Effectiveness of Reading and Writing Textbooks Used in Special Education Practice Schools: Teacher Perspective

Nesime Kübra Terzioğlu[a] *& Abdulkadir İnan[b]

[a] *Bolu Abant Izzet Baysal University, Faculty of Education, Department of Special Education, Bolu, Turkey*

[b] *Ali Kuşçu Special Education Business Practice School, Malartya, Turkey*

Abstract

Reading and writing textbooks used for students attending special education practice schools should be generated condidering the learning characteristics of the target students. The aim of this study is to examine the opinions of special education teachers regarding the effectiveness of reading and writing textbooks used in special education practice schools. In line with this aim, case study, a qualitative research design, was adopted. Participants were composed of 15 special education teachers who were selected using criterion sampling method. The data were collected through a semi structured interview form develped by the reserchers. The obtained data were analyzed using content analysis method. The results have revealed that participant teachers find the reading and writing textbooks used in special education practice schools insufficient, especially in terms of preparatory work and assessment sections. Additionally, the participants emphasized the need for simplification in terms of language and expression in the textbooks, and they highlighted the necessity of arranging the visuals larger and non-distracting.

Keywords: Special education, practice school, textbooks, reading and writing instruction

1. Introduction

According to the Regulation on Special Education Services (2018), special education refers to educational programs developed with specially trained personnel in suitable environments to meet the educational and social needs of individuals who exhibit significant differences from their peers in terms of individual and developmental characteristics as well as educational competencies. Similarly, the same regulation defines individuals with special needs as those who exhibit significant differences from their peers in terms of individual and developmental characteristics as well as educational competencies. Individuals with special needs can demonstrate variations in

* Corresponding author: Nesime Kübra Terzioğlu. ORCID ID.: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2041-5049
  E-mail address: kubrakeskin@ibu.edu.tr

cognitive, sensory, physical, and many other aspects compared to their peers. Even among individuals diagnosed with the same disability, there can be considerable differences. Everyone is unique, and their disabilities impart them with various distinct characteristics. Nevertheless, it is known that these individuals are categorized under common umbrellas in certain classifications. The most common classification among these is the system based on the type of disability. Based on the types of disabilities, these individuals are classified as having intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments, visual impairments, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, severe and multiple disabilities, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder. Regardless of the type of disability, these individuals need to possess certain fundamental skills to live independently, participate in society, and acquire jobs and careers. One of the primary skills among these is functional literacy skills.

Reading is a complex skill that involves a series of activities such as visual perception (recognizing the written word), comprehension, oral expression, recall, and evaluation (Sarı & Gökdağ, 2021). Writing, considered one of the fundamental language skills, involves conveying emotions and thoughts to the other side using symbols and signs (Akyol, 2021; Coşkun, 2007). From this perspective, initial reading and writing activities denote teaching an individual literacy skill and encompassing activities performed as part of the learning process (Yeleğen, 1997). The fundamental goal of reading and writing instruction is to equip individuals with essential reading and writing skills they will need throughout their lives, which is aligned with basic language abilities.

There are numerous factors influencing reading and writing instruction. These factors include suitability for school, readiness level, age, family, and societal environment, as well as various health issues, general cognitive status, cognitive thinking ability, visual perception, auditory perception, ability to establish connections, attention, verbal language development, learning environment, and process (Akyol, 2021; Baştuğ & Demirtaş-Şenel, 2020; Kayahan-Yüksel & Emmioğlu-Sarıkaya, 2021; Özcan & Yıldız, 2018). All of these factors can positively or negatively impact individuals' processes of acquiring reading and writing skills. For instance, a gifted individual might naturally acquire reading and writing skills even before starting primary school, whereas an individual with intellectual disabilities might take an extended period to acquire these skills. Due to reasons like these, individuals with special needs can encounter various challenges during the process of learning to read and write.

Reading and writing difficulties observed in elementary school often persist into later stages, and there is a considerable risk that these challenges will continue to affect future learning (Avcı & Bağlama, 2023; Fouganthine 2012). Moreover, research indicates a connection between successful acquisition of written language and psychological well-being (Halonen et al., 2006; Taube 1988). Particularly for individuals with disabilities, reading and writing are prerequisites for daily life skills such as finding addresses,

seeking medical treatment, using the correct medication, and paying bills. For instance, a person with special needs who is ill needs to be able to read the writings on a bus to get on the correct one or read signs with clinic and doctor names to visit the right physician. Additionally, having the ability to express oneself and convey feelings and needs to others requires possessing writing skills.

Considering the importance of reading and writing, it is necessary to develop and utilize effective approaches, methods, materials, and textbooks for teaching these skills to individuals with special needs. The reading and writing textbooks used for students attending special education practice schools are prepared by the Ministry of National Education Curriculum and Board of Education (/http://orgm.meb.gov.tr/ekutuphane/derskitaplari/). While these textbooks are evaluated based on general criteria established by the Curriculum and Board of Education, the lack of specific criteria in these evaluations leads to various issues (Karabulut & Öz-Nişli, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to create and utilize more specific, personalized, and effective methods for enhancing the reading and writing abilities of individuals with special needs. This approach will better address their individual needs, enhance the efficiency of the educational process, and increase their future learning potential. The reading and writing textbooks used in special education practice schools should be appropriate for the type and level of disabilities of individuals with special needs and should meet their educational requirements. In this context, the opinions of teachers who work on reading and writing instruction with these individuals are of utmost importance.

Relevant studies in the literature have examined the textbooks used in schools for individuals with special needs. Demir (2017) investigated the content, visuals, language-expression, activities, and evaluation practices of the religious culture and ethics textbook taught in special education vocational training schools. The results of this research indicated certain deficiencies in the evaluated book's practical application and highlighted the need for a reconsideration of the textbook. Similarly, in a more comprehensive study, Karabulut and Öz-Nişli (2020) analyzed the opinions of teachers regarding the visual design, content, language-expression, and assessment criteria of textbooks used in special education practice schools. Using a descriptive research model as a quantitative research approach, the study found that teachers considered the textbooks adequate in terms of visual design, content, and language-expression, but inadequate in terms of assessment and evaluation. These studies contribute significantly to the literature. However, there has been no specific study regarding the reading and writing textbooks used in special education practice schools. Examining the opinions of special education teachers about these textbooks holds great importance. These opinions can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness, appropriateness, and capacity of the books to address student needs based on teachers' expertise and experience in the field. Such assessments can help us understand how well the textbooks support students' learning processes, influence their interest and motivation, and to what extent learning

objectives are achieved. Furthermore, the perspectives of special education teachers can help identify the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks, paving the way for future development efforts. Therefore, teacher feedback serves as a crucial resource in designing and implementing more effective and student-centered textbooks. Based on this, the aim of this study is to examine the opinions of special education teachers regarding the reading and writing textbooks used in special education practice schools.

2. Method

2.1. Research design

This study was conducted using a case study design, which is a qualitative research approach, to examine the opinions of special education teachers regarding the textbooks used in teaching reading and writing to students with special needs. Case study is a method used in research to examine an event or events in detail (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The data for the study were collected through interviews. An interview is an interactive research technique that involves planned and purposeful questioning and answering, serving a specific purpose (Stewart & Cash, 1985).

2.2. Participants

Fifteen special education teachers participated in this study. The individuals forming the participants of this research were selected using the criterion sampling method from among various sampling methods, based on the research objectives. Criterion sampling refers to examining all examples that meet a predetermined set of criteria (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). For this study, participants were required to: a) be actively engaged in special education teaching at the time of data collection, and b) be involved in teaching reading and writing at the time of data collection. The demographic characteristics of the participant teachers are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of participating teachers (n=15)

Descriptive Characteristics	f	%
Gender		
Famale	9	60
Male	6	40
Age		
Ages between 25 and 30	5	33.33
Ages between 31 and 36	5	33.33
Ages between 37 and 42	4	26.66
Ages between 43 and 48	1	6.66
Educational Status		
Bachelor's Degree	13	86.66
Master's Degree	2	13.33
Level & Type of Disabilities of Your Students		
Moderate to Severe Mental Disability	15	100
Years of Teaching Experience		
Between 0-5 years	3	20
Between 6-10 years	5	33.33
Between 11-15 years	4	26.66
Between 16-20 years	2	13.33
Between 21-25 years	1	6.66
Current Institution/School of Employment		
Special Education Application School	15	100

2.3. Data collection tool and data collection process

In this study, a semi-structured interview form consisting of two sections, demographic data and interview questions, was used. This form was prepared based on a review of relevant literature. The demographic information section of the interview form includes questions about the teachers' ages, genders, years of service, types and levels of disabilities of their students, and the institutions they work at. The interview questions are as follows:

1. What are your opinions on the literacy preparation activities in the textbooks you use in literacy education?

2. What are your opinions on the visual layout and design of the textbooks you use in literacy education?

3. What are your opinions on the content of the textbooks you use in literacy education?

4. What are your opinions on the suitability of the language and expression in the textbooks you use in literacy education?

5. What are your opinions on the suitability of assessment and evaluation aspects of the textbooks you use in literacy education?

6. What are your opinions on the contributions of the textbooks you use in literacy education to literacy skills?

7. What are your opinions on the proficiency of the textbooks you use in literacy education in imparting literacy skills to students with special needs?

Ethical approval was obtained for the data collection process of the research. The participant group was determined, the research process was explained, and interviews were conducted with 15 willing teachers. Before the interviews began, permission was obtained from the participants to record audio, and the interviews were recorded using an audio recording device.

2.4. Data analysis

The data of the research were analyzed using content analysis method. For this purpose, the recorded interviews were listened to, and these recordings were transferred to a computer environment without making any changes to what was heard. Then, codes were assigned to the teachers as P1, P2, P3. The recorded interviews were evaluated by the researchers, and meaningful sections were identified. The meaning of each section was discussed and coded. As a result of these codings, a code list was created, and the data were organized according to these codes. After this stage, the codes were grouped together, and these codes were consolidated under specific themes and sub-themes. Furthermore, the obtained data were supported with direct quotations.

3. Findings

3.1. Evaluation of literacy preparation activities

The participating special education teachers were asked the question "What are your opinions on the preparation activities for literacy in the textbooks you use in literacy education?" After receiving responses from the teachers, the themes "evaluation of literacy preparation activities" and sub-themes "suitability of the books for preparation activities," "content and functionality evaluation," "student-centered approaches," "importance of line exercises," and "shortcomings and suggestions for textbooks" were identified. Table 2 presents the themes, sub-themes, and codes obtained.

Table 2. Theme: Evaluation of literacy preparation activities

Sub-themes	Codes and Frequency
Suitability of the Books for Preparation Activities	Lack of Line Exercises: P1, P8, P11, P14, P3
	Inadequacy of Sound-Related Writing and Pronunciation Activities: P1, P8, P7
	Lack of Level Appropriateness: P1, P8, P10
Content and Functionality Evaluation	Functionality and Insufficiency of Content: P2, P9
	Necessity of Line Exercises for Initial Literacy Skills: P1, P2, P8, P5
Student-Centered Approaches	Lack of Content Suitable for Student Levels: P2, P5, P9
Importance of Line Exercises	Contribution of Line Exercises to Muscle Development: P4, P14
	Supporting Fundamental Skills with Line Exercises: P4, P14
Shortcomings of Textbooks and Recommendations	Inappropriateness of Textbooks for the Level: P2, P12, P3, P14
	The Necessity of Focusing on Early Literacy Preparation Skills: P2, P5

When examining Table 2, it is evident that special education teachers believe that there are deficiencies in the preparation activities of literacy textbooks used in special education schools. These teachers particularly hold opinions regarding the lack of line exercises in the literacy textbooks, the necessity of line exercises for early literacy, and the inadequacy of these books in terms of being suitable for students' levels. Some of the teachers' opinions on this matter are presented under the following headings:

3.1.1. Lack of line exercises:
"I believe that especially the line exercises in the book are not sufficient, meaning that activities related to spelling or pronunciation of a sound or matching activities are not at an adequate level." (P1)

"I think that the literacy preparation activities, especially the line exercises, are almost nonexistent in the books we use. Since it would be difficult for these children to go directly to letters both in terms of drawing and understanding, more space should be given to preparation activities." (P8)

3.1.2. Inadequacy of sound-related writing and pronunciation activities:

"Since our students are at a moderate to severe level, it is observed that the sound system overwhelms the students. They are not at a level to grasp this system, so there is a deficiency in the preparation activities as well." (P1)

3.1.3. Lack of level appropriateness:

"We generally see that our textbooks focus on functional reading and sound group activities in the first grade. Looking at these groups, it is evident that in functional reading and writing, the students are not able to be efficient due to inadequate preparation. Therefore, I think the book is insufficient in this regard." (P1)

3.1.4. Functionality and insufficiency of content:

"The book is functional in terms of content but inadequate. Since you mentioned preparation skills, the book starts a bit more advanced, from a higher level. It starts by introducing letters before showing them through line exercises, which is a bit lacking." (P2)

3.1.5. Necessity of line exercises for early literacy:

"There should be numerous line exercises or activities related to pencil grip for children in the preparation phase in literacy books. This is applied in regular schools as well as to regular students, and it should be the same for special education schools. However, in our current textbooks, there is no such activity, and this is a significant deficiency." (P5)

3.1.6. Contribution of line exercises to muscle development:

"Since it would be difficult for these children to go directly to letters both in terms of drawing and understanding, more space should be given to preparation activities. I believe that these preparation activities contribute to the muscle and motor development of the children." (P4)

3.1.7. Supporting fundamental skills with line exercises:

"When we examine the book, we see that for literacy preparation activities, the creators of the book started with letters directly in the activities. However, before that, as a preliminary study, line exercises or activities like pencil grip should have been given. It would have been more appropriate to provide preliminary skill conditions for the study and then move on to letters." (P4)

3.1.8. Inappropriateness of textbooks for the level:

"In our class, we have students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. The textbook we use for the first literacy lesson for these students is the textbook provided by the Ministry of Education. First and foremost, this book is functional in terms of content but inadequate. Because you mentioned preparation skills; the book for early literacy preparation starts a bit more advanced, from a higher level, without even introducing the sound. This book should focus more on recognizing the sound and producing the sound before everything else. The children who find the source of the sound need to see this sound more frequently. When we look at the first unit and set of the book, it starts to introduce the sound, but this stage is missing for students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. If we move on to writing skills related to literacy skills, I say this because the early literacy preparation skills should also be appropriate for the students' levels." (P2)

3.1.9. The Necessity of focusing on early literacy preparation skills:

"Almost no preparation activities for literacy are included in these books. These skills should be emphasized considerably." (P2)

3.2. Visual layout and design of literacy textbooks

The participating special education teachers were asked the question "What are your opinions on the visual layout and design of the textbooks you use in literacy education?" After receiving responses from the teachers, the themes "visual variety and distractions," "student profile and visual harmony," "visual perception," and "visual usage" were identified under the theme of "visual layout and design of literacy textbooks." The themes, sub-themes, and codes obtained are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Theme: Visual Layout and Design of Literacy Textbooks

Sub-themes	Codes and Frequency
Visual Variety and Distractions	Excess of Visual Variety: P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8, P11, P12, P14
	Distraction Caused by Images: P2, P8, P9, P12, P13, P14, P15
Visual Variety and Distractions	Inappropriate Images for Students with Special Needs: P1, P5, P7, P9
Attractiveness and Dimensions	Engaging Images: P1, P2, P3
	Small Image Sizes: P3, P4, P10, P11

When examining Table 3, it is evident that special education teachers have various opinions regarding the visual layout and design of literacy textbooks used in special education schools. Participating teachers believe that there is a considerable excess of visual variety in the literacy textbooks. While this variety contributes to capturing

students' interest, it also distracts their attention, according to the teachers. Some of their opinions on this matter are presented under the following headings.

3.2.1. Excess of visual variety:

"When we look at the visuals, there is a sufficient variety of objects given to the images related to the books." (P4)

"Visuals have been given enough space." (P8)

3.2.2. Distraction caused by images:

"The visuals are a bit more colorful, yes, they are appealing, but on one page, there are multiple different concepts or object images. When trying to distinguish these images from each other, they become distracting. For instance, in these books, it started with three object images on one page. It could have been two objects, and larger images could have been used. Thus, the child's focus could have been directed more to the object where the desired letter is located. There are some deficiencies in this aspect, but it is good in terms of being colorful and attractive, yet it is distracting." (P2)

"Visuals have been widely incorporated into our books, which is a good thing. However, there are too many visuals on one page, and that leads to the child's attention being dispersed. There could be fewer visuals on a page, and more vibrant colors could be used in printing." (P14)

3.2.3. Inappropriate images for students with special needs:

"The visual design is not bad; it looks good and appeals to the eye. However, I work in a school for moderate to severe disabilities, and when I integrate it for our students, I see that the images are not very suitable for them. The characters are not appropriate for them. I think the children should be able to find something of themselves in the images." (P5)

"I believe that there should be more images related to the child's experience. When there are images that are not part of the child's experience, they don't make sense to the child, and since they are not part of their experience, they can't remember them." (P7)

3.2.4. Engaging images

"The visuals have become a bit more colorful, yes, are they engaging? Yes." (P2)

3.2.5. Small image sizes:

"When it comes to visual aspects, especially for the initial letters, they could be diversified more, and the sizes of the images could be increased a bit. This would be better in terms of capturing students' attention." (P3)

"When we look at the visuals, there is a sufficient variety of objects given to the images related to the books. However, for images, they could have been slightly larger and more

detailed. In this regard, I think it would be more suitable for special education students if these adjustments were made." (P4)

In summary, the examination of Table 3 reveals that special education teachers hold diverse views on the visual layout and design of literacy textbooks used in special education schools. They perceive an excess of visual variety in the books, which both captures students' interest and distracts their attention. Teachers also point out the presence of images that are not suitable for students with special needs and suggest improvements in terms of image sizes and their alignment with students' experiences.

3.3. The content of literacy textbooks

Special education teachers participating in the research were asked the question "What are your opinions on the content of the literacy textbooks you use in literacy education?" Following the responses received from the teachers, the theme of "the content of literacy textbooks" was identified, along with the sub-themes "appropriateness of content and organization" and "teaching methods and techniques." The obtained theme, sub-themes, and codes are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Theme of the content of literacy textbooks

Sub-themes	Codes and Frequency
Appropriateness of Content and Organization	Inappropriate Content for the Level of Special Needs Students: P1, P2, P6, P8, P9, P11, P12, P13, P14
	Content Not Aligned with the Needs of Individuals with Special Needs: P1, P6, P10, P11
Teaching Methods and Techniques	Lack of Basara Method: P5, P7, P12, P15
	Inappropriateness of Phonics-Based Reading and Writing Instruction Method: P12, P14, P15

When examining Table 4, it can be observed that special education teachers have various opinions regarding the content of the reading and writing textbooks used in special education schools. Most participant teachers believe that the content of the reading and writing textbooks is not suitable for students with special needs. Many participant teachers express the view that these textbooks are not appropriate for the level of students with special needs and do not meet their requirements. Additionally, the majority of special education teachers indicate that they are more successful in teaching reading and writing to students with special needs using the "Basara" method instead of the phonics-based reading and writing instruction. They also mention the lack of suitable content for this method in the textbooks. Some of the teachers' opinions on this topic are provided in the following headings.

3.3.1. Inappropriate content for students with special needs:

"I believe that the content is prepared like a regular student's, and I don't think it is specifically tailored to our students' needs. It could be more carefully prepared." (P8). "When it comes to putting words and sentences into writing, the content remains too abstract for our moderately severe level students; it's really challenging for the children to grasp. (P13).

3.3.2. Incompatibility with the needs of individuals with special needs:

"As for the content, I believe it should be scientific as it is, but regarding the examples I've seen in the content, I think they should be organized according to a child's level of perception. In other words, the situation and needs of a disabled student should be taken into account when organizing the content." (P1).

3.3.3. Limited number of activities:

"When we examine the content, we see that the number of activities is limited, which is not sufficient for a student. Sometimes, we can spend a month or two with a student just focusing on one letter, so I saw the content as accelerated teaching. Instead of that, if the content is expanded and spread over more time, it would be more suitable for teaching sustainability." (P4).

3.3.4. Lack of "basara" method:

"When we asked many special education colleagues, almost all of them use the 'Basara' method in teaching reading and writing to children. They obtain the necessary resources themselves and use this method because they see that it is much more beneficial for the children. Therefore, the textbooks are insufficient." (P5).

"As I mentioned, I use the 'Basara' method in the textbook and progress is being made quite successfully. When children see that they can read their own syllables, progress is achieved more quickly. Textbooks based on the 'Basara' method are necessary." (P7).

3.3.5. Inappropriateness of phonics-based reading and writing method:

"I've been working for eight years. In the first three years, I wasn't aware of the existence of the Basara system, or rather, I started with functional reading using a phonics-based approach from books. I tried many methods, but I couldn't make any functional progress with the children. I got stuck, I mean, I hit a roadblock and couldn't continue. I don't believe that textbooks prepared according to the phonics-based sentence method are suitable for special education." (P12).

3.3.6. Frequent changes in teaching methods:

"In recent history, over a period of 15 to 20 years, unfortunately, our education system constantly changes the reading and writing technique. Sometimes, it is taught from whole to part, sometimes from part to whole, using different methods. This is a serious problem for educators. We constantly try to integrate a different teaching method, and

it's challenging. While it can be functional for normal children, unfortunately, elat inorm or whatever method comes after that is not very functional for our special children. Many special education colleagues, when asked, almost all of them use the 'Basara' method in teaching reading and writing to children." (P5).

3.4. Appropriateness of language and narrative in textbooks

The participants in the research were asked the question, "What are your opinions on the appropriateness of language and narrative in the reading and writing textbooks you use?" After receiving responses from the teachers, the theme of "appropriateness of language and narrative in textbooks" and sub-themes such as "understandability and functionality of visual selections," "simplicity and clarity need of instructions," and "special education language and narrative needs" were identified. The attained theme, sub-themes, and codes are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Theme: Appropriateness of language and narrative in textbooks

Sub-themes	Codes and Frequency
Clarity and Functionality of Visual Selections	Insufficient Comprehension of Images: P1, P7
	Weaknesses in Image-Text Connections: P1, P3
Need for Simplicity and Clarity in Instructions	Should Be Simplified in Terms of Language and Expression: P1, P3, P6, P12, P14
	Instructions Should Be Simplified and Clarified: P1, P13, P15
Appropriateness in Language and Narrative	Appropriate Language and Expression: P4, P5, P8, P9, P10, P11

When examining Table 5, it can be observed that special education teachers have various opinions regarding the language and expression used in the reading and writing textbooks used in special education schools. Some of the participating teachers believe that these textbooks are appropriate in terms of language and expression, while others think they are not suitable. Many of the teachers who find the language and expression of these books unsuitable have mentioned that the language needs to be simplified. Additionally, teachers believe that the instructions provided in the books should be simplified and standardized for each activity. Some of the teachers' opinions on this matter are provided under the following headings.

3.4.1. Insufficient clarity of visuals:
"In terms of language and expression, at least I can say that in some visuals, especially those related to functional reading and writing, there are some images that I myself cannot understand or interpret, like whether it's milk or something else in the picture. In

such cases, the child's perception becomes a bit more challenging, and I personally experience this difficulty, so I think more simple and understandable visuals and expressions could be used." (P1).

3.4.2. Disconnection between visuals and text:

"In terms of language and expression, visuals can be provided in a way that corresponds to each syllable. This way, the student can learn more easily." (P4).

3.4.3. Simplification of language and expression:

"The language seems heavy, it needs to be simplified a bit more, and made more relatable to children's lives. These books are a bit challenging for our children. Even after teaching reading and writing, there are sentences that a child wouldn't understand, they are too long and hard to comprehend in my opinion. Because sometimes, even when I read them, I find myself needing to read the sentences again and again, wondering what they want from me, what they want me to work on. The adequacy of language and expression in this regard is not sufficient for me." (P6).

3.4.4. Instructions should be simplified and clarified:

"Instructions are important in terms of language and expression as well. Instructions should not be changed constantly; they should remain the same. When different definitions are provided, the child can get confused, because if the way the instruction is given in the first question differs from the second one, then inevitably such differences can occur. In terms of language and expression, having consistent instructions is more important for me." (P13).

3.4.5. Appropriate language and expression:

"Well, in my opinion, the texts shared are quite understandable and are at a level that the children will comprehend. They are in the imperative form, so I think they are quite good." (P5).

"In terms of language and expression, the statements are generally in a way that children will understand, and in a way that children who transition to reading can understand, there are clear expressions, so there's no problem in that regard." (P8).

3.5. Measurement and evaluation suitability of textbooks

Special education teachers participating in the study were asked the question: "What are your opinions on the suitability of the reading and writing textbooks you use in terms of measurement and evaluation?" After receiving responses from the teachers, the theme of "measurement and evaluation suitability of textbooks" was identified, along with sub-themes such as "insufficiency of textbooks in terms of measurement and evaluation" and

"lack of student-appropriate measurement and evaluation approach." The obtained theme, sub-themes, and codes are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Theme: Measurement and evaluation suitability of textbooks

Sub-themes	Codes and Frequency
Insufficiency in Terms of Measurement and Evaluation of Textbooks	Insufficiency of Activity Quantity: P1, P2, P10, P11, P14, P15
	Abstraction and Complexity of Activities: P2, P9
	Lack of Measurement and Evaluation: P2, P3, P4, P7, P8, P9, P10, P12, P13
Insufficiency in Terms of Measurement and Evaluation of Textbooks	Inappropriate Measurement and Evaluation for Student Level: P5, P6, P15

When examining Table 6, it is evident that special education teachers generally share a common view regarding the measurement and evaluation sections present in the reading and writing textbooks used in practical schools. In fact, all teachers seem to believe that the measurement and evaluation aspects of the reading and writing textbooks are inadequate. Most participant teachers believe that there is a lack of measurement and evaluation components in the textbooks, while others think that the existing measurement and evaluation activities are limited in number, abstract, and complex. Some of the teachers' opinions on the matter are provided in the following headings.

3.5.1. Inadequacy of activity numbers:

"When we examine the books in general, I believe that they are insufficient in terms of activities related to measurement. We need much more and diverse activities because we require a lot of repetition, and in this sense, the books fall short." (P1).

3.5.2. Abstraction and complexity of activities:

"In fact, there is nothing related to measurement included; I mean, there aren't many activities where you can actually measure and evaluate the child. They have mostly focused on simple and abstract activities like feeling the sound, finding the sound, but there is a lack of more concrete, comprehensible expressions." (P2).

3.5.3. Lack of measurement and evaluation:

"The book doesn't include any activities related to measurement and evaluation. It would be more appropriate for our reading and writing assessment to include activities related to measurement and evaluation. With its current content, as I said, there is no measurement and evaluation." (P4).

3.5.4. Inappropriate measurement and evaluation for student level:

"For middle to severe level students, our criteria for measurement and evaluation are quite different. For instance, we cannot administer written exams or anything like that to the students. Since we observe the performance status of these students more and evaluate accordingly, I don't think there is much benefit for the children in the textbooks regarding measurement and evaluation." (P5).

3.6. Contributions and shortcomings of reading and writing textbooks

The participants in the research, who are special education teachers, were asked the question, "What are your opinions about the contributions of the reading and writing textbooks you use in the reading and writing lessons?" After receiving responses from the teachers, the theme of "contributions and shortcomings of reading and writing textbooks" emerged, along with sub-themes such as "use and functionality of the books," "student profile and needs," and "book content and teaching approaches." The obtained theme, sub-themes, and codes are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Theme: Contributions and shortcomings of reading and writing textbooks

Sub-themes	Codes and Frequency
Use and Functionality of the Books	Use of Books as Initial Guidance: P1, P8, P10, P13, P14
	Need for Additional Resources: P4, P8, P10, P11, P13, P14
Student Profile and Needs	Not Suitable for Students at Different Levels: P4, P7, P9
	Neglecting Individual Differences: P5, P13
Book Content and Teaching Approaches	Not Including Different Teaching Methods: P3, P15
	Utilizing Images in the Book: P12

When examining Table 7, it is evident that special education teachers in inclusive schools have diverse opinions regarding the contribution of the reading and writing textbooks to literacy skills. However, it is also noticeable that most participating teachers do not rely solely on these textbooks but resort to additional resources. Some of the teachers' opinions on the subject are provided under the following headings.

3.6.1. Using the books as initial guides:

"We mostly use reading and writing books as an initial guiding tool, like a manual. However, later on, we don't continue with the book in a very functional way because students' developmental levels vary, and we progress at different paces. Therefore, the book only provides us with initial support, but we can't benefit from it much later on." (P1).

3.6.2. Need for supplementary resources:

"When it comes to their contribution to reading and writing, considering that we work in a school with students at a moderate to severe level, we cannot use these reading and writing books extensively. Therefore, we turn to different sources." (P4).

3.6.3. Not suitable for students at different levels:

"I don't think these books contribute to students at the moderate to severe level." (P7).

3.6.4. Neglecting individual differences:

"These textbooks cannot be very beneficial because children have significant individual differences." (P13).

3.6.5. Lack of different teaching methods:

"I tried sound-based methods, but we couldn't make progress with any of my students. These books are not suitable for the Basara method." (P15).

3.6.6. Utilizing images from the book:

"The only contribution for me is, for example, if I'm teaching the 'ba' sound, I take the picture of a balloon and stick it in their notebook, that's all. Apart from that, I haven't used the textbooks in any way for about 5 years." (P12).

3.7. The Adequacies and shortcomings of reading and writing textbooks

The participants of the study, special education teachers in inclusive schools, were asked the question, "What are your opinions on the adequacies of the reading and writing textbooks you use in terms of equipping special needs students with reading and writing skills?" After collecting responses from the teachers, the theme "adequacies and shortcomings of reading and writing textbooks" emerged, along with the sub-themes "insufficiencies and needs of the textbooks," "teaching methods and activities," and "book content and material development." The obtained theme, sub-themes, and codes are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Theme: Adequacies and shortcomings of reading and writing textbooks

Sub-themes	Codes and Frequency
Needs and Insufficiency of the Books	Overall Insufficiency of the Books: P1, P4, P6, P7, P9, P10, P14
	Student Diversity and Needs: P5, P8, P10, P11
	Insufficient Number of Activities: P1, P4, P10
Insufficiency of the Books and Needs	The Necessity of Simplifying the Content: P3, P4, P15
	The Necessity of Concretizing the Content with Visuals: P1, P7, P10, P13

Upon examining Table 8, it is evident that special education teachers have diverse opinions regarding the effectiveness of the reading and writing textbooks used in special

education schools for imparting reading skills to students with special needs. However, it should be noted that most participating teachers recognize the limitations of these textbooks and acknowledge areas for improvement. Some of the teachers' opinions on this matter are presented under the following headings.

3.7.1. Overall insufficiency of the books:
"I don't think the books are sufficient." (P1).

3.7.2. Student diversity and needs:
"The books are not sufficient for many children. These books seem to be designed to cater to a single level, as if based on a single student model, and unfortunately, this diminishes their functionality in our use. (P5).

3.7.3. Insufficient number of activities:
"Of course, the textbooks are insufficient in a general sense. More activities, more practical work could be included. Increasing the variety and number of activities would contribute to the realization of teaching." (P4).

3.7.4. Necessity for simplifying the content:
   "The content and methods of the books need to be simplified and structured." (P15).

3.7.5. Need for concrete visualization in content:
   "I don't think these books are sufficient for teaching reading and writing skills to students with special needs. If the visuals in the book are of a type that the child can perceive in their experience, more concrete teaching can be achieved." (P7).

4. Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

In this study, the opinions of teachers regarding the reading and writing textbooks used in special education schools for reading instruction were examined. Based on the responses from teachers, it can be seen that these reading and writing textbooks in special education schools have limitations in terms of preparatory work, assessment and evaluation, language and expression, and various other aspects. The results obtained from the study are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The conclusion of the study indicates that the preparatory work in the reading and writing textbooks is insufficient. Participating teachers often emphasized the lack of line exercises, inadequate content for students, and the non-adaptability of these books to students with special needs. These findings underscore the need for improvement in the preparatory work of reading and writing textbooks used in special education schools. Especially, the lack of line exercises can negatively impact students' handwriting and letter recognition skills. Studies in the literature emphasize the significance of

preparatory activities for early reading and writing. Preparation for reading and writing is a process that contributes to children's joyful and stress-free learning. In order to pass through this process more effectively, certain activities need to be implemented. Prior to learning to write, children need pre-writing activities that strengthen their hand and arm muscles. Cutting paper, folding, pasting, drawing lines, forming shapes in sand, finger exercises, and other activities conducted in preschool institutions or at home are considered activities that can be effective during the pre-writing period (Güneş, 2000). Another study in the literature also reveals that special education teachers include preparatory activities such as developing finger, hand, and arm muscles, pen-holding, and coloring and drawing exercises while teaching reading and writing to students with intellectual disabilities (Terzioğlu & Topaç).

Another finding of the study is that the visuals included in the reading and writing textbooks are diverse, and this diversity sometimes distracts students' attention. The small size of the visuals is also highlighted as a concern. This finding shed light on how the nature and quantity of visuals in reading and writing textbooks can affect students' attention. The diversity and quantity of visual content can directly impact students' learning process, with potential positive or negative consequences. The abundance of diverse visuals in textbooks may make it difficult for students to interact with the text and focus on the main topic. Additionally, the small size of visuals is significant. Small-sized visuals can hinder students' ability to discern visual details accurately. Especially for students with special needs, the size and clarity of visuals should positively influence their learning experience. Otherwise, students' process of comprehending visuals might become challenging. The literature highlights the importance of visuals in instruction and reading and writing education. Dursunoğlu (2010), emphasizing that visuals are one of the fundamental components of learning activities, states that teaching and learning will be more effective and long-lasting when the taught subjects include visual elements. Furthermore, considering that children in primary education age show a great interest in pictures due to their age, it is recommended to make ample use of pictures while teaching sounds, to better suit their learning style.

Regarding the content of the reading and writing lessons, special education teachers have expressed concerns such as inadequacy for students' levels, failure to meet students' needs, and insufficient number of activities. This finding underscores the necessity for content in reading and writing textbooks to be tailored to student-centered learning approaches. The content should be designed to suit the needs of students with special needs, support different learning styles, and contain an adequate number of activities. Studies examining textbooks for subjects such as physical education and Turkish have also revealed inadequacies in content (Ayvacı & Devecioğlu, 2013, Çelik & Gülcü, 2016, Demir, 2017). Similarly, Bayat (2015) in a study examining teachers' opinions about the difficulties children aged 60 to 66 months face during their initial reading and writing

process, reported that teachers found initial reading and writing textbooks lacking in terms of both content and visuals.

In conclusion, special education teachers generally find the reading and writing textbooks inadequate, lacking in meeting students' needs, insufficient in activities, and needing simplification and concretization of content. This finding reflects teachers' criticisms and suggestions regarding the design and content of the textbooks.

Teachers' perception of overall insufficiency of the textbooks implies that the teaching materials are not suitable for students, or they do not adequately address the learning needs of students. This could potentially hinder teachers from fully unleashing students' learning potential. Thus, more effective content and better-designed materials are needed to support teachers in assisting students. The insufficiencies in the textbooks might prevent teachers from fully realizing the potential of their students' learning. Therefore, more effective content and better-designed materials are required to provide teachers with better teaching tools while enriching students' learning experiences.

In the broader scope of the study's findings, it is clear that the design and content of reading and writing textbooks in special education schools have various shortcomings. Teachers' opinions underscore the need for these textbooks to be designed in a student-centered approach, with improvements needed in areas such as visual materials, language and expression, effective assessment tools, and content tailored to students' diverse learning needs. The results of the study offer valuable guidance for the development of educational materials aiming to amplify teachers' voices and ensure better learning experiences for students.

Building upon the findings of the study, several recommendations can be made to enhance the quality of reading and writing textbooks in special education schools and better cater to student needs. The participants in this study were comprised of 15 special education teachers. Therefore, future research could further delve into the opinions of special education teachers on textbooks. Details such as what specific features are lacking or what content aligns better with students could be explored more comprehensively in the development of textbooks. Another recommendation pertains to assessment and evaluation. As mentioned in the study, teachers have high expectations for assessment and evaluation tools. Consequently, assessment and evaluation tools that allow for more effective monitoring of student progress could be expanded in reading and writing textbooks.

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