translation of the book, a letter in the name

of the book is depicted in the hole. There isn't such a detail on the original cover of the book. The original name of the book "Holes" is translated into Turkish word by word (direct) translation. When the cover illustration of the original and the Turkish translation of "The Graveyard Book" is examined, it is seen that the cover illustrations are exactly the same, but in the original case, there is a label on the cover showing the Newbery medal award, as well as an annotation for New York Times bestseller and the Hugo award at the top of the cover. While the Newbery label is not included in the Turkish translation; instead it is shown as an annotation that Newbery is received with a small font in the upper part and a label showing the Hugo award appears. New York Times bestseller information is not included in the Turkish translation. The original name of the book "The Graveyard Book" is translated into Turkish word by word (direct) translation.

The data of the study were analyzed on a basis through the PSTs' written responses and their participation in LC discussions. They used their written notes to discuss their reading in LCs. When the discussions were examined, it was seen that some roles of LCs were more active than other roles during the process. The active roles were discussion director, illustrator, passage master and connector. The analysis of students' writing was categorized and thereby themes emerged. All of the written notes used by the PSTs in the LC were collected and analyzed in the three main areas like the main concept of the book, personal response and critical/analytical comment and curriculum connections. One of the methods used to ensure the reliability of the analysis in such studies where qualitative data is included is peer confirmation. Within the scope of this study, all opinions of the PSTs were analyzed by both of the researchers. According to the findings obtained from the analyses, the subjects that have agreement/disagreement among the researchers were determined. The reliability formula (Miles & Huberman 1994) is calculated as 86% of the conformity. The findings of each book is presented in subheadings.

#### **Number the Stars by Lois Lowry**

The children's book, "Number The Stars", was read by 66 readers and discussed within the scope of group discussions in LC. After the students read the book, their written responses were closely examined. Therefore, some specific concepts including war", "historicity", "solidarity", "sacrifice", "living with difficulties", "prejudice", "friendship", "patriotism", "values" and "racism" were identified as the theme of the book by the readers. The investigation of the discussion groups' written answers indicated that the readers link the subject, character, and events of the book with themselves and so each criticism about the book is very different from each other. The readers reflected their personal views on concepts such as "racism" and "peace, love, integrity" (*The book is universal. Its message is about fighting against racism; Peace, Love, Integrity: I found the things we will need in the future in this book. These are brotherhood, common sense, courage, resistance, love, respect, peace...*).

During the LC discussions, readers made comments on the book about their future career. In this regard, they shared their opinions about whether or not to use these books in their future classrooms, how they would use, and on what age /class level they might fit (*The subject of the book (war) is a subject to be faced. I think the 3rd and 4th grade students can read this book easily. Maybe the received message may vary according to the age group but it can still be read easily*). As a result of the analysis, most of the readers stated that the book could be suitable for children over 10 years of age (*I read the book in a snap, but my 10-year-old dreamer brother may not prefer to sit down and read a novel whose subject is taken from a real event*) and a few of them expressed that it could be suitable for 15 years old children (*I think this book is suitable for 15 years of age because it is about Nazi occupation. I mean, I think the children who are under 15, know very little/nothing about Nazis*).

#### **The Giver by Lois Lowry**

The children's book, "The Giver", was read by 90 readers and discussed within the scope of group discussions in LC. The concepts that come out of this book were "Diversity"-it was named it in

different forms as; Respect for diversity (*In the beginning of the book, I emulated to society. It was an honest, decent society. As I read it later, I realized what seen as unimportant is very important in life. I think this is also very important for children too. Love, care, colors, brotherhood, respect, freedom of choice...*), Importance of diversity (*This book taught me that, things that seem perfect is not what they actually look like. Life must also meet with troubles, we must also suffer and worry. I think the meaning of life at that time is understandable. An ideal book for those who want to look at life from different perspectives*), Effect of diversity (*This book tells us how important it is to be free to choose, to decide, and to be different. Maybe the writer is describing a world we can live in the future; I like this book more than other fictional works. Because, in many respects, it makes it realistic to reflect the past, present and future. We should be more careful and sensitive to our children who we entrust our future*), and Social order (*All in all, I think it is in a very different style and a very fascinating novel. Manipulating the genes of people, giving death to people by voluntarily, giving people a complete deprivation of choice, ignoring sexuality, and most of all not having colors, make the book very different; As I read this book, the first thing coming to my mind was socialism. At the beginning of the book, I thought how nice the layout was. However, the costs paid were heavy. People's mechanization of losing their emotions... are 'nt there many mistakes already made because of wrong choices?*).

During the LC discussions, PSTs made comments on the book about the use of the books in their future classrooms (*I think the book can be read easily by adults as well as children. I like the book. I think children should read this book to understand the value of what we have but that people in the book cannot have it. I think children should read this book so that they can understand the value of what we have.*).

*They can also understand how bad it would be to have everything the same; I think it is a very successful work written for children. Jonas has a qualification for being a role model for children. With this book, children can learn to look at life from a different perspective. Because this book was designed in a different way and it tells about a different world; the author's open-ended final was beautiful in terms of expanding the imagination of children. A very exciting, fascinating, fluent, unique novel. I read it with pleasure. It helped me better examine the world I live in, see its beauty and love it more).*

Regarding the previous comments, while some of the PSTs stated that the book is more appropriate for above the 4th grade level (*It is an important and qualified work that can add something to the reader. It is a book I can recommend from the 4th grade since it talks about abstract concepts that lead to think about it*), the rest of them have introduced that the book should be read by children who are above 13 years of age (*I think the book is for children 13 year aged and older because "being detached from the community" can affect children negatively; I like the book, but I don't think it's a book to be recommended to primary school students. Because I think that can be difficult for primary school students to understand the flow of the events and what the book is talking about. A book that can be applicable for higher levels. It ends with the obscurity*).

### **Holes by Lois Sachar**

The children's book, "Holes", was read by 51 readers within the context of the LC group discussion. The concepts that came out of this book were "Universal values like friendship, cooperation, solidarity and self-belief", "reality", "Hope", "social problems", "fight with injustice", and "optimism". The particular focus of the PSTs on "Values" clearly showed the effectivity of this book in teaching value.

During the LC discussions, readers made comments on the book about their prospective classrooms. These statements illustrated that the book is more appropriate for the 10 years old and above (*The age range of children who read this book should be ten years and above. The plot is chaotic and intertwined times can be challenging for younger people; Children 11 years old and the older than 11 should read this book. In fact, in this book children can put themselves in character's*

*shoes and so they can better understand the problems that the character suffered, they can try to find solutions to the problems faced by him).*

### **The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman**

The children's book, "The Graveyard Book", was read by 56 readers. The concepts that came out of this book were "death" (*One of the biggest reasons why the book draw my interest is the fictional expression of life and death concepts*), "cemetery" (*Since I read this book, my perspective on the graveyards really changed. I now see them as a mysterious place that contains many mysteries within them, not a scary place*, and "respect for diversity" (*When I finished this book, I perceived it as a liberation of a child, separation from family, stepping into adulthood. I thought the graveyard and dead people were all symbolic. In fact, I deduce that what was told in book was real life itself*).

In terms of their statements, almost half of the readers indicated that the book would be appropriate for the children above fourth grade level, three of the readers indicated that it would be appropriate for the third grade level. Some quotations containing these opinions are as follow: *The book may not be suitable for third grade primary school and younger children in terms of the type size, the narration and the subject.; I think it would be suitable for 4<sup>th</sup> grade and older children because of the some of the abstract concepts and scary components; It may draw interest of children, but it is necessary to explain that these are surreal things when suggesting such books to them. The child should be able to distinguish between real and fantastic elements.*

### **Discussion and Implications for Teacher Education**

The findings obtained from the written responses of the 66 pre-service teachers related to "Number the stars" showed that most of them were about values such as "solidarity, sacrifice, prejudice, friendship etc." In this book where Lowry's emphasis on the differences of religious beliefs is mentioned, the problems experienced by the characters due to their religious beliefs are explained in a historical reality. However, it was observed that PSTs did not provide any opinions on this subject. Consequently, the pre-service teachers did not present any opinions about the subjects known as special issues in children's literature religious belief, refugee children, and freedom besides it was seen that some of the PSTs had opinions about these special issues might have negative effects on students. The preservice teachers did not comment on many cultural elements in the book. Lois Lowry's other book "The Giver" was the most preferred book by preservice teachers. The book, that 90 PSTs read, is the one of the book in the study that is fantastic. Findings of this book showed that the opinions are related to the themes of "difference and social order". It is seen that in interpreting the book, the readers compared their life style with the life style of the characters in the book. Lowry, emphasized the importance of questioning skills, while narrating the characters, however, none of the pre-service teachers stated any opinions about this situation.

The findings, obtained from the written responses of 51 PSTs related to "Holes" book, show that the book can adversely affect the psychology of children, but they also demonstrate that they think the events in the book have a suspensive development. In interpreting the book, readers emphasized that the cultural elements in the book were instructive, but they did not give any idea about the facts such as crime-punishment or the traits of other characters in the book. In addition, they stated that it would be challenging for children under 10 years of age by arguing that the time pattern in the book, such as past-future time, is complex. The Holes and The Giver were turned into a screenplay. Some of the PSTs also made comparison between books and movies in discussion groups since they watched these movies. Most of the PSTs explained that they viewed these movies after reading the books.

The findings obtained from the written responses of the 56 pre-service teachers related to "The Graveyard Book", while some of the readers thought that the unusual elements in the book might be frightening for the children, some readers expressed that these elements such as death, graveared give real-life information to the children. Some readers saw the book as a metaphor and they looked

positively to these unusual elements too. Readers stated that these subjects were not suitable for primary school children and were only appropriate for the final year of secondary school and older children. However, in the original version of the book, it was stated that they will be appropriate for the levels starting from the 4th grade in the original class. The factor behind that opinion can be shown as the PSTs have not previously taken any other courses based on children's books. Result of not taking such courses before, they could not see the books with special subjects. However, there are amount of researches (McBee, 1996; Cai and Bishop, 1994; Rochman, 1993) which suggested that these subjects would be appropriate for the primary school children.

Literature Circles reflect reader response theory because students have a discussion environment where they can express their unique opinion. In this direction, Klassen (1993) stated that, "Literature Circles were a place to explore the value and usefulness of diverse perspectives for the purpose of expanding one's own orientation toward multiculturalism (p. 138)." In a similar manner, Tompkins (2006), emphasized that "Literature Circles are an effective instructional approach because of the three key features-choice, literature and response. As students read and discuss books with classmates, they often become more engaged and motivated than in other more teacher-directed approaches (p. 391)." In this study, we conducted reading activities through LC and as a result of these activities, it was appeared that some of the LC roles (discussion director, illustrator, passage master and connector) were more active than others. In this case, when using this method in classrooms, taking the characteristics of these roles and some roles should not be left behind.

Based on the idea that every individual is unique with regard to what constitutes his/her schema in any particular area, Rosenblatt (1978) argued that every reading experience is therefore unique to each individual as well. The results obtained from the use of these books in the classroom environment have been found to be different from each reader in terms of Reader Response Theory. This situation reveals that they respect each others ideas, think from different perspectives and use their own ways to make sense of events because of their varying backgrounds. This difference clearly indicates itself in the age groups in which the book is recommended. It can be seen that the books contain a wide age range from the third grade of the primary school to the age of 15 years.

The concepts of the books were classified into four broad categories (Freeman and Lehman, 2001): gaining an understanding of different perspectives on life in the world; gaining an understanding of the cultures of specific groups, developing the skills needed to take social action to eliminate social injustice; gaining an awareness of own cultures and cultural backgrounds; gaining a recognition an understanding of global issues, learning how to reduce stereotyping, prejudice and racism within ourselves and within society. Our study offers findings for the first two categories. It was seen that the PSTs expressed their opinions for the first (gaining an understanding of different perspectives on life in the world) and second (gaining an understanding of the cultures of specific groups, developing the skills needed to take social action to eliminate social injustice) categories in all four children books. Although all books offer rich data on all of these categories, it was observed that PSTs could not express their opinions for third (gaining an awareness of own cultures and cultural backgrounds) and fourth (gaining a recognition an understanding of global issues, learning how to reduce stereotyping, prejudice and racism within ourselves and within society) categories. These results demonstrated that the PSTs' interpretations of the events in the texts were at good level but they were insufficient in the process of critical reading and actualisation. PSTs did not allocate time to other literary genres other than textbooks with the effect of the education system and did not improve their inquiry skills.

There have been a variety of multiculturalism studies in Turkey on scale development/adaptation (Acar Ciftci, 2017; Ozturk Akcaoglu and Aarsal, 2018; Yazici, Basol, Toprak, 2009) and teachers'/students attitudes and competences (Akman and Imamoglu Akman, 2017; Aslan and Aybek, 2018; Bulut and Saricam, 2016; Gezer and Sahin, 2017; Ozdemir and Dil, 2013; Polat and Kılıc, 2013) related to multicultural issues. Most of these studies are theoretical and away from the implementation. In this regard, there is a need for studies that offer outcomes for the implementation of multicultural education such as using of literature, discussion method (LC). In view of Turkey's

multicultural society, teachers need to prepare for diverse classrooms. As a result of this study, we can say that; PSTs had opportunities to work with each other, they were motivated because of choosing the books they read, and they participated in authentic literacy experiences. Jackson (1995) stated that, "Preservice teachers must first confront themselves-their own views of others and the world. They must also engage in critical reflection about difference in terms of journeying to selfhood (p. 42)." One of the most important ways of achieving this is the placement of activities that will provide such opportunities in teacher education programme.

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