

ECEM MUTLU

TURKISH MOTHERS' NARRATIVE STYLES

Bilkent University 2018

AN INVESTIGATION OF TURKISH MOTHERS'
NARRATIVE STYLES AND THEIR RELATION
TO CHILDREN'S NARRATIVE COMPREHENSION

A Master's Thesis

by
ECEM MUTLU

Department of Psychology
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University
Ankara
May 2018

AN INVESTIGATION OF TURKISH MOTHERS'
NARRATIVE STYLES AND THEIR RELATION
TO CHILDREN'S NARRATIVE COMPREHENSION

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

ECEM MUTLU

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY

THE DEPARTMENT OF
PSYCHOLOGY
İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA

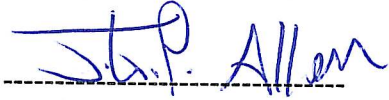
May 2018

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology.



Asst. Prof. Dr. Hande Ilgaz
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology.



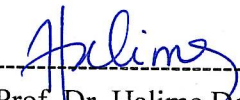
Asst. Prof. Dr. Jedediah Wilfred Papas Allen
Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology.



Asst. Prof. Dr. Başak Şahin-Acar
Examining Committee Member

Approval of the Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences



Prof. Dr. Halime Demirkan
Director

ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF TURKISH MOTHERS' NARRATIVE STYLES AND THEIR RELATION TO CHILDREN'S NARRATIVE COMPREHENSION

Mutlu, Ecem

MA. Department of Psychology

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Hande Ilgaz

May 2018

Quality of mothers' book sharing interactions with their children show variations at both individual and cultural levels. The narrative styles that mothers adopt during these book sharing interactions influence their children's emergent literacy skills. The current study investigated Turkish mothers' narrative styles as they narrated a wordless picture book to their 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children, and whether these narrative styles had a relation to their children's narrative comprehension. To answer these two questions, the current study consisted of two phases. In the first study, eighty-seven mothers were asked to narrate a wordless picture book to their children. Their narrative discourse was coded according to the pragmatic function and the narrative content of their utterances. As a result, two different narrative styles were identified: *storytellers* who make use of informative utterances that do not require their children's participation and talk about events that are within the storyline, and *story builders* who use interactive utterances that encourage their children's contribution and talk about both within and beyond the storyline. In the second study, forty-nine children were asked comprehension questions

after their mothers had narrated the wordless picture book to them. Analyses revealed no significant link between mothers' narrative styles and their children's narrative comprehension skills. However, children whose mothers adopted the story builder style displayed higher receptive vocabulary competence. Findings and implications of both studies were discussed in terms of their congruence and contributions to the existing literature.

Keywords: Emergent Literacy Ability, Maternal Narrative Styles, Mother-Child Book Sharing, Narrative Comprehension

ÖZET

TÜRK ANNELERİN ÇOCUKLARINA HİKAYE ANLATMA STİLLERİ VE BU STİLLERİN ÇOCUKLARININ ÖYKÜ MUHAKEME BECERİLERİ İLE İLİŞKİSİ

Mutlu, Ecem

Yüksek Lisans, Psikoloji Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Hande Ilgaz

May 2018

Annelerin çocuklarına hikâye anlatırken kullandıkları stratejiler hem bireysel hem de kültürel olarak çeşitlilik göstermektedir. Annelerin bu anne-çocuk etkileşimleri sırasında kullandıkları hikâye anlatma stilleri çocuklarının erken okuma yazma becerilerini etkilemektedir. Bu araştırma Türk annelerin 3, 4 ve 5 yaşlarındaki çocuklarına resimli bir hikâye kitabını anlatırken kullandıkları hikâye anlatım stillerini ve bu stillerin çocukların hikâyeyi anlama becerileri ile bir ilişkisi olup olmadığını öğrenmeyi amaçlamaktadır. İki farklı araştırma sorumuz olduğu için bu araştırma iki çalışmadan oluşmaktadır. İlk çalışmada, seksen yedi annenin çocuklarına bir resimli hikâye kitabını anlatmaları incelenmiş, annelerin kullandıkları anlatım ifadeleri işlevlerine ve içeriklerine göre kodlanmıştır. Yapılan analizler sonucunda iki ayrı hikâye anlatım stili ortaya çıkmıştır. Bunlardan biri daha fazla düz cümle kullanıp çocuklarının hikâye anlatımına katılmasına ortam hazırlamazken, diğer grup soru-cevap tekniklerini kullanarak çocuklarıyla daha fazla etkileşime girmiş ve onların hikâyeye katılımını teşvik etmişlerdir. İçerik olarak ele alındığında da ilk gruptaki anneler hikâyede

gerçekleşen olayların dışına çıkmazken, ikinci gruptaki anneler hem hikâyedeki olaylar hem de bu olaylarla alakalı olarak genel kültür ve okuryazarlık bilgisi hakkında konuşmuşlar, ayrıca kitaptaki olaylarla çocuklarının hayatında gerçekleşen benzer olaylar arasında ilişki kurmuşlardır. İkinci çalışmada, kırk dokuz çocuğa annelerinin az önce anlatmış olduğu resimli hikâye kitabı ile ilgili muhakeme soruları sorulmuştur. Yapılan analizler annelerin hikâye anlatma stilleri ile çocuklarının hikâyeyi anlama becerileri arasında bir ilişki olmadığını göstermiştir. Fakat hikâyeyi çocukları ile karşılıklı etkileşim içerisinde anlatmayı tercih eden annelerin çocuklarının alıcı dil becerilerinde daha başarılı oldukları görülmüştür. İki çalışmanın da bulguları var olan alan yazına uygunlukları ve katkıları açısından tartışılmış, gelecekteki çalışmalar için önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Annelerin Hikâye Anlatma Stilleri, Erken Okur-Yazarlık Becerileri, Hikâye Anlama Becerileri, Muhakeme Becerileri

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been an honor for me to be a part of Bilkent Developmental Psychology Lab, and to work with some of the most successful young psychologists. Throughout my journey with this team, I feel nothing but gratitude for their guidance and friendship.

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the most devoted teacher I have ever had, Asst. Prof. Hande Ilgaz. She has been not only an advisor for my studies but also a great role model for life. Her support and faith in me as well as her teachings have turned me into the person I am now. I feel extremely lucky to be one of her students. I will always be in debt to her for her efforts on me. I only hope that someday I can be worthy of them.

I am also grateful to Asst. Prof. Jedediah Allen. His lectures taught me how to be a critical thinker and how to be a hard-working student. I have always appreciated his constructive feedbacks for I believe they are the ones that will make us better academicians who will eventually serve for the development of our community.

I owe a big thank you to my dear friend Bahar Bozbıyık for her constant help in my data collection as well as for being the most supportive and understanding friend one could have. I also feel grateful to my dear friend Zeynep Baktır for her psychological support and for her delicious cookies whenever I'm in distress. When I was with Bahar and Zeynep, there was no such problem that the three of us could not overcome together. I would like to thank all of my friends at the developmental lab, Emre Aydın, Elçin

Baykal, Cansu Sümer, Feride Nur Haskaraca, Eda Önoğlu and Elif Bürümlü-Kısa, for becoming my family in Ankara. I also would like to thank to all of the undergraduate members of our lab for helping me collect data for my thesis.

I would also like to express my love and gratitude to my mother and father for always believing in me and encouraging me in my studies. I owe special thanks to my beloved sister and my best friend, Görkem, for always being there for me and inspiring me to be a better person since our childhood. Finally, I will forever be grateful to our little Oscar for bringing joy to our family.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	III
ÖZET	V
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VIII
LIST OF TABLES	XI
LIST OF FIGURES	XII
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Narrative as a Cultural Tool.....	3
1.2 Cultural Variations in Maternal Narrative Styles	5
1.3 Mother-Child Interaction in Book Reading	7
1.4 Mother-Child Interaction in Book Sharing	10
1.5 Narrative Comprehension in Book Reading and Book Sharing Contexts	12
1.6 The Current Study	15
CHAPTER 2: STUDY 1 – METHOD	17
2.1 Participants.....	17
2.2 Materials	18
2.2.1 Background Information	18
2.2.1.1 Demographic Form.....	18
2.2.1.2 Book Reading Habits Survey (İlgaz & Aksu-Koç, 2005)	18
2.2.2 Language Measure	18
2.2.3 Executive Functions Measure	19
2.2.4 Theory of Mind Measure	19
2.2.5 Wordless Story Book	20
2.3 Procedure	20
2.4 Coding.....	21
2.4.1 Function	22

2.4.1.1 Informative Utterances	22
2.4.1.2 Interactive Utterances	22
2.4.2 Content	23
2.4.2.1 Referential Utterances	23
2.4.2.2 Evaluative Utterances	23
2.4.2.3 General Knowledge Utterances	24
2.4.2.4 Extension Utterances	24
2.4.2.5 Meta-Literacy Utterances	24
2.4.2.6 Other Utterances	24
CHAPTER 3: STUDY 1 – RESULTS	26
3.1 Does Mothers’ Talk Differ Based on Their Children’s Age and Gender?	27
3.1.2 Do Mothers’ Functional Discourse Variables Differ by Their Children’s Age and Gender?	27
3.1.3 Do Mothers’ Content-Discourse Variables Differ by Their Children’s Age and Gender?	28
3.2 Are There Variations Among Mothers’ Narrative Styles?	30
3.3 Do Mothers’ Narrative Styles Show Variations Based on Mother and Child Characteristics?	33
3.4 Do Children’s Vocabulary Skills Differ Based on Their Mothers’ Narrative Styles?	34
CHAPTER 4: STUDY 2 – METHOD	36
4.1 Participants	36
4.2 Measures and Procedure	36
4.2.1 Narrative Comprehension	37
CHAPTER 5: STUDY 2 – RESULTS	39
5.1 Does Children's Narrative Comprehension Change by Age or Gender?	39
5.2 Does Children’s Narrative Comprehension Change according to Mothers’ Narrative Styles?	40
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION	42
REFERENCES	52
APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHIC FORM	58
APPENDIX B: BOOK READING HABIT SURVEY	60
APPENDIX C. QUESTIONS AND SCORING OF THE NARRATIVE COMPREHENSION	63

LIST OF TABLES

1. Mean and Standard Deviations of Mothers' Functional Discourse Variables by Children's Age and Gender	28
2. Correlations between Mothers' Content Discourse Variables.....	28
3. Mean and Standard Deviations of Mothers' Content Discourse Variables by Children's Age and Gender.....	30
4. Receptive and Expressive Language Scores Based on Mothers' Narrative Styles.....	34
5. Children's Narrative Comprehension by Age and Gender.....	40
6. Children's Narrative Comprehension by Age and Mothers' Narrative Styles.....	40

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Final Cluster Solution for Mothers’ Narrative Styles.....3



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Contrary to the belief that literacy is taught through formalized schooling, children begin developing important literacy skills during the preschool years. This prior knowledge about literacy is called emergent literacy (Dickinson & McCabe, 2001; Reese, Cox, Harte & McAnally, 2003; Watkins & Bunce, 1996). Components of emergent literacy include: vocabulary knowledge, conventions of print, knowledge of letters, linguistic awareness, phoneme-grapheme correspondence, emergent reading and emergent writing (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998) as well as comprehension skills (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Strasser, Larrain & Lissi, 2013; Tompkins, Guo & Justice, 2013). Among these emergent literacy components, comprehension has a critical role for school achievement as well as children's everyday life, including play.

In order to learn at school and communicate with other people in their social environment, children need to be able to make sense of what is being taught to them both in oral and written contexts, and to make connections between different ideas (Strasser & del Rio, 2013). This is an ability that will help them be successful both in academic and daily life. The comprehension skills necessary to make meaning of written language is called reading comprehension. In preschool children who are yet unable to read on their own, however, their ability to make meaning of stories is

named narrative comprehension (Tompkins et al. 2013). Previous studies have found that narrative comprehension is a precursor to reading comprehension (Kendeou, Bohn-Gettler, White & van den Broek, 2008; Kendeou, van den Broek, White & Lynch, 2009).

The fact that there is an impact of mother-child interaction during book reading on children's emergent literacy development is a well-known and widely replicated finding (Chow & McBride-Chang, 2003; Hargrave & Senechal, 2000; Justice & Ezell, 2000; Roberts, Jergens & Burchinal, 2005; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002; Whitehurst et al., 1994) which has been confirmed by meta-analytic studies (Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995; Reese, Sparks, & Leyva, 2010). Previous research indicates that the frequency of book sharing activities in the home environment are related to a host of positive child outcomes that include increases in children's interest and participation in the literacy activity (Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1992; Lyytinen, Laakso & Poikkeus, 1998), higher scores in receptive and expressive vocabulary assessments (Senechal, 1997), and greater use of complex sentences (Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992). However, even in samples that make frequent use of shared book reading, individual differences abound.

Studies have shown that features of mothers' narrative discourse, such as being more interactive and asking open-ended questions throughout the joint book reading activity, were related to children's vocabulary knowledge (Whitehurst et al., 1988). In addition to individual differences there are also intracultural and intercultural variations among mothers' narrative strategies when they share a book with their children. Since mothers' beliefs and attitudes in how to read a story more effectively to their children are shaped by the culture they are surrounded, their strategies to promote their children's narrative comprehension are also affected by the culture.

Hence, it is worth a closer look at children's narrative comprehension skills in their social interactions with their mothers who are members of the culture they live in. The current study will aim to discover individual differences in Turkish mothers' narrative discourse as they share a picture book with their child, to identify mothers' narrative styles, and to compare these with cross-cultural findings. Moreover, the current study will investigate whether the narrative styles of these mothers are related to their children's narrative comprehension skills.

1.1 Narrative as a Cultural Tool

Just as it is impossible to approach human psychology by considering it as something that is consisted of separate individuals without a connection to a social community (Bruner, 1990), it is, as well, wrong to assume that children develop narrative skills independent of the culture they live in. The constitutive role of culture compels researchers to pursue the bidirectional impact of the social and the individual on each other. Through narratives that are about past, present, or future events, adults and children collaboratively construct a social context where adults' goals and beliefs are shared with their children (Nelson, 1996). Through gradual incorporation of culturally accepted narrative discourse practices, children learn to use language effectively. Cultural values, as a consequence, take their place in children's own narratives, hence, continue to influence the canonical forms of the community (Nelson, 1996).

In line with Bruner's (1990) and Nelson's (1996) ideas on the critical role of social interaction for children's development, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, when it is applied to narrative context, suggests a relation between mother-child interaction and children's narrative comprehension as one important component of emergent literacy skills. Reese's (1995) study examining mother-child

conversations supports this idea by showing that there is a relation between the use of language in mothers' conversations with their children and children's vocabulary, knowledge of print concepts and narrative comprehension.

Vygotsky (1978) does not limit learning within the child's actual developmental level, rather, he proposes that learning occurs in the space between child's actual developmental level and child's level of potential development that the child can reach through adult scaffolding. Being the experts in mother-child dyads, mothers become role models in their language interactions with their children. Children learn how to engage in daily conversations by interacting with their mothers. Through internalization processes, children gradually take the responsibility of being the expert from their mothers, hence become an active participant of that cultural community.

Although any kind of verbal interaction with the mother in everyday contexts contributes to improving children's linguistic abilities, what separates book reading from other daily mother-child interactions, such as the interactions during play time or meal time, is that storybooks elicit mothers to use more complex words and grammatical structures (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002). In addition to children's exposure to new vocabulary (Whitehurst et al., 1988) as well as concepts about print (Justice & Ezell, 2002), narrative exchanges during book reading are more structured than other contexts, that is, they build up around a certain theme based on certain illustrations on each page (Caspe & Melzi, 2008). Children are exposed to narrative structures such as introducing the characters and the events before the problem breaks out, providing a solution to the problem, hence, systematically leading the reader from the beginning to the end of the story. (Cochran-Smith, 1984). For preliterate children, book reading is an activity that is inherently social in that it

requires a narrator and an audience (Melzi, Schick & Kennedy, 2011), therefore, it provides practice with narrative discourse. While reading a storybook to their children, mothers implicitly teach them how to narrate a story with a beginning, an end and problems that need to be solved in between, as well as to make connections between events, actions or characters' internal states, and to make sense of these connections in order to be able to comprehend the story.

During joint book reading activities, mothers have several opportunities to scaffold their children by personally observing their children's developmental needs and adjusting their language use in a way that serves to improve children's cognitive skills as compared to other contexts where mother and child interact with one another (Bus, 2001; Sénéchal, Cornell & Broda, 1995). Furthermore, during book reading, mothers respond to their children's questions, and extend what is in the story book to children's own life when compared to other types of daily mother-child interactions (Fletcher & Reese, 2005). While reading books, mothers do not only read the text of the story to children, they also explain the story, make comments about the characters or events, label the pictures and address questions about them to children (Haden, Reese & Fivush, 1996). All of these benefits of mother-child book reading interactions help children develop a better comprehension of the storyline. Hence, by internalizing the processes involved in narrative comprehension, children become capable of generalizing their comprehension skills into different books and narrative contexts.

1.2 Cultural Variations in Maternal Narrative Styles

Each individual is socialized into their culture's preferred ways of storytelling, and importantly, cultures may hold different views of children's and adults' role in conversation, book reading, and/or storytelling contexts. In a study by Melzi (2000)

about mother-child narrative conversations on past events, it was found that while Latino mothers worked on improving their children's ability to maintain a conversation, European-American mothers preferred to put emphasis on children's ability to narrate an organized and coherent story. Since Latino mothers targeted their children's participation in the conversation, they did not interrupt their children's narrative to organize its content. Rather, they let their children be the sole narrator of their own experience. Different from the Latino culture, European-American mothers' goal was to improve their children's organizational narrative skills. Hence, these mothers interfered with their children's narrative with the purpose of helping them put the events in temporal order and make connections between them. That is, European-American mothers co-constructed their children's narrative while having a joint conversation with them.

Similar to conversational contexts, mother-child book reading interactions are also affected by variation within a culture. Comparing three different groups of families (middle-class European-American, working class European-American, and working class African-American communities) while reading storybooks to their children, Heath (1982) provided evidence for cultural variations by finding differences in these three communities' "ways of taking" from books. She proposed that each group had its own beliefs, traditions, and values, and that these shaped the mainstream ways of "taking from books". As a result, these community beliefs and expectations are reflected on mother-child book reading activities. Hence, Heath (1982) proposed that the way mothers interact with their children during joint book reading activities shows cultural variations.

Based on Heath's (1982) findings, further evidence for difference among mothers' book reading styles comes from studies that have shown cultural variability between

different cultures such as Peruvian and European-American mothers (Melzi & Caspe, 2005; Melzi et al., 2011), and Puerto Rican and African-American mothers (Hammer, Nimmo, Cohen, Draheim & Johnson, 2005), as well as between subcultures of the same population such as African-American and Euro-American mothers (Anderson-Yockel & Haynes, 1994). Similarly, studies have also shown individual variability within the same subgroup in a culture such as white and middle class American mothers (Haden et al., 1996), European New Zealander mothers (Reese et al., 2003), or low-income Latino mothers in New York City (Caspe, 2009). In what follows, the terms book reading and book sharing are going to refer to slightly different narrative activities. While book reading is an activity where an adult reads a storybook that includes text, book sharing is an activity where an adult narrates a storybook that does not have any text included. Thus, what differentiates book sharing from book reading is that mothers create a coherent story from the pictures during book sharing, and that it does not involve reading of a text. While book reading limits mothers' own use of language to extra-textual talk, that is the mother-child talk apart from the literal text of the book, book sharing allows mothers to use their natural language. Hence, book sharing does not limit mothers to the extra-textual talk, but rather makes use of all of the talk about the wordless story book.

1.3 Mother-Child Interaction in Book Reading

Examples to variations in mothers' book reading styles while reading a book to their children has been found in studies of DeTemple and Tabors (1994), Haden et al. (1996), and Reese et al., (2003). These studies investigated samples from different backgrounds such as low SES mothers, middle SES European-American mothers, and middle SES European-New Zealander mothers. Each study found different

patterns of mothers' book reading styles, hence, they named these styles differently. However, even though each study used different labels for mothers' book reading styles, the criteria that these styles were based on were similar such as interactivity, the level of cognitive demand, or reference to child's own life.

One of the earliest studies that looked at individual differences among mothers' storybook reading styles is DeTemple and Tabors' (1994) study. Their study is based on the hypothesis that in order for the early literacy intervention programs to be effective, natural book reading behaviors of mothers must be identified first. In their study, DeTemple and Tabors videotaped 290 low SES teenage mothers while they were reading a book to their children. The results of their analysis revealed four different book reading styles. Mothers in the straight readers group only rarely stopped reading and discussed the events occurring in the book with their children. These mothers expected their children to listen to the story without asking questions. Mothers in the standard interactive readers group tended to stop their reading to discuss the events in the book to engage their children in the story. These mothers talked about both the information provided in the story and the information beyond the storyline. Mothers in the non-readers group did not read the text in the book, but mostly made use of the illustrations of the book to discuss the events with their children. Finally, mothers in the recitation readers group expected their children to repeat every word or line after the mother as she read the book.

Another study that examined individual variations among mothers' natural book reading style was Haden et al.'s longitudinal study (1996). In this study, researchers observed middle-class American mother-child dyads reading a book together when their children were 40 and 58 months old. Haden et al. identified three different maternal reading styles that utilized different reading strategies. One group of

mothers, called describers, tended to describe and label pictures, name characters, and emphasize vocabulary more than mothers in the other two groups. Describers made low-level cognitive demands from their children, meaning their questions were limited to the story and did not require children to retrieve distant information. Another group of mothers, called collaborators, tended to make more confirmations by giving feedback to their children, elicited more comments from children, and encouraged their children more often to contribute to the story. Finally, the third group of mothers, called comprehenders, tended to ask their children to make more predictions and inferences that went beyond the information given in the storybook, used more causal explanations, and allowed their children to interrupt the reading more in order to create an opportunity for children to provide and request information about the story. Comprehenders made high-level cognitive demands from their children during storybook reading, meaning these mothers asked questions that required children to extend the information in the story or apply previously learned information to the story.

Adapting Haden et al.'s (1996) coding scheme, Reese et al. (2003) aimed to find out natural reading styles of European New Zealander mothers while they read books to their preschooler children. The researchers identified two groups of mothers according to their reading styles: Describers and comprehenders. Describers requested and provided more labels, requested and provided more picture descriptions, and requested more evaluations than other mothers. Comprehenders, however, provided more evaluations and inferences, requested and provided more personal experience than the other group of mothers. In their follow-up study, Reese et al. aimed to examine the effects of mothers' natural reading styles on children's language development and emergent literacy. For this study, they included another

style of reading called performance-oriented. This style was initially found to be one of the reading styles that preschool teachers engage in while reading books to their students (Dickinson & Smith, 1994). It is called performance-oriented style because teachers pay more attention to how they perform the reading, make high level comments at the beginning of the book while introducing it to the children, and do not allow children to interrupt during the reading letting them ask their questions only at the end of their performance.

1.4 Mother-Child Interaction in Book Sharing

Maternal narrative styles in book sharing contexts have been the focus of research in few studies (Caspe, 2009; Melzi & Caspe, 2005; Melzi et al., 2011). The sample of these studies included European-American and Latino mother-child dyads. Each of these studies compared maternal narrative styles across the two cultures, within a subgroup in a culture (i.e., low SES Latino mothers), and across the different contexts (book sharing and family reminiscing). Even though the narrative styles were labeled with different words in each study, the narrative characteristics of, for example, storyteller mothers in one study showed similarities with storyteller mothers in another.

Melzi and Caspe (2005) provided Peruvian and American mothers with a wordless storybook and asked mothers to narrate the story to their 3-year-old children.

Different from reading story books with text, when mothers narrate from a wordless story book, they have freedom in constructing the story. In other words, they are not constrained by the text of the story. As noted before, narrative elicitation with wordless story books allows researchers to examine mothers' narrative choices (e.g., elaboration of select events, emotional states) as well as their linguistic choices (e.g., the length of narration, types of syntax used). As a result of their study, Melzi and

Caspe identified two distinct groups of mothers varying in their narrating strategies: storytellers and story builders. The first group of mothers, the storytellers, used more informative narrative utterances. These mothers provided information by using declarative statements about the events and non-events in the story. They did not necessarily elicit children's comments and contributions, nor did they seem to welcome questions during the storytelling. The storyteller mothers' focus was on the narrative rather than non-narrative information centering their narration on the events happening in the story. In contrast, story builders co-constructed the story with their children through the use of interactive narrative and non-narrative utterances. That is, they engaged their children by requesting information about the story and by relating story events to children's personal experiences. The story builders' focus was more on the non-narrative information which was about children's own experiences and their general knowledge of the world rather than the story itself. These mothers made utterances about both events that were occurring in the story and events that were related to children's own life experiences.

In a separate study where Caspe (2009) examined book sharing styles of low SES Latino mothers and its relation to Latino Head Start children's emergent literacy development, she found that there were three different groups of mothers clustered according to the strategies they used while sharing a wordless picturebook with their children. She labeled the first group of mothers as story builder-labelers. Mothers of this group requested more narrative information from their children than the other two groups in order to involve their children in the narration. She labeled the second group of mothers as storytellers. These mothers provided more narrative information to their children than the other two groups so that they could be in control of the narration. Finally, she labeled the third group of mothers as abridged-storytellers.

Mothers in this group requested less narrative and non-narrative information from their children than the other two groups. Also, these mothers provided narrative information to their children at a moderate amount compared to the other two groups. Stories of these mothers were more concise than the mothers in the other two groups.

In their study, Melzi, Schick and Kennedy (2011) examined the narrative styles of mother-child dyads across two different contexts: family reminiscing and book sharing. They identified two clusters in the family reminiscing context (elicitors and constructors) in addition to verifying the strategies they identified in book sharing context (storytellers and story builders) in their earlier study (Melzi & Caspe, 2005). Storyteller mothers in the book sharing context held ownership of being the primary narrator of the story. Elicitor mothers in the reminiscing context acted as the audience and let their children become the main narrator. Across contexts, both story builder and constructor mothers shared the role of the narrator, and encouraged their children to take a co-narrator role while recounting the story or the past events.

1.5 Narrative Comprehension in Book Reading and Book Sharing Contexts

The cultural, subcultural and individual differences found in mothers' narrative styles across book reading and book sharing contexts in the empirical studies discussed above are unique to the communities of interest. Therefore, as Heath (1982) previously cautioned, these sorts of findings about mothers' book reading styles should be treated with caution when investigating their benefits for children's development. Looking solely at European-American mother-child book reading interactions, and assuming that their book reading styles will be useful for children from different cultures or different social backgrounds would be misleading. Even though there have been empirical studies conducted to examine variations among

mothers in Latino, New Zealander and African-American populations other than European-Americans, since they are culture-bound, it is necessary to also look at the effects of different cultures' maternal book sharing styles on child outcomes such as narrative comprehension skills.

Among the studies introduced in the previous two sections in both book reading and book sharing contexts, only three of them investigated the effects of mothers' narrative styles on several emergent literacy skills as a child outcome. While two of these studies (Haden et al, 1996; Reese et al, 2003) examined this relationship in a book reading context, only one of them (Caspe, 2009) focused on the relationship in a wordless picturebook sharing activity. However, the child outcomes that Caspe (2009) assessed in her study involved concepts about print, letter identification, and narrative ability, but not narrative comprehension skills. Therefore, for the purposes of the current study, only the first two of the aforementioned studies are going to be discussed further in terms of their results for child outcomes in the following paragraph, respectively.

In addition to identifying three different maternal book reading styles (describers, collaborators, comprehenders) among European- American mothers, in their longitudinal study, Haden et al. (1996) investigated whether these book reading styles were related to children's emergent literacy skills when children were 70 months old (i.e., just before they started grade school). Emergent literacy measures in the study included vocabulary, concepts about print, decoding, story production, story retelling, and narrative comprehension assessments. Narrative comprehension skills were measured by asking questions to children while the experimenter was reading an unfamiliar storybook to them. The questions were asked at pre-established time points during the reading. The questions tapped children's

understanding of the plot, their inferences about the story events, and their general world knowledge that supported story comprehension. When the researchers looked at the relations between mothers' book reading styles and children's literacy outcomes, they found that children of comprehender mothers obtained higher scores in narrative comprehension than children in the other two groups, and that children of describer mothers obtained lower scores in narrative comprehension than children in the other two groups. Since mothers in the comprehenders group encouraged their children to contribute to the story, requested more inferences and predictions about the story, provided more causal explanations, and made high-level cognitive demands from their children by asking them to make connections between the story and their general knowledge, children of these mothers were better at understanding the story.

In Reese et al.'s (2003) study with European-New Zealander mothers, the researchers identified two different maternal reading styles (describers and comprehenders). In order to investigate the relationship between mothers' book reading styles and children's emergent literacy outcomes, Reese and her colleagues conducted a second study. In study 2, the researchers used a different sample of children. They randomly assigned children into three different reading styles (describers, comprehenders, & performance-oriented) according to which experimenters read books to children over six weeks. Emergent literacy measures in the study included vocabulary, print skills, and narrative comprehension assessments. Children's narrative comprehension was assessed as in Haden et al.'s (1996) study by asking comprehension questions while the experimenter read an unfamiliar book to children. However, different from Haden et al.'s (1996) findings, the results of this study did not show any effect of book reading style on children's

narrative comprehension.

In Reese et al.'s (2003) study, the fact that it is the experimenters that read books to children in three separate book reading styles according to a reading protocol provides this study with an artificial research design rather than a naturalistic one. Instead of examining mothers' or teachers' own narrative styles and looking at their effects on child outcomes, artificial reading style groups were created. It is plausible to think that children who are exposed to a narrative style consistently either from their mother or teacher may not be affected by a 6-week book reading intervention especially if they were placed in narrative style groups other than the one they are accustomed to. Furthermore, the fact that these studies' samples consisted of two different cultures (i.e., European-American and European-New Zealander) might be leading to two inconsistent results. Therefore, these might be important reasons to take into consideration while interpreting the results of these two studies. Since there are only two studies that look at the relation between mothers' book reading style and children's narrative comprehension skills, and since these two studies conclude with inconsistent results, the question still remains as to whether there is a link between mothers' book reading styles and children's narrative comprehension, thus, it is necessary for future research to look at this question.

1.6 The Current Study

The current study aimed to answer two questions: (1) What are Turkish mothers' narrative styles? (2) Is there a link between mothers' narrative styles and their children's narrative comprehension skills? In order to address these questions, we conducted two separate studies.

The first study aimed to investigate individual differences among middle SES Turkish mothers' interactions with their children during joint book sharing activities.

In order to identify Turkish mothers' narrative styles, and find out whether their narrative styles show similarities with other cultures as was reported in previous literature, we asked mothers to narrate a wordless story book *Frog, Where Are you?* to their children, and coded their book sharing interactions according to both the pragmatic use and narrative content of the discourse elements. Given the paucity of studies that examine Turkish mothers' book sharing language coupled with the fact that cultural differences in book sharing practices are well documented in the literature; this study will fill a gap in the literature that will inform both the research on language development and provide a first step in opening Turkish mother-child book sharing talk to cross-cultural examination. After identifying mothers' narrative styles, the second study aimed to investigate whether there is a relation between mothers' narrative styles and children's narrative comprehension skills. In order to assess children's comprehension skills, we asked them several comprehension questions about the picture book that their mother just narrated. Given the inconsistent findings of the two studies (Haden et al., 1996; Reese et al., 2003) that look at the relation between maternal book reading styles and children's narrative comprehension, this study attempts to further examine this relation with a Turkish-speaking sample, and with a research design that allowed us to see the correlations between mothers' own natural narrative styles and their children's narrative comprehension skills. In line with the findings of Haden et al.'s (1996) longitudinal study, it was hypothesized that there will be a relation between mothers' narrative styles and their children's narrative comprehension scores, with more interactive narrative styles yielding higher comprehension scores than more informative maternal narrative styles.

CHAPTER 2

STUDY 1 – METHOD

2.1 Participants

Eighty-seven Turkish-speaking mothers and their children participated in the first study. Thirty-three of the children were 3-year-olds ($M = 41.09$ months, $SD = 3.07$), 30 were 4-year-olds ($M = 54.23$ months, $SD = 3.63$), and 24 were 5-year-olds ($M = 63.21$ months, $SD = 3.57$).

Mothers' age ranged from 25 to 51 years ($M = 35.90$, $SD = 5.22$); 52.9% of mothers had one child, 43.7% had two children, and 3.4% had more than two children. A majority of mothers (87.4%) obtained a university degree, 9.2% obtained a high school degree, and 3.4% had equal to or less than a middle-school education. Based on families' household income and the official poverty line in Turkey in November of 2015 (4.530 TL for a family of four), the majority of the families belonged to middle socioeconomic status with 78% stating their household income as more than 5000 TL, 15% having a household income between 3000 TL and 5000 TL, and 4.6% having a household income between 1000 TL and 3000 TL.

While this study's first goal was to discover similarities and differences of Turkish mothers' narrative styles with other cultures, intracultural differences were also taken into account. Given that this is the first study to investigate Turkish-speaking

mothers' narrative styles and that it has a limited sample size, we aimed for a homogeneous sample so that mothers' narrative styles would not be affected by other variables. Therefore, we conducted this study solely on mothers who were from a middle socioeconomic background ($N = 87$).

The participants were recruited through announcements made to Bilkent Holding staff, Bilkent University Alumni, and several preschools near the university campus in Ankara, the capital of Turkey with a population of 5,5 million. Both parents of the children were to sign the informed consent form before the data collection procedure began. The informed consent forms were approved by Bilkent Ethics Committee. When the data collection was completed, each child received a coloring book and a box of crayons as a gift for their participation.

2.2 Materials

2.2.1 Background Information

2.2.1.1 Demographic Form

This form consisted of questions about both of the parents' age, education, job, child's birth date, number of children in the family, and family income.

2.2.1.2 Book Reading Habits Survey (Ilgaz & Aksu-Koç, 2005)

This survey consisted of questions that asked mothers about their children's exposure to oral and written narratives in the home.

2.2.2 Language Measure

Since the focus of both study 1 and study 2 required children to have the ability to comprehend and produce language while a story was narrated to them, it was necessary to assess their language skills. In order to fulfil this aim, we used a Turkish expressive and receptive language test (TIFALDI, Berument & Guven, 2013). This test is a standardized vocabulary task that assesses both receptive and expressive

language skills for children who are between the ages of 2 and 12. The receptive language test consists of 4 different pictures on each of 104 pages. Children are asked to point to the target word as a response to each question (e.g., “Which one of these is a rectangle?”). The expressive language test consists of 80 pictures with one picture on each page. Children are asked to name the image they see on the page (e.g., “What is this?”). In both receptive and expressive language tests, the difficulty of questions increases as children move forward in the task.

2.2.3 Executive Functions Measure

Children’s executive functions were assessed with Dimensional Change Card Sorting task (DCCS; Zelazo, 2006). There were three phases in the task. In the first phase, called the color game, children were asked to sort cards based on their color. In the second phase, named the shape game, children were asked to sort cards based on their shape. Only if children were able to pass these two phases, could they move onto the third phase –the border game. In this game, children were asked to sort cards based on whether there is a border on them or not. If there was a border on the card, it was to be sorted according to its color. If there was no border on the card, it was to be sorted according to its shape.

2.2.4 Theory of Mind Measure

Children’s theory of mind ability was assessed with Wellman and Liu’s (2004) scale, which was adapted to Turkish by Özoran (2009). The scale consists of six theory of mind tasks including diverse desires, diverse beliefs, knowledge access, explicit false belief, content false belief, and the appearance-reality emotions task. Since this study was a part of a larger study that focused on Turkish children’s theory of mind ability, we included a theory of mind scale among our measures.

2.2.5 Wordless Story Book

Mothers' narrative styles were observed as they shared the wordless picture book "Frog, where are you?" (Mayer, 1969) with their child. This book was specifically chosen for three reasons. First, it has been widely used to collect narrative data from different cultures (e.g., Berman & Slobin, 1994; Melzi & Caspe 2005; Melzi, Schick & Kennedy 2011; Slobin, 2000; Slobin, 2005). Second, it has also been used in research assessing children's narrative comprehension skills (Curenton, 2010). Third, the book is not commercially available, therefore, it is a novel book for all participants.

The book consists of 24 pictures and depicts the story of a boy who lost his frog and went searching for it in the woods with his dog. As they try to find the frog, they come across various animals and have to go through some challenging situations (e.g., escaping from a bee hive). At the end of the story, the boy finds his frog among other frogs sitting by a pond, and finally takes one of the frogs to his home.

2.3 Procedure

The data collection procedure took place in Bilkent University Developmental Psychology Research Center. When participants arrived, the child was directed to a play room where there were various toys to play with. Parents stayed in the waiting room where they filled out the consent form and looked at the picture book. The child and the experimenter played together for five minutes so that the child could warm up to the environment. After the warm up session, the testing phase began. The experimenter measured the child's receptive and expressive language. Theory of mind and executive functions were also measured as part of a larger study but were not included in this project. After the testing was over, the experimenter left and invited the mother to play with her child for 10 minutes. Since the play session was

part of a larger study, there will be no more reference to it in the current study. When the mother-child play time was over, the experimenter gave the picture book to the mother to narrate it to her child as they would normally do at home. As soon as the story was over, the experimenter came in and asked the narrative comprehension questions to the child. In order to prevent mothers from interfering with the questions, they were asked to fill out the demographics form and book reading habits survey while their child was answering the questions.

2.4 Coding

All transcriptions were coded by the author and two graduate students. The coding scheme was adapted from Melzi & Caspe's (2005) study. Based on their coding scheme, mothers' language was coded at the utterance level for both function (i.e., informative and interactive) and content (i.e., referential, evaluative, general knowledge, extension, meta-literacy, and other). A representative sample of transcripts was coded by four students (the author, another graduate student and two senior thesis undergraduate students) and the advisor. The Turkish coding protocol was created in this process. In line with the specific hypothesis, we found it necessary to specify the subcategories originally subsumed by the Non-Narrative category in Melzi & Caspe's (2005) coding scheme. These subcategories were *General Knowledge*, *Extension*, and *Meta-Literacy*. Moreover, utterances that belonged to the *Other* subcategory were excluded from the analyses due to their dependence on children's willingness to participate in the book sharing activity. Coders coded in groups of two. All disagreements were discussed in larger group meetings with the advisor, and the coding protocol was finalized.

Two graduate students and the author coded the remaining transcriptions. Twenty-five percent of the remaining transcriptions were coded for reliability. Twelve and a

half percent with one student and 12.5% with the other. Separate interrater reliability analyses were conducted for function (i.e., informative, interactive) and content (i.e., referential, evaluative, general knowledge, extension, meta-literacy, non-narrative) for each of the coders. The author served as the golden coder for these analyses. Cohen's Kappa for both function and content was equal to or above 90%. For function, kappa values were between .90 and 1.00; for content, kappa values were between .93 and 1.00 for each of the coders.

2.4.1 Function

This category included utterances that mothers used with the intention of engaging their child with the story. Each maternal utterance was coded according to two independent codes:

2.4.1.1 Informative Utterances

These utterances aimed to engage the child with the story by providing information. There was no intention of eliciting any information from the child by the mother.

Informative utterances included declarative statements and tag questions.

[1] There is a frog in the jar.
Kavanozun içinde bir kurbağa var.

[2] The frog is escaping from the window, right?
Kurbağa camdan dışarı kaçıyor, değil mi?

2.4.1.2 Interactive Utterances

These utterances aimed to engage the child with the story by means of requesting information from the child such as questions and statements that expect an answer from the child. The mother's intention in using these utterances was to elicit information from her child.

[1] Where did the frog go?
Kurbağa nereye gitti?

[2] The boy was angry at his dog because...?

Çocuk kurbağasına kızmıştı, çünkü...?

2.4.2 Content

This category included utterances through which mothers provide or request information that is in the book, related to what is included in the book or related to the reading activity itself. Contextual role of each utterance was determined according to six subcategories:

2.4.2.1 Referential Utterances

These included provisions or requests for information about the story line. In order for an utterance to be coded as referential it must be described in the illustrations of the story.

[1] They came across with a deer.

Bir tane geyikle karşılaşmışlar.

[2] What is the dog doing here?

Köpek burada ne yapıyor?

2.4.2.2 Evaluative Utterances

These included provisions or requests for judgments about the story line such as evaluations, predictions and inferences about the story, indicating causality between events, expectations about future, onomatopoetic forms, internal states, reported speech, intentions, modifiers, intensifiers, hedges, and defeat of expectations. Evaluative utterances were about events that are not necessarily in the illustrations but related to the story line.

[1] The boy went out to the woods so that he could find his frog.

Çocuk kurbağasını bulmak için ormana gitmiş.

[2] The boy said “Be quiet. I think I hear a croak.”.

Çocuk “Sessiz ol. Sanırım bir kurbağa sesi duyuyorum” demiş.

[3] Froggie missed its family so much.

Minik kurbağa ailesini çok özlemiş.

2.4.2.3 General Knowledge Utterances

These included provision or request for information that is outside the story and about general world knowledge such as labeling an object in the book, requesting the child to label it, or teaching how to count.

[1] How many babies does the frog have?
Kurbağanın kaç tane yavrusu var?

[2] Bees make honey in the bee hive.
Arılar kovanda bal yapar.

2.4.2.4 Extension Utterances

These utterances included provision or request for information that is outside the story and about the child's real life experiences.

[1] Look, this boy's room is just like your bedroom.
Bak, bu çocuğun odası da senin odan gibiymiş.

[2] This dog was very naughty just like our next-door neighbor's dog.
Bu köpek de bizim yan komşunun köpeği gibi çok muzurmuş.

2.4.2.5 Meta-Literacy Utterances

These included utterances about the reading activity such as conventional storytelling techniques, provision or request of the book's or the characters' name.

[1] What should we name this boy?
Bu çocuğun adı ne olsun?

[2] And this story ends here.
Bu hikaye de burada bitmiş.

2.4.2.6 Other Utterances

These utterances included mother-child talk that has nothing to do with either the story line or the book sharing activity. For instance, mothers' utterances to convince their child to pay attention to the story, or totally out of context conversations.

[1] Look, we only have two more pages.
Bak, iki sayfacık kaldı.

[2] Okay, we took off your socks.
Tamam, oraplarını ıkarttık.



CHAPTER 3

STUDY 1 – RESULTS

The results of the first study are reported in four sections. The first analyses were conducted in order to find out whether mothers' use of functional and contextual utterances depended on their children's age and gender. Although gender was not among the research questions, it was included in the analyses with regard to the previous studies that showed a relation between mothers' talk and their children's gender (Fivush & Zaman, 2014; Reese & Fivush, 1993). The second set of analyses was performed to identify mothers' narrative styles. The third set of analyses was run in order to determine whether mothers' narrative styles showed variations based on mothers' education and children's age and gender. Finally, the fourth set of analyses aimed to examine whether there are differences in children's vocabulary skills based on their mothers' narrative styles.

Due to the fact that mothers engaged in different amounts of talk with their children during the book sharing activity, we decided to use proportions, instead of frequency, of mothers' discourse variables so that we can control for the length of mothers' narratives. Moreover, since we were interested in relative uses of each discourse variable in mothers' narrative styles, using proportions enabled us to compare the characteristics of each narrative style.

3.1 Does Mothers' Talk Differ Based on Their Children's Age and Gender?

With the purpose of finding out whether the variations in mothers' use of narrative utterances are based on their children's age and gender, we conducted two separate sets of analyses for mothers' functional (informative and interactive utterances) and content (referential, evaluative, general knowledge, extension, and meta-literacy utterances) discourse variables.

3.1.2 Do Mothers' Functional Discourse Variables Differ by Their Children's Age and Gender?

In order to test for the main effects of age (3-, 4-, & 5-year-olds) and gender (girls & boys) on mothers' use of informative and interactive utterances we conducted two separate univariate analyses. We opted to use univariate analysis based on the finding that the observations were not independent ($r = -.88, p < .001$).

The analysis for informative utterances revealed that the interaction between age and gender on mothers' use of informative utterances was not statistically significant, $F(2, 81) = .30, p = .74; \eta_p^2 = .007$. There was no main effect of age $F(2, 81) = .60, p = .55; \eta_p^2 = .015$, or gender $F(1, 81) = 1.63, p = .20; \eta_p^2 = .02$ on mothers' use of informative utterances.

Similarly, the analysis for interactive utterances indicated that the interaction between age and gender on mothers' use of interactive utterances was not statistically significant, $F(2, 81) = .63, p = .53; \eta_p^2 = .015$. There was no main effect of age, $F(2, 81) = .81, p = .45; \eta_p^2 = .02$. However, there was a marginally significant main effect of gender $F(1, 81) = 3.68, p = .058; \eta_p^2 = .044$ on mothers' use of interactive utterances. Although marginally significant, mothers tended to use more interactive utterances with their girls ($M = 25.18$) as compared to their boys ($M = 19.70$). See Table 1 for means and standard deviations of mothers' functional discourse variables by children's age and gender.

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviations of Mothers' Functional Discourse Variables by Children's Age and Gender

	Informative	Interactive
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
3-year-olds		
Girl (n = 20)	70.54 (15.21)	22.41 (11.30)
Boy (n = 13)	71.51 (10.56)	18.50 (10.82)
Total (n = 33)	70.92 (13.39)	20.87 (11.11)
4-year-olds		
Girl (n = 14)	66.92 (19.81)	29.66 (19.88)
Boy (n = 24)	73.79 (12.06)	19.72 (11.36)
Total (n = 16)	70.43 (16.20)	24.36 (16.41)
5-year-olds		
Girl (n = 13)	72.14 (11.09)	23.46 (10.51)
Boy (n = 11)	76.49 (13.82)	20.88 (12.83)
Total (n = 24)	74.13 (12.34)	22.28 (11.44)

3.1.3 Do Mothers' Content-Discourse Variables Differ by Their Children's Age and Gender?

In order to test for the main effects of age (3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds) and gender (girls and boys) on mothers' use of content utterances (referential, evaluative, general knowledge, extension, and meta-literacy) we conducted five separate univariate analyses. We decided to use univariate analyses based on the finding that the observations were not independent (See table 2).

Table 2. Correlations between mothers' content discourse variables

	Referential	Evaluative	General Knowledge	Extension	Meta-Literacy
Referential	—				
Evaluative	-0.52**	—			
General Knowledge	0.049	-0.38**	—		
Extension	-0.04	-0.15	0.34**	—	
Meta-Literacy	-0.46**	-0.15	-0.09	-0.06	—

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The analysis for *referential* category revealed that the interaction between age and gender on mothers' use of *referential* utterances was not statistically significant, $F(2, 81) = .34, p = .71; \eta_p^2 = .008$. There was no main effect of age $F(2, 81) = .065, p = .94; \eta_p^2 = .002$, or gender $F(1, 81) = 1.71, p = .195; \eta_p^2 = .021$ on mothers' use of *referential* utterances. Similarly, the analysis for *evaluative* category indicated that the interaction between age and gender on mothers' use of *evaluative* utterances was not significant, $F(2, 81) = .60, p = .55; \eta_p^2 = .015$. There was no main effect of age $F(2, 81) = .51, p = .60; \eta_p^2 = .012$, or gender $F(1, 81) = .094, p = .76; \eta_p^2 = .001$ on mothers' use of *evaluative* utterances. The analysis for the *general knowledge* category showed that there was no significant interaction between age and gender on mothers' use of *general knowledge* utterances, $F(2, 81) = .057, p = .94; \eta_p^2 = .001$. There was no main effect of age $F(2, 81) = .47, p = .63; \eta_p^2 = .011$. Nor there was a main effect of gender $F(1, 81) = .98, p = .33; \eta_p^2 = .012$ on mothers' use of *general knowledge* utterances. The analysis for extension category demonstrated that the interaction between age and gender on mothers' use of *extension* utterances was not significant, $F(2, 81) = .97, p = .38; \eta_p^2 = .023$. There was no main effect of age $F(2, 81) = .44, p = .65; \eta_p^2 = .011$, or gender $F(1, 81) = .08, p = .78; \eta_p^2 = .001$ on mothers' use of *extension* utterances. The analysis for *meta-literacy* category set out that the interaction between age and gender on mothers' use of *meta-literacy* utterances was not statistically significant, $F(2, 81) = 1.52, p = .22; \eta_p^2 = .036$. There was no main effect of gender $F(1, 81) = 3.14, p = .08; \eta_p^2 = .037$. However, there was a statistically significant main effect of age $F(2, 81) = 3.85, p = .025; \eta_p^2 = .087$ on mothers' use of *meta-literacy* utterances. Mothers used more *meta-literacy* utterances with 4-year-olds ($M = 8.47, SD = 1.13$) and 5-year-olds ($M = 11.84, SD =$

1.26) as compared to 3-year-olds ($M = 7.28$, $SD = 1.099$). For means and standard deviations of mothers' content discourse variables by children's age and gender, see Table 3.

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviations of Mothers' Content Discourse Variables by Children's Age and Gender

	Referential	Evaluative	General knowledge	Extension	Meta-literacy
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
3-year-olds					
Girl	35.52 (7.10)	42.62 (10.75)	5.40 (5.36)	.68 (1.75)	8.75 (4.95)
Boy	39.52 (8.65)	38.54 (12.44)	4.71 (4.51)	1.40 (2.44)	5.82 (2.80)
Total	37.10 (7.87)	41.01 (11.43)	5.12 (4.98)	.97 (2.04)	7.60 (4.42)
4-year-olds					
Girl	37.86 (9.83)	42.36 (10.10)	4.79 (5.78)	.57 (1.48)	.57 (1.48)
Boy	38.28 (7.07)	44.25 (9.14)	3.94 (3.84)	.80 (1.55)	5.95 (4.08)
Total	38.08 (8.32)	43.37 (9.48)	4.33 (4.77)	.69 (1.50)	8.31 (6.61)
5-year-olds					
Girl	35.69 (10.66)	42.50 (11.73)	4.59 (4.69)	1.40 (1.90)	11.43 (7.50)
Boy	38.76 (9.92)	42.50 (11.20)	3.07 (2.92)	.78 (1.37)	12.25 (8.80)
Total	37.10 (10.22)	42.50 (11.24)	3.90 (3.97)	1.11 (1.67)	11.80 (7.95)

3.2 Are There Variations Among Mothers' Narrative Styles?

In order to discover mothers' narrative styles, we conducted a k-means cluster analysis on the proportions for mothers' discourse variables. The reason we used cluster analysis is that it is able to assign mothers into groups according to their individual characteristics. Cluster analysis classifies cases by assessing their distance from each other. Since we do not have a priori knowledge about Turkish mothers' narrative styles, cluster analysis is useful in that it produces clusters from the data itself. Moreover, it is the preferred way of analyzing maternal narrative styles as indicated by previous studies. Having applied cluster analysis on their data, Haden et al. (1996) discovered three clusters: *describers*, *collaborators*, and *comprehenders*;

Reese et al. (2003) revealed two clusters: *describers* and *comprehenders*; Melzi and her colleagues (2005 & 2011) identified two clusters: *storytellers* and *story builders*. To determine the number of clusters for mothers' narrative styles, we first performed a hierarchical cluster analysis by using Ward's linkage method with squared Euclidian distance. We requested a range of two to four cluster solutions in order to find out the optimal number of clusters. The examination of the dendrogram as well as the theoretical and practical interpretation of the data suggested a two-cluster solution. Hence, we requested a two-cluster solution in the k-means cluster analysis. As a result of the k-means cluster analysis on the proportion scores of the six maternal discourse variables (Informative-Referential utterances, Informative-Evaluative utterances, Informative-NonNarrative utterances, Interactive-Referential utterances, Interactive-Evaluative utterances, and Interactive-NonNarrative utterances), it was found that the resultant two clusters were significantly different from each other (all $ps < .001$, except Informative-NonNarrative $p < .05$). As shown in Figure 1, mothers who are in Cluster 1 made use of Informative-Referential and Informative-Evaluative utterances. This shows that mothers in Cluster 1 were more informative when sharing a book with their children than mothers in Cluster 2. Moreover, in terms of the narrative content, these mothers talked more about what is happening in the story and what is being illustrated in the book than the mothers in the other group. These mothers constituted 68% of the total sample ($N = 59$), meaning that the majority of the mothers in our sample were made up of informative mothers. Narrative styles of the mothers in Cluster 1 show similarity with Melzi & Caspe's (2005) storyteller mothers in that they focused on telling the story to their children rather than encouraging them to contribute to the narrative. In terms of the content of

their narrative, these mothers tended to give more referential and evaluative information to their children that helped them focus on the story line.

In comparison to Cluster 1, mothers who are in Cluster 2 made use of Interactive-Referential, Interactive-Evaluative, Interactive-NonNarrative, and Informative-NonNarrative utterances (See Figure 1). This shows that mothers in Cluster 2 are characterized with the use of interactive utterances. In terms of the narrative content, these mothers not only talked about the story line but they also discussed general knowledge, extension, and meta-literacy topics that were related to or inspired by the story. Cluster 2 constituted 32% of the total sample ($N = 28$).

As with Cluster 1, mothers in Cluster 2 were similar to Melzi & Caspe's (2005) story builder mothers in that they encouraged their children's participation in the narration of the story by making use of interactive utterances. Moreover, the content of these mothers' narratives included both the events happening in the story line and the events that are beyond the story such as talking about general world knowledge, extending the story events into their child's own life, and providing meta-literacy information.

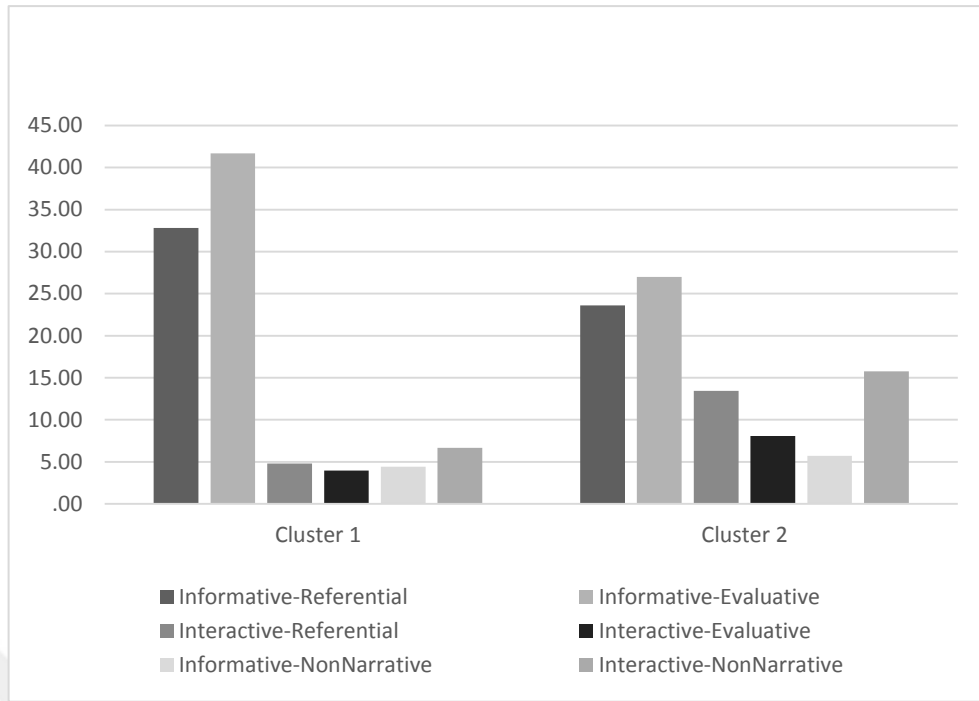


Figure 1. Final cluster solution for mothers' narrative styles

3.3 Do Mothers' Narrative Styles Show Variations Based on Mother and Child Characteristics?

After identifying mothers' narrative styles, we performed several analyses to understand whether mothers were distributed into clusters according to their education level (primary school, middle school, high school, university, master's degree and PhD) and their children's age and gender.

A chi-square analysis was run in order to find out if mothers' level of education had any impact on their narrative styles. The analysis revealed no significant difference in mothers' narrative styles based on their education level, $\chi^2 (5, n = 87) = 6.87, p = .23$, showing that mothers' level of education did not play a role in determining the narrative styles that they adopted.

In order to find out if mothers were distributed differentially into clusters according to their children's age or gender, we conducted chi-square analyses. The chi-square test for independence indicated no significant difference in mothers' narrative styles

based on children's age, $\chi^2 (2, n = 87) = .086, p = .96$. Likewise, there was no significant difference in mothers' narrative styles depending on children's gender, $\chi^2 (1, n = 87) = 1.195, p = .27$.

3.4 Do Children's Vocabulary Skills Differ Based on Their Mothers' Narrative Styles?

A one-way between-groups multivariate analysis of variance was conducted in order to investigate whether children's vocabulary skills (i.e., receptive vocabulary and expressive vocabulary) differed based on their mothers' narrative styles (i.e., Cluster 1 and Cluster 2). There was a statistically significant difference in children's total language scores as an aggregated measure of their receptive and expressive vocabulary scores based on their mothers' narrative styles, $F (2, 84) = 3.63, p = .031$; Wilks' Lambda = .92; $\eta_p^2 = .08$. When the results for each of the dependent variables were investigated separately, it was found that the only difference that showed a statistical significance was in children's receptive vocabulary scores, $F (1, 85) = 4.96, p = .029$; $\eta_p^2 = .055$. The means of both receptive and expressive language scores for each cluster is provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Receptive and expressive language scores based on mothers' narrative styles

	Cluster 1 (<i>Storytellers</i>)	Cluster 2 (<i>Story builders</i>)	Total
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Receptive language	123.34 (10.30)	128.39 (8.96)	124.97 (10.11)
Expressive language	125.92 (10.57)	125.29 (10.97)	125.71 (10.64)

Results of the first study indicated that there are variations among middle class Turkish mothers' narrative styles as they narrate a picture book to their children. While the majority of these mothers (Cluster 1) were similar to Melzi and Caspe's (2005) storyteller group in that they were more informative and talked about the

events and non-events described in the story line, the rest of the mothers (Cluster 2) were similar to Melzi and Caspe's (2005) story builder mothers in their use of interactive utterances and inclusion of both narrative and non-narrative content. It was found that mothers were not distributed into their clusters based on their education level or their children's age and gender. However, the narrative styles that mothers adopt had an influence on their children's vocabulary skills. Children of mothers who belonged to Cluster 2 had higher receptive vocabulary scores than the children of mothers who were in Cluster 1.



CHAPTER 4

STUDY 2 – METHOD

4.1 Participants

A sub-group of participants ($N = 49$) who completed the narrative comprehension task were included in the second study. Sixteen of these children were 3-year-olds ($M = 42.06$ months, $SD = 2.744$), 17 were 4-year-olds ($M = 54.18$ months, $SD = 3.712$), and 16 were 5-year-olds ($M = 63.88$ months, $SD = 3.775$). The number of boys and girls in each age group were approximately the same.

Mothers' age range was between 25 and 51 years ($M = 35.21$, $SD = 5.547$). Fifty three percent of mothers had one child, 43% had two children, and 4% had three children. Similar to first study's demographics, these mothers were predominantly a university or a higher degree graduates (87.7%). Ten percent of them obtained high school degree, and 2% had primary school education. The majority of the families (81.6%) belonged to middle socioeconomic background stating their household income as more than 5000 TL. The household income of 12.2% was between 3000 TL and 5000 TL, and 6% of the participants had household income between 1000 TL and 3000 TL.

4.2 Measures and Procedure

The second study consisted only of the participants that had the narrative comprehension scores in addition to the other measures in the first study. Hence,

apart from the narrative comprehension task, all other tasks (demographic form, book reading survey, language measure) and their procedure in study 2 were the same as in study 1.

4.2.1 Narrative Comprehension

In order to assess children's narrative comprehension skills, a narrative comprehension measure that consisted of 10 carefully designed questions was created by the author and the thesis advisor. These questions were adopted from the narrative comprehension assessments of Paris & Paris (2003), Curenton (2010), and Tompkins, Guo & Justice (2013). However, since the picture book (*Frog, Where Are You?*) used in the current study is different than the books used in these studies, only the types of questions asked in the comprehension task were similar. In line with these previous studies, the comprehension questions of the current study included five literal questions (problem, goal, attempt, two resolutions) and five inference questions (dialogue, two false beliefs, feelings, resolution). The literal questions required answers that could directly be seen in the illustrations of the book whereas inference questions asked about what is beyond the visible events in the story. See Table 7 for narrative comprehension questions. The scoring of the narrative comprehension task was also adapted from Paris & Paris (2003). For each question in the task, children could receive 0, 1 or 2 points. If the children gave no response or an incorrect response to a question, they would get 0 point. If they answered a question by describing what is happening in the picture, they would get 1 point. If they were able to give an answer by relating other story events to the picture and making an inference, they would get 2 points. Hence, the highest comprehension score children could obtain was 20 points (See Appendix C for comprehension questions and their scoring). Twenty-five percent of children's responses to

comprehension questions were coded for reliability by the author and one graduate student. Interrater reliability analysis revealed 100% reliability with a kappa value of 1.00.



CHAPTER 5

STUDY 2 – RESULTS

Results of the second study are presented in two sections. First, we conducted an analysis to understand whether children's narrative comprehension scores differed depending on children's age and gender. Second, we investigated whether mothers' narrative styles have any relation to their children's narrative comprehension.

5.1 Does Children's Narrative Comprehension Change by Age or Gender?

In order to test for the main effects of age (3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds) and gender (girls and boys) on children's narrative comprehension skills, we conducted a univariate analysis. The analysis revealed that the interaction between age and gender on children's narrative comprehension was not statistically significant, $F(2, 43) = .065$, $p = .94$; $\eta_p^2 = .003$. There was no main effect of gender on children's narrative comprehension, $F(1, 43) = .019$, $p = .89$; $\eta_p^2 = .000$. However, there was a main effect of age on narrative comprehension, $F(2, 43) = 17.47$, $p = .000$; $\eta_p^2 = .448$. Post-hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni correction indicated that the mean comprehension score of 3-year-olds ($M = 11.06$, $SD = 4.65$) was significantly different from 4-year-olds ($M = 16.65$, $SD = 2.42$) and 5-year olds ($M = 17.44$, $SD = 2.03$). Mean comprehension scores of 4- and 5-year-olds were not significantly different from each other. The means of children's narrative comprehension scores for each age group is given in Table 5.

Table 5. Children's narrative comprehension by age and gender

	3-year-olds	4-year-olds	5-year-olds
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Girl	10.88 (4.12)	16.86 (1.07)	17.25 (1.28)
Boy	11.25 (5.42)	16.50 (3.10)	17.63 (2.67)
Total	11.06 (4.65)	16.65 (2.42)	17.44 (2.03)

Comprehension scores are out of 20 points.

5.2 Does Children's Narrative Comprehension Change according to Mothers' Narrative Styles?

In order to find out whether mothers' narrative styles had any relation to their children's narrative comprehension, we conducted a univariate analysis that included children's age as a second IV. The analysis revealed that the interaction between children's age and mothers' narrative styles on children's comprehension scores was not statistically significant, $F(2, 43) = .12, p = .89; \eta_p^2 = .005$. There was no main effect of mothers' narrative styles on their children's comprehension scores, $F(1, 43) = .39, p = .54; \eta_p^2 = .009$. The means of children's comprehension scores according to their age group and their mothers' narrative style is provided in Table 6.

Table 6. Children's narrative comprehension by age and mothers' narrative styles

	3-year-olds	4-year-olds	5-year-olds	Total
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Cluster 1	11.00 (4.58)	16.25 (2.67)	17.33 (2.19)	14.97 (4.20)
Cluster 2	11.20 (5.36)	17.60 (1.52)	17.75 (1.71)	15.36 (4.53)
Total	11.06 (4.65)	16.65 (2.42)	17.44 (2.03)	15.08 (4.26)

In the second study, it was found that children's narrative comprehension skills improved as children got older with a significant difference between the comprehension scores of 3-year-olds and 4- and 5-year olds. When we looked

whether mothers' narrative styles had an influence on their children's narrative comprehension skills, the results indicated that children's narrative comprehension scores were not related to their mothers' narrative styles.



CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The aims of the current two studies were, first, to explore Turkish mothers' narrative styles during a book sharing interaction with their preschool aged children, and second, to investigate whether there was a relation between mothers' narrative styles and their children's narrative comprehension skills. Narrative styles have been found to be related to a variety of literacy and school readiness outcomes. The first study was more exploratory in nature as it was the first of its kind in investigating Turkish mothers' narrative styles. This exploratory study was critical in examining literacy outcomes of Turkish children, given the documented cultural differences in narrative styles both intra-and inter-culturally. As a second step, we investigated whether Turkish mothers' narrative styles were related to their children's narrative comprehension abilities.

Results of the first study revealed two separate maternal narrative styles: Cluster 1 and Cluster 2. Moreover, the narrative styles mothers belonged to had an influence on their receptive vocabulary. Children of story builder mothers obtained higher scores in receptive vocabulary task than the children of storyteller mothers. When compared with previous studies, the clusters found in the current study showed the same pattern with Melzi and Caspe's (2005) *storyteller* and *story builder* mothers.

Therefore, for the rest of the discussion section, Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 are going to be named as **storytellers** and **story builders**, respectively.

The results of the first study are consistent with the previous literature, namely, Melzi & Caspe's (2005), and Melzi, Schick & Kennedy's (2011) studies where they compared English-speaking American and Spanish-speaking Peruvian mothers' narrative styles. In both of these studies Melzi et al. identified two maternal narrative styles: *story tellers* and *story builders*. These two narrative styles were similar to the narrative styles found in the current study. Story teller mothers mostly used informative utterances, did not ask for their children's participation, and focused on provision of information that was related to the story line whereas story builder mothers were interactive, explicitly encouraged their children to participate in the story telling, and talked about both the events happening in the story line and the events beyond the story line.

In those studies, the distribution of American and Peruvian mothers into storyteller or story builder groups was based on mothers' individual narrative strategies. That is, each group contained both American and Peruvian mothers. However, the ratio of these mothers in each group was different. While the story teller group was constituted mostly of Peruvian mothers, the story builder group consisted of American mothers for the most part. Hence, there was a cultural difference, middle class Peruvian mothers adopting story teller style whereas middle class American mothers adopting story builder style. A similar split among the middle class Turkish mothers into storyteller and story builder groups was revealed as well, indicating that 68% of the mothers belonged to storyteller group and 32% belonged to story builder group.

After we identified mothers' narrative styles, we investigated whether mothers' narrative styles depended on their children's age and gender, and the mothers' education level. We considered children's age as an important characteristic to examine because the literature shows that mothers can change the way they read books to their children according to the age group of their children. While mothers of younger children use more labeling and describing during the book reading activity (DeLoache, 1984), mothers of three and four years old children provide and request information that is related but beyond the story line of the book (Wheeler, 1983). Likewise, we looked at the relation between mothers' narrative styles and their children's gender because past research has shown that mothers' narrative styles in conversational contexts change depending on the gender of their children (Fivush & Zaman, 2014; Reese & Fivush, 1993). Moreover, given that mothers' education level is one of the indicators of language environment the child lives in, we also looked at the relation between mothers' education and their narrative style. We found that mothers were not classified into their narrative style groups based on child age or gender, nor were there effects of mother education. The fact that our sample consisted of highly educated mothers with a university or higher degree, may have masked the differences that may exist within samples with lower education. It was found in the previous literature that mothers' book reading and book sharing styles predict children's emergent literacy outcomes (Haden et al., 1996; Caspe, 2009). Among those, one of the most important is vocabulary skills (Strasser, Larrain & Lissi, 2013). Assuming that mothers' narrative styles would be related to their children's receptive and expressive vocabulary skills, we looked at this link closer. It indicated that children of story builder mothers had higher receptive language scores than the children of storyteller mothers. Since story builder mothers

were more interactive in the book sharing activity asking questions and eliciting their children's contribution in constructing the story as well as providing and requesting information about general world knowledge, relating story events to their children's own life experiences, and promoting their meta-literacy skills, these mothers' children had higher scores in receptive language than the children of other mothers. This finding was in line with Haden et al.'s (1996) study where they found that children of comprehender mothers, who were characterized as being interactive and using cognitively high demand utterances, achieved higher receptive vocabulary scores than the children of other two groups.

Even though narrative comprehension skills are among the most important precursors of literacy development, there is a paucity of research on the relation between mothers' narrative styles and children's narrative comprehension. In the second study, we examined whether mothers' narrative styles had an impact on their children's comprehension of the story. It is plausible to expect that children whose mothers adopted the story builder style would have better comprehension of the narrative. Contrary to this expectation, the results showed no significant relation between middle class Turkish mothers' narrative styles and their children's comprehension scores. In the literature, the two studies that looked at this relation do not provide sufficient information to infer a sound conclusion because they have inconsistent results with each other. While Haden et al.'s (1996) study resulted in a significant and longitudinal relation between European-American mothers' book reading styles and children's narrative comprehension, Reese et al.'s (2003) intervention study did not show a significant link between European-New Zealander mothers' book reading styles and their children's narrative comprehension.

The current study aimed to look closer into the relation between mothers' narrative styles and their children's narrative comprehension skills. The analyses showed that there was no significant relation between mothers' narrative styles and their children's narrative comprehension skills. The only main effect on children's narrative comprehension was of children's age, and it was consistent with the findings of Curenton's (2011) study. With this finding, we can safely conclude that our comprehension questions were able to correctly measure children's comprehension skills. There was no ceiling effect in 5-year-old group. Their mean scores were around 17 points out of 20. Moreover, 3-year-old children's mean scores were around 11 points showing that these children actually obtained half points from the questions. This means that the scoring of the comprehension task was correct in that children earned one point if they gave a description, and earned two points if they were able to relate story events with each other and make inferences. However, the fact that the standard deviations of 3-year-old children's comprehension scores (see Table 5) is higher than the standard deviations of 4- and 5-year-old children's comprehension scores shows that individual differences among 3-year-olds are more prevalent. Other cognitive variables that were not included in this study (i.e., verbal working memory) may be responsible for the higher variation in standard deviation of 3-year-olds. Future studies should incorporate these controls in their research designs.

A reason that we did not find a significant relation between mothers' narrative styles and children's narrative comprehension might stem from the fact that our sample consisted of middle class mothers with high degrees of education. These families support their children's development by providing an optimal educational environment for their children. Not only do they raise their children in a relatively

more literate home where children are exposed to books and literacy activities, but they can also afford to send their children to high ranked preschools and kindergartens where children are exposed to a stimulating environment with knowledgeable teachers. Given that the quality of preschool environment plays a critical role in children's literacy development (Dickinson & Neuman, 2006), for children in middle class families, mothers are not the only source of information that they can learn literacy skills. Since the second study focused on mother-child language interactions during joint book reading, we were unable to find a significant link to children's narrative comprehension.

Since this study is the first one to investigate Turkish mothers' narrative styles, our first initiative was to find out whether the narrative style coding was applicable to Turkish language. Hence, we conducted the study on a homogeneous sample of middle class mothers. However, having a homogeneous sample constitutes a limitation for the current study. Caution must be taken when interpreting the results. The narrative styles that we found holds true only for middle class Turkish mothers. Hence, we cannot generalize these results to Turkish mothers who are from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Our findings show that the majority of middle class Turkish mothers make use of a more informative but rich in content utterances, however, data from LSES mothers might show a different pattern with informative but cognitively less demanding utterances than middle class mothers. Future studies should address this limitation and discover LSES Turkish mothers' narrative styles as well.

Another limitation for the second study is that we measured children's narrative comprehension by asking questions on the same story book that their mothers had just narrated to them. In the previous two studies by Haden et al. (1996) and Reese et

al. (2003), independent from mother-child book reading interaction, the experimenter read an unfamiliar book to the child, and asked comprehension questions while reading the book. Therefore, these two studies assessed children's narrative comprehension by examining whether children can transfer their comprehension skills from one book to another. Moreover, since these two studies as well as other past studies on narrative comprehension by Paris & Paris (2003), Curenton (2011), and Tompkins et al (2013), asked on-line comprehension questions to children as the book was being read to them, they assessed children's on-line processing of the story, through which they could eliminate memory demands on children. Hence, in order to understand whether children can transfer their general abilities of comprehension to every story that is narrated to them, and to rule out the demands on their memory, future studies should utilize an online comprehension task on a book that is unfamiliar to children. Including a narrative comprehension measure that probes children's understanding of narratives read to them by an experimenter would probably probe children's true narrative comprehension abilities better. Mothers could be aware of the developmental level of their children and may be able to adapt their language and narrative strategies according to their children's social, cognitive, or emotional needs. The fact that it was the mother that narrated the story to her child in our study made it easier for children to comprehend the story as compared to a neutral experimenter telling the story to the children. Even though we did not find a relation between mothers' narrative styles and their children's comprehension scores in our study, if we were to measure comprehension with an experimenter narrating an unfamiliar story to the child, the results might reveal a different pattern. Story builder mothers' children might be more flexible in adapting their comprehension strategies that they developed through their mothers' narrative

styles to comprehending the story that is narrated by a stranger. Hence, children of story builder mothers might be better at comprehending the experimenter when she was narrating the story.

The final limitation for the current study is that based on the previous studies that take the first reading of a book as a basis to determine mothers' narrative styles (Haden et al., 1996; Reese et al., 2003; Melzi & Caspe, 2005; Melzi et al., 2011), we only looked at mothers' first reading session. That is, we asked mothers to narrate an unfamiliar picture book to their children for the first time. However, when a mother-child dyad reads a book, they don't usually read it once. Typically, mothers and their children read the same book several times. Moreover, studies show that when mothers read a story repeatedly to their children, their utterances to explain the meaning of the story increase (Phillips & McNaughton, 1990), and as children become more knowledgeable on a particular story, mothers might shift from role of being an expert to a co-narrator, and provide more opportunities for their children to co-construct the story with them (Melzi et al. 2011). Hence, when identifying mothers' narrative styles, it is important for future studies to not only examine the first time of joint reading of a book but also observe the second and third readings so that we can take into account mothers' sensitivity to their children's developmental needs as they share a book together.

In the current study, we only investigated mothers' narrative styles, but we must keep in mind that these narrative styles are not unchangeable, trait-like qualities of mothers' discourse. Mothers do not use the same narrative strategies for any child. Nor do they narrate a story in the same way for any of their own children, because they are able to sensitively adapt their narrative styles according to their children's level and contribution. Since the narrative interaction between the mother and the

child originates from the bidirectional relationship between the two, assuming that it is the mother's narrative style that lead the child's contribution in the narrative activity might be misleading. It might as well be the child contribution that influences mothers' decisions to adopt specific narrative styles. Hence, for the future studies, it would be important to take into consideration the child contribution as well. Moreover, in our study, we used a wordless story book as a way to examine mother-child narrative interactions, however, there are other narrative contexts such as mother-child shared book reading, or mother-child reminiscing conversations that can be studied to investigate mothers' narrative styles. In addition to more structured contexts of mother-child book sharing and book reading, future studies must analyze mother-child conversations so that we can compare and contrast mothers' narrative styles over different narrative contexts, and see whether mothers change their styles according to these contexts.

Since the first study was exploratory in nature, we identified middle class Turkish mothers' narrative styles as they share a book with their children. However, given that we did not find a significant effect of mothers' narrative styles on their children's narrative comprehension skills, we need further investigations in order to be able to make practical suggestions as future implications. In the first study, the results revealed a relation between mothers' narrative styles and their children's receptive vocabulary. However, the direction of this link is not clear. Hence, being the first study investigating Turkish mothers' narrative styles, this study forms the first step into a longitudinal research where we can discover the effects of mothers' narrative styles on child outcomes such as receptive vocabulary. Furthermore, the sensitivity of our coding scheme for narrative styles allows us to differentiate between mothers who use informative utterances and mothers who describe pictures.

That is, coding mothers' utterances into referential and evaluative categories separately will enable us to compare and contrast mothers from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Hence, the current study will conduce to future studies that attempt to investigate narrative styles of low SES mothers.

The fact that we found two distinct narrative styles (i.e., *storytellers* and *story builders*) among middle class Turkish mothers by adapting an interculturally accepted coding scale (Melzi & Caspe, 2005) into Turkish is promising for future studies. The current study shows that the coding scale works reliably on a Turkish sample; hence, this study can be considered as a first step into opening Turkish mothers' narrative styles into both cross-cultural and intra-cultural examination. Using the same coding scale, future research can also expand their sample to low SES Turkish mothers. Furthermore, given the fact that vocabulary knowledge is a precursor to narrative comprehension, the significant relation found between mothers' narrative styles and children's receptive vocabulary can form a basis for future intervention studies especially on low SES mother-child dyads. Hence, it will prove to be useful for applied developmental psychology as well. Moreover, the relation between mothers' narrative styles and children's receptive vocabulary is encouraging for conducting longitudinal studies where we can ascertain the direction of the relationship. Therefore, being the first study of its kind in a Turkish sample, the current study contributes to the literature by paving the way for future studies such as intervention projects focusing on low SES populations, and longitudinal designs.

REFERENCES

- Anderson-Yockel, J., & Haynes, W. O. (1994). Joint book-reading strategies in working-class African American and White mother-toddler dyads. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 37(3), 583-593.
<https://doi.org/10.1044/jshr.3703.583>
- Berman, R. A., & Slobin, D. I. (1994). Narrative structure. In Berman, R. A. & Slobin, D. I. (Eds.), *Relating Events in Narrative: A Cross-Linguistic Developmental Study* (pp. 39–84). Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Berument, S. & Güven, A. G. (2013). Turkish Expressive and Receptive Language Test: I. Standardization, reliability and validity study of the Receptive Vocabulary Sub- Scale. *Turk Psikiyatri Dergisi*, 24(3), 192.
- Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of Meaning*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Bus, A. G. (2001). Joint caregiver-child storybook reading: A route to literacy development. In S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook of Early Literacy Research* (pp. 179-191).
- Bus, A. G., Van Ijzendoorn, M. H., & Pellegrini, A. D. (1995). Joint book reading makes for success in learning to read: A meta-analysis on intergenerational transmission of literacy. *Review of Educational Research*, 65(1), 1-21.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1170476>
- Caspe, M. (2009). Low-income Latino mothers' booksharing styles and children's emergent literacy development. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 24(3), 306-324. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2009.03.006>
- Chow, B. W. Y., & McBride-Chang, C. (2003). Promoting language and literacy development through parent-child reading in Hong Kong preschoolers. *Early Education and Development*, 14(2), 233-248.
https://doi.org/10.1207/s15566935eed1402_6
- Crain-Thoreson, C., & Dale, P. S. (1992). Do early talkers become early readers? Linguistic precocity, preschool language, and emergent literacy. *Developmental Psychology*, 28(3), 421. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.28.3.421>
- Curenton, S. M. (2011). Understanding the landscapes of stories: The association between preschoolers' narrative comprehension and production skills and

cognitive abilities. *Early Child Development and Care*, 181(6), 791-808.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2010.490946>

De Temple, J. M., & Tabors, P. O. (1994, November). *Styles of Interaction during a Book Reading Task: Implications for Literacy Intervention with Low-Income Families*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference, San Diego, California.

DeLoache, J. S. (1984). What's this? Maternal questions in joint picture book reading with toddlers. *The Quarterly Newsletter of the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition*, 4: 87-96

Dickinson, D. K., & Smith, M. W. (1994). Long-term effects of preschool teachers' book readings on low-income children's vocabulary and story comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 105-122.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/747807>

Dickinson, D. K., & McCabe, A. (2001). Bringing it all together: The multiple origins, skills, and environmental supports of early literacy. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 16(4), 186-202.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/0938-8982.00019>

Fletcher, K. L., & Reese, E. (2005). Picture book reading with young children: A conceptual framework. *Developmental Review*, 25(1), 64-103.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2004.08.009>

Haden, C. A., Reese, E., & Fivush, R. (1996). Mothers' extratextual comments during storybook reading: Stylistic differences over time and across texts. *Discourse Processes*, 21(2), 135-169.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01638539609544953>

Hammer, C. S., Nimmo, D., Cohen, R., Draheim, H. C., & Johnson, A. A. (2005). Book reading interactions between African American and Puerto Rican Head Start children and their mothers. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 5(3), 195-227. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468798405058683>

Hargrave, A. C., & Sénéchal, M. (2000). A book reading intervention with preschool children who have limited vocabularies: The benefits of regular reading and dialogic reading. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15(1), 75-90.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0885-2006\(99\)00038-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0885-2006(99)00038-1)

Heath, S. B. (1982). What no bedtime story means: Narrative skills at home and school. *Language in Society*, 11(1), 49-76.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404500009039>

Ilgaz, H., & Aksu-Koç, A. (2005). Episodic development in preschool children's play- prompted and direct-elicited narratives. *Cognitive Development*, 20(4), 526-544. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogdev.2005.08.004>

- Justice, L. M., & Ezell, H. K. (2000). Enhancing children's print and word awareness through home-based parent intervention. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 9(3), 257-269. <https://doi.org/10.1044/1058-0360.0903.257>
- Kendeou, P., Bohn-Gettler, C., White, M. J., & Van Den Broek, P. (2008). Children's inference generation across different media. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 31(3), 259-272. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9817.2008.00370.x>
- Kendeou, P., Van den Broek, P., White, M. J., & Lynch, J. S. (2009). Predicting reading comprehension in early elementary school: The independent contributions of oral language and decoding skills. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 101(4), 765. <http://doi.org/10.1037/a0015956>
- Lyytinen, P., Laakso, M. L., & Poikkeus, A. M. (1998). Parental contribution to child's early language and interest in books. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 13(3), 297-308. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23420152>
- Mayer, M. (1969). *Frog, where are you?*. New York: Dial Press.
- Melzi, G. (2000). Cultural variations in the construction of personal narratives: Central American and European American mothers' elicitation styles. *Discourse Processes*, 30(2), 153-177. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326950DP3002_04
- Melzi, G., & Caspe, M. (2005). Variations in maternal narrative styles during book reading interactions. *Narrative Inquiry*, 15(1), 101-125. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.15.1.06mel>
- Melzi, G., Schick, A. R., & Kennedy, J. L. (2011). Narrative elaboration and participation: Two dimensions of maternal elicitation style. *Child Development*, 82(4), 1282-1296. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2011.01600.x>
- Nelson, K. (1996). *Language in cognitive development: Emergence of the mediated mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Özoran, D. (2009). *Cognitive development of Turkish children on the relation of evidentiality and Theory of Mind* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- Paris, A. H., & Paris, S. G. (2003). Assessing narrative comprehension in young children. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 38(1), 36-76. <https://doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.38.1.3>
- Reese, E., & Fivush, R. (1993). Parental styles of talking about the past. *Developmental Psychology*, 29(3), 596. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.29.3.596>

- Reese, E. (1995). Predicting children's literacy from mother-child conversations. *Cognitive Development*, 10(3), 381-405. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0885-2014\(95\)90003-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0885-2014(95)90003-9)
- Reese, E., & Cox, A. (1999). Quality of adult book reading affects children's emergent literacy. *Developmental Psychology*, 35(1), 20. <http://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.35.1.20>
- Reese, E., Cox, A., Harte, D., McAnally, H. (2003). Diversity in adults' styles of reading books to children. In van Kleeck, A., Stahl, S.A., Bauer, E.B. (Eds.), *On Reading Books to Children: Parents and Teachers*, (pp. 37–57). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Reese, E., Sparks, A., & Leyva, D. (2010). A review of parent interventions for preschool children's language and emergent literacy. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 10(1), 97-117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468798409356987>
- Roberts, J., Jergens, J., & Burchinal, M. (2005). The role of home literacy practices in preschool children's language and emergent literacy skills. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 48(2), 345-359. [http://doi.org/10.1044/1092-4388\(2005/024\)](http://doi.org/10.1044/1092-4388(2005/024))
- Sénéchal, M., Cornell, E. H., & Broda, L. S. (1995). Age-related differences in the organization of parent-infant interactions during picture-book reading. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 10(3), 317-337. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0885-2006\(95\)90010-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0885-2006(95)90010-1)
- Sénéchal, M. (1997). The differential effect of storybook reading on preschoolers' acquisition of expressive and receptive vocabulary. *Journal of Child Language*, 24(1), 123-138.
- Sénéchal, M., & LeFevre, J. A. (2002). Parental involvement in the development of children's reading skill: A five-year longitudinal study. *Child Development*, 73(2), 445-460. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00417>
- Slobin, D. I. (2000). Verbalized events: A dynamic approach to linguistic relativity and determinism. In S. Niemeier & R. Dirven (Eds.), *Evidence for Linguistic Relativity* (pp. 107–138). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Slobin, D. I. (2005). Relating narrative events in translation. In *Perspectives on language and language development* (pp. 115-129). Springer US.
- Strasser, K., Larraín, A., & Lissi, M. R. (2013). Effects of storybook reading style on comprehension: The role of word elaboration and coherence questions. *Early Education & Development*, 24(5), 616-639. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2012.715570>
- Strasser, K., & Río, F. D. (2014). The role of comprehension monitoring, theory of mind, and vocabulary depth in predicting story comprehension and recall of

- kindergarten children. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 49(2), 169-187.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.68>
- Tompkins, V., Guo, Y., & Justice, L. M. (2013). Inference generation, story comprehension, and language skills in the preschool years. *Reading and Writing*, 26(3), 403. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-012-9374-7>
- Valdez-Menchaca, M. C., & Whitehurst, G. J. (1992). Accelerating language development through picture book reading: a systematic extension to Mexican day care. *Developmental Psychology*, 28(6), 1106.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.28.6.1106>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher mental process*. M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner & E. Souberman (Eds.), London: Harvard University Press.
- Watkins, R. V., & Bunce, B. H. (1996). Natural literacy: Theory and practice for preschool intervention programs. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 16(2), 191-212.
- Wellman, H. M., & Liu, D. (2004). Scaling of theory-of-mind tasks. *Child Development*, 75, 523–541 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2004.00691.x>
- Wheeler, P. (1983). Context-related age characteristics in mother's speech: joint book reading. *Journal of Child Language* 10, 259–63.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305000900005304>
- Whitehurst, G. J., Falco, F. L., Lonigan, C. J., Fischel, J. E., DeBaryshe, B. D., Valdez-Menchaca, M. C., & Caulfield, M. (1988). Accelerating language development through picture book reading. *Developmental Psychology*, 24(4), 552. <http://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.24.4.552>
- Whitehurst, G. J., Arnold, D. S., Epstein, J. N., Angell, A. L., Smith, M., & Fischel, J. E. (1994). A picture book reading intervention in day care and home for children from low-income families. *Developmental Psychology*, 30(5), 679.
<http://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.30.5.679>
- Whitehurst, G. J., & Lonigan, C. J. (1998). Child development and emergent literacy. *Child Development*, 69(3), 848-872. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1132208>
- Zaman, W., & Fivush, R. (2013). Gender differences in elaborative parent–child emotion and play narratives. *Sex Roles*, 68(9-10), 591-604.<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-013-0270-7>
- Zelazo, P. D. (2006). The Dimensional Change Card Sort (DCCS): A method of assessing executive function in children. *Nature Protocols*, 1(1), 297.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/nprot.2006.46>



APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Tarih:

ID:

e-mail adresi:

1. Adınız ve soyadınız:

2. Yaşınız:

3. Cinsiyetiniz: ☐ Kadın ☐ Erkek

4. Çocuklarınız/çocuğunuzla olan yakınlığınız:

- ☐ Anne ☐ Baba ☐ Diğer:
- ☐ Öz / Üvey

5. Çocuk sayısı: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ Diğer:

6. Çocuğunuzun (çocuklarınızın) adı: Çocuğunuzun/çocuklarınızın doğum tarihi:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Eğitim durumunuz nedir?

☐ Okuryazar değil (1)

☐ İlköğretim (2)

☐ Ortaokul (3)

☐ Lise (4)

☐ Üniversite (5)

☐ Yüksek Lisans (6)

☐ Doktora (7)

☐ Diğer: _____

8. İşiniz:

☐ Tam zamanlı çalışmaktayım (1)

☐ Yarı zamanlı çalışmaktayım (2)

☐ Evden yürütmekteyim (3)

☐ Su anda çalışmamaktayım (4)

☐ Okula devam etmekteyim (5)

9. Eşinizin yaşı:

10. Eşinizin eğitim durumu nedir?

☐ Okuryazar değil (1)

☐ İlköğretim (2)

☐ Üniversite (5)

☐ Yüksek Lisans (6)

☐ Ortaokul (3)

☐ Lise (4)

☐ Doktora (7)

☐ Diğer: _____

11. Eşinizin İşi:

☐ Tam zamanlı çalışmakta (1)

☐ Yarı zamanlı çalışmakta (2)

☐ İşlerini evden yürütmekte (3)

☐ Su anda çalışmamakta (4)

☐ Okula devam etmekteyim (5)

12. Evinizin aylık gelir düzeyi:

☐ 1.000 TL`den az (1)

☐ 1.000 TL- 3.000 TL (2)

☐ 3.000 TL-5.000 TL (3)

☐ 5.000 TL- 7.000 TL (4)

☐ 7.000 TL`den fazla (5)

13. Evinizin aylık gelir düzeyini nasıl değerlendirirsiniz?

☐ Düşük (1) ☐ Orta Seviyede (2) ☐ İyi seviyede (3) ☐ Çok iyi seviyede (4)

APPENDIX B: BOOK READING HABIT SURVEY

Çocuğunuzun: Adı:
Soyadı:
Doğum Tarihi:

Formu Dolduran Kişinin: Adı:
Soyadı:
Çocuğa Yakınlık Derecesi: ☐ Anne
☐ Baba

1. Çocuğunuz ilk anlamlı kelimesini kaç aylıkken/kaç yaşında söyledi?

2. Çocuğunuza resimli kitaplar okunur mu?

- ☐ Evet
☐ Hayır

Cevabınız “hayır” ise lütfen 8. soruya geçerek devam ediniz.

3. Kaç yaşından itibaren çocuğunuza hikaye kitapları okumaya başladınız?

- ☐ 6 ay- 12 ay
☐ 1 yaş
☐ 2 yaş
☐ 3 yaş
☐ 4 yaş
☐ 5 yaş

4. Çocuğunuza ne sıklıkta hikaye kitabı okursunuz?

- ☐ Her gün
☐ 1-2 günde bir
☐ 3-4 günde bir
☐ Haftada bir

- ☐ Ayda bir-iki kere
- ☐ Diğer

5. Çocuğunuz hikaye kitaplarının resimlerine bakarak kendisi hikaye anlatmaya çalışır mı?

- ☐ Evet
- ☐ Hayır

6. Çocuğunuzun çok sevdiği, kendisine okunmasından bıkmadığı, sürekli okunması için ısrar ettiği bir hikaye var mı?

- ☐ Evet Hikayenin adı: _____
- ☐ Hayır

7. Çocuğunuzun ezbere bildiği ve bakarak anlattığı bir hikaye kitabı var mı?

- ☐ Evet Hikayenin adı: _____
- ☐ Hayır

8. Çocuğunuza masal anlatır mısınız?

- ☐ Evet
- ☐ Hayır

9. Kaç yaşından itibaren çocuğunuza masal anlatmaya başladınız?

- ☐ 6 ay- 12 ay
- ☐ 1 yaş
- ☐ 2 yaş
- ☐ 3 yaş
- ☐ 4 yaş
- ☐ 5 yaş

10. Çocuğunuza ne sıklıkta masal anlatıyorsunuz?

- ☐ Her gün
- ☐ 1-2 günde bir
- ☐ 3-4 günde bir
- ☐ Haftada bir
- ☐ Ayda bir iki kere
- ☐ Diğer

11. Çocuğunuzun çok sevdiği, kendisine anlatılmasından bıkmadığı, sürekli anlatılması için ısrar ettiği bir masal var mı?

- ☐ Evet Masalın adı: _____
- ☐ Hayır

12. ocuęunuzun ezbere bildięi bir masal var mı?

- ☐ Evet Masalın adı: _____
☐ Hayır



APPENDIX C. QUESTIONS AND SCORING OF THE NARRATIVE COMPREHENSION

Question type	Picture description	Question	Score
Problem (literal)	The jar is empty. The frog is not there.	1. When they woke up in the morning, something surprising happened. What happened?	0 = Wrong answer 1= The jar is empty 2 = The frog has escaped
Goal (literal)	The boy and the dog are looking for the frog in the house.	2. What did the boy and the dog decide to do when they saw that the frog was not there?	0 = Wrong answer 1= They looked around in the boot/jar 2 = They decided to search for the frog
Dialogue (inference)	The boy is calling his frog in the woods.	3. What do you think the boy is saying here? Why is he saying so?	0 = Wrong answer 1= "Frog, where are you?" 2= Because he is looking for the frog.
Attempt (literal)	The boy is looking into a molehill.	4. What is the boy doing here? Why?	0 = Wrong answer 1= He is looking in the hole 2= Because he is looking for the frog
False belief (inference)	The boy is looking into a tree hollow.	5. Who does the boy think is in the tree hollow, the owl or the frog? Who is there actually, the owl or the frog?	0 = Wrong answer to both questions 1= Right answer to the second question 2= Right answer to both questions
False belief (inference)	The boy is holding onto the sticks coming out behind a rock.	6. What does the boy think these long sticks are, the antlers of the deer or the branches of the tree? What are they actually, the antlers of the deer or the branches of the tree?	0 = Wrong answer to both questions 1= Right answer to the second question 2= Right answer to both questions

Question type	Picture description	Question	Score
Resolution (literal)	The boy and the dog hears a sound by the river.	7. What did the boy and the dog hear when they fell down to the river?	0 = Wrong answer 1= They heard a sound 2= They heard a frog sound
Feelings (inference)	The boy found the frog behind a log.	8. How does the boy feel in this picture? Why?	0 = Wrong answer 1= Happy/good 2= Because he has found his frog
Resolution (literal)	The boy is holding the frog in his hand and waving goodbye to the other frogs.	9. What did the boy, the dog, and the frog do at the end of the story?	0 = Wrong answer 1= They waved good bye 2= They went back home together
Resolution (inference)	No picture	10. You know the frog ran away from home at the beginning of the story. Why did the frog run away?	0 = Wrong answer 1= It went to his family/friends 2= Because it missed his family/friends

