Preparing and Implementing Instruction Reading Activities in French Language Classes: An Action Research with Pre-Service French Teachers

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ABSTRACT

In this study, answers were sought about how instruction reading activities affect pre-service teachers' instruction reading behavior, the opinions of pre-service teachers about instruction reading activities, how to apply instruction reading activities in Text Grammar in a French course, and how instruction reading activities affect pre-service teachers' awareness of delivering the instructions. The study was designed as action research. For this purpose, following the literature review, teaching materials were developed and applied to improve instruction reading skills. The participants of the study consisted of students studying at the French Language Teaching Program in a state university, who are attending a second-year spring semester Text Grammar in a French course. Different qualitative and quantitative data collection tools such as video recordings, observations, interviews, researcher diary, and achievement tests were used to collect data in the study. As a result of the analysis of the data, it was observed that instruction reading activities had a positive effect on the students' instruction reading skills, increased the students' awareness of instruction reading, and supported the use of strategies in instruction reading. Instruction reading activities conducted during the action research influence the development of instruction reading skills of French teacher candidates. And these activities created an awareness of the instruction in pre-service teachers and supported instruction reading behaviour. In addition, instruction reading activities had positive effects on the academic achievement, strategy use, and professional development of participants.

INTRODUCTION

An instructive text is a type of text that explains the individual what to do in detail, guiding the individual to take action, which we frequently encounter in our daily lives. This type of text, also used in the education/training process, usually appears as an instruction or a question. In this process, frequently used instructions are expected to explain how and for what purpose students should perform the assigned tasks and specify the success criteria. Instructions can be provided both orally and written. While written instructions are generally used in homework, books, and exams, oral instructions are mostly used to lead students to take action during the teaching process. This study is limited to the use of written instructions in a foreign language classroom. Nevertheless, written instructions that are frequently used in language teaching can cause problems when it comes to foreign languages. This is because it requires both the ability to understand what you read in a foreign language and to understand this particular type of text that leads to an action.

Literature Review

In Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001, p.112), being a basic reference source in the field of foreign language teaching, instructions, textbook descriptions, tests, and exams are considered special text types and they are emphasized to be texts that need to be examined especially in the field of education. Analysing the studies concerning literature in the field, it has been observed that there are not many studies conducted upon the place and importance of instructions in language education both inland and abroad, and there are important points that need to be studied on this subject. As stated by Watson Todd and al. (2008: 26) "instructions are a key aspect of classroom discourse which have unfortunately received little attention in the literature". Jean-Michel Zakhartchouk (1990; 2000; 2004), who conducted many studies in the relevant field, published studies on the use of instructions in the mother tongue and the difficulties students face in reading and understanding these instructions. According to Zakhartchouk, instruction reading behaviour can be taught and developed. If teachers help their students

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develop this skill effectively, students will be more successful in every field.

Some studies in the field, though in a limited number, (Yaiche & Mettoudi, 2003; Bisonnette, 2005; Gregori, 2005; Gorine, 2010; Author, 2015) also support Zakhartchouk's view. In these studies, it is emphasized that the instructions constitute an important element which looks simple but can lead to students' failure and that it is necessary to help students develop effective instruction reading behaviours. The case study conducted by Ercanlar (2016), which examined the use of instructions in French foreign language teaching, aimed to describe the instruction reading behaviours of higher education students studying French as a foreign language and how the instructions were used in the classroom. The results of this study revealed that the instructions in the classroom were conveyed by the teacher and the students were not given enough time to read and analyse the instructions. It was also found that the students had no idea about instruction reading strategies and did not develop the habit of instruction reading. Studies in the literature generally focus on how instructions should be created and seek an answer for the question, "How can a better instruction be written?" However, as stated by Zakhartchouk (2000, p. 63), the important thing is not only how to write the instructions, but also to make students understand the instructions of all types and levels of difficulty, since the instruction may be given especially difficult and complex depending on the purpose of the activity.

Research Problem

The difficulty level of the instruction depends on many factors such as its clarity or obscurity, the number of actions to be performed, the words used, the cognitive processes it requires, the structural arrangement and presentation of the expression (Yaiche & Mettoudi, 2003). Therefore, it may vary in line with the activity given and the teachers' purposes. In this case, it is a prerequisite for the student to understand the instruction to be able to perform a task given in the education/training process independently from the teacher.

Nowadays while lifetime learning and autonomous learning concepts are gaining importance, it is very crucial for students to develop independent instruction reading habits. As Bayat (2011, p. 17) points out, the concept of autonomy is important in Western cultures. But in non-Western cultures, being a member of a society and submitting to authority is expected. In this respect, it is thought that should these matter-related inadequacies of teacher candidates studying in teacher training programs be developed, they will fulfil their profession more successfully in the future. At the same time, the activities carried out in this direction will set an example for pre-service teachers to develop this skill in their student groups by creating an effective instruction reading awareness. Therefore, the aim of this study is to develop effective instruction reading behaviour in teacher candidates who constitute the sample of the study, and to offer solutions to the problems that have been identified. In line with this objective, a series of activities were planned
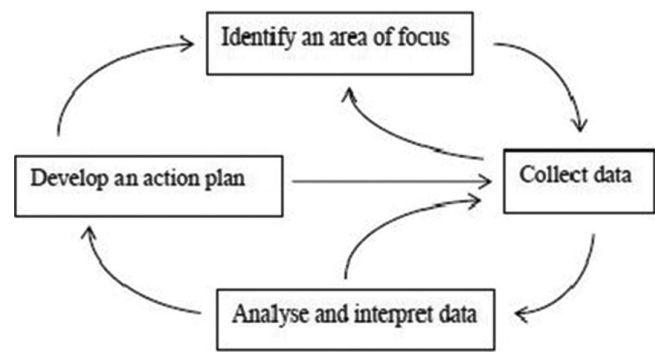

Figure 1. The dialectical cycle of action research (Mills, 2003)

to help pre-service teachers studying in the French Language Teaching Program gain effective instruction reading behaviours. Within this scope, weekly lesson plans were prepared, and various studies were carried out with a group of students studying in the second year. At the end of the study, it was examined whether these activities influenced the pre-service teachers' instruction reading behaviours and tried to develop solutions for the problems that were identified.

Research Questions

The aim of this study is to examine the development of independent instruction reading behaviours of pre-service teachers by applying instruction reading activities in French as a foreign language. In line with this general purpose, answers were sought for the following research questions:

1. How do instruction reading activities affect teacher candidates' instruction reading behaviour?
2. What do the pre-services teachers think about instruction reading activities?
3. How are instruction reading activities implemented in the Text Grammar in French course?
4. How do the instruction reading activities affect teacher candidates' awareness of instruction reading?

METHOD

The research model, the process of the research, the scope of the research, the collection and the analysis of the data are included in this section.

Research Model

The general purpose of the study is to reveal the practicability of instruction reading activities in the development of instruction reading skills in French as a foreign language. The research was designed as an action research to understand the quality of the work carried out during the activity process and to increase the quality of teaching. This type of research is highly preferred by educators, for it allows effective and practical problem solving (Tomal, 2010, p.11). According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013, p. 335), the action research process consists of problem determination, data collection, data analysis, determination of an action plan,

the realization of action, and decision making for an alternative or a new action. This research process was shaped on the basis of the dialectical cycle, demonstrating that Mills' (2003) action research consists of four basic steps.

Defining the focus area

The stage of determining the focus area aims to determine and limit the subject/area to be studied. Accordingly, first, a research was made regarding the subject and the related literature, then the researcher carried out information gathering studies on the subject matter.

Studies conducted in the literature (Author, 2016; Lengagne, 2005; Vecchi, 2010) demonstrate that students experience various challenges while reading the instructions, they do not know what to do and how to read the instructions, and their reading habits are not sufficiently developed. It is justified that instruction reading skills can be improved and developed with various activities and studies (Zakhartchouk, 1990). Following the analysis of the current situation, an action plan was considered to solve the problems and focused on determining the area to study. Primarily the courses currently given by the researcher lecturer were primarily considered in a determining the study group, for they were suitable in terms of accessibility. Accordingly, the 2nd-grade Text Grammar course opened in the spring semester of the 2018-2019 academic year was confirmed appropriate for this practice by the Validity Committee. It was thought that the second-grade education of the group to be studied would be convenient for conducting the study for it was assumed that the students in this group were at B1 language level. It is expected that the relevant group with an intermediate level of French knowledge will be able to understand the instructions written in French. On the other hand, it was thought that working on various texts in the Text Grammar course, doing different activities, and using different instructions are appropriate for the conduct of the research.

After determining the study group, the researchers made observations in the classroom environment for two weeks to get to know the focus area better and to seek answers for the questions such as "What is happening in the learning environment? How are the students' participation and interactions in the classroom? How are students' independent instruction reading habits?" These observations enabled the focus area to be recognized and understood in more detail.

Data collecting

Both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques were used in this study. Qualitative data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews with students, video recordings, researcher diary, student activity sheets, and validity committee audio recordings while quantitative data were collected through the instruction reading achievement test. While determining data collection techniques, research questions were taken as basis. Data sources of this study are:

- **Video recordings**: Video recordings provide general information about "students' non-verbal behaviors, their locations, and movements during the course" and the researcher's performance (Johnson, 2015, p. 96). Video recordings were used as the primary data source in this study. Each lesson was recorded with a video camera. These recorded images were transferred to the computer environment right after the lesson and supported with the researcher diary and student study examples, then, transcribed as "lesson flow form".

- **Observation notes:** Observation, which is frequently used in qualitative research, aims to "provide in-depth and detailed explanations and definitions regarding the activity, fact, and situation subject to the research rather than producing numerical data." In action research, on the other hand, it is a technique used both in determining the focus area and in the implementation process. In this study, before the implementation, which is to get to know the focus area, was started, the researchers observed the class by giving a pilot course for a week. In addition, the second researcher was present in the classroom as an observer during the activity process and indicated his observations regarding the activity onto both the observation form and the reflective diary.

- **Semi-structured interview forms:** The interview technique, enabling to reveal the feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and emotions of the participants, is a technique that is frequently used in qualitative research (Ekiz, 2013, p. 62). In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted to determine the opinions of the participants about the activity process, for it provided in-depth knowledge and flexibility. The interview questions were written by the researchers by establishing a connection between the literature and the research questions. It was paid attention that the questions were written in an open-ended, non-directional, clear, and understandable language. Following the preparation of the questions, two experts, one experienced in qualitative research and the other working in the field of French language education, were consulted. After performing the necessary arrangements, the experiment was conducted with two students other than the participants selected as the focus from the experimental class. Following the trials, the questions were finalized. At the end of the activity process, face-to-face interviews were held with the focus students, who were determined according to their pretest and final test success.

- **Diaries:** Reflective diaries are a supportive data type, frequently used in qualitative research. Throughout the study, a diary was kept both before and after the lesson by the researcher observer and the researcher instructor. In these diaries, the researchers noted down their feelings, thoughts, impressions, and evaluations concerning the implementation. These diaries helped the researcher develop a holistic and analytical perspective in the analysis of the data in the process regarding the research questions, and the findings were supported with direct quotations from the notes in the reflective diary in the presentation of the findings.

- **Student work samples:** Student work samples are documents that students work on in the classroom

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during an activity. These documents were collected by the researchers to be reviewed at the end of each course. The responses of the participants to the activities, the mistakes they made, the notes they received were reviewed and their status in the process was followed up.

- **Instruction reading achievement test:** When necessary, quantitative data collection techniques are used in action researches. In this study, the Instruction Reading Achievement Test was developed by the researchers in order to assess the effect of instruction reading activities. In the process of developing the test, first of all, literature review was made and the purpose of the implementation and the subject it aimed to assess were determined. After the implementation activities and the purpose of each activity were clarified, test activities that are in line with the relevant purposes were created and the expert opinion was obtained. The test, which was organized in line with the feedbacks of the experts, was applied as a pilot scheme before the implementation. Following the pilot scheme, the necessary changes and adaptations were made and the instruction reading test was given to the students as a pre-test at the beginning of the implementation and as a final test at the end. With this test, it was aimed to determine the differences in students' instruction reading success before and after the implementation.

Analysis and interpretation of data

In this section, firstly, the quantitative data, and later the analysis process of qualitative data were discussed.

- **Analysing quantitative data:** The instruction Reading Achievement Test was used as a pre-test and final test to determine the effects of instruction activities on instruction reading behaviour. After the test was completed by the participants, the test questions were scored and compared separately by the two researchers. The test results, scored according to the score table prepared in advance, are arranged to be compared. Analysis of the quantitative data obtained for doing the research questions was carried out using the "SPSS for Windows" package program. First, it was checked whether the test results demonstrated a normal distribution, and the normally distributed data were made ready for analysis. A paired sample test was used to make comparisons within groups. The findings obtained from the analysis of quantitative data are explained in the relevant section.
- **Analysis of qualitative data:** The analysis was carried out using the theoretical framework of the research in the holistic analysis of the data. Therefore, the descriptive analysis approach was used in the study. Accordingly, following the completion of the implementation process, the data were re-reviewed, a framework was created for descriptive analysis, the stage of coding the data and presenting the findings was started. The data analysis process consists of organizing the data for analysis, coding the data, and determining the relevant themes, defining, and interpreting the findings.

Development of the action plan

This stage of the research cycle is the stage of taking action to solve the problem based on the data obtained during the collection process. 15 activities were developed in the study to improve instruction reading behaviour based on the relevant literature. After each activity plan was developed, applied, and assessed in line with expert opinions, the next activity was conducted. In the development of these 15 activities, a series of suggestions developed by Zakhartchouk (1990), as well as other studies in the literature, were used as a base on teaching instruction reading. The activities were conducted in the following five phases:

- Revealing perceptions about instruction reading
- Creating instructions
- Analyzing instructions
- Associating all the information (symbolic-visual-structural) with the instructions
- Associating the lesson with the exercise
- Designing the results

Research Environment and Participants

The research was carried out in the Text Grammar course, which is a third-semester course in the French Teaching Program of Faculty of Teaching, Eskisehir Anadolu University in the spring term of the 2018/2019 academic year. During the activities, a camera was placed in the room in such a way that it could see the whole class. The observer researcher also had the opportunity to sit in the back row and observe the board and the researcher lecturer who deliver the lecture. The participants of the study were pre-service teachers studying in the second-grade in the French Language Teaching Program. All the participants have learned French as a second language when they started university, and all of them started their faculty education after taking at least one year of preparatory education.

As B1 language level is necessary to be successful in the preparatory class, it was assumed that the French language level of the students was B1/B1 +.. In the research, the participants were determined using the maximum diversity sampling method (Patton, 2018; Punch, 2009), being one of the versatile methods. The aim was to find similar and different points in the progress levels of students at different levels within the fields of this course. For this purpose, the no focus student was determined at the beginning of the study, and focus students were determined according to the final test results after the implementation. In determining the focus students, pre-test, and final test results were examined. Accordingly, 2 people with the highest improvement, 2 people with the lowest improvement, and 2 people with moderate improvement were determined. Instruction reading activities in the classroom were carried out addressing the whole class. However, semi-structured interviews were conducted only with the focus students after the activity. 2 of the focus students were male and 4 of them were female. Participation in the study was based on voluntariness, the subject, purpose, and scope of the research were explained to the students at the beginning of the process, and their written consents were noted.

Validity and Reliability

In the study, the processes of designing the research, collecting data, analysing, implementing, and interpreting the findings were taken as criteria of cogency and reliability. The measures taken to prevent possible problems regarding the validity and reliability of the findings obtained from the data collected objectively can be summarized as follows:

- Data diversification was made by using different and multiple data collection sources.
- In-depth and consistent findings were obtained by using both quantitative and qualitative techniques.
- For the content validity of the instruction reading achievement test, which was prepared in the quantitative dimension of the research, the field experts were consulted.
- The role of researchers in the research process was described reflectively.
- Video recordings were monitored during the activity process and necessary controls were established over the data through expert opinions.
- The records were verified by allowing another expert to listen to some parts of the video and digital audio recordings made during the research process.
- The opinions of the validity committee were taken into consideration during the preparation of the action plans.
- The coding of the data was performed by the researchers, then they were compared to find out whether they were encoded similarly.
- Sufficient time was spent in the research environment to determine the needs and collect credible and reliable data (2 weeks before the activity; 11 weeks during the activity).
- Originality was achieved by including quotations from relevant data sources without commenting on the data.
- The data were checked for consistency.
- The results obtained from the data were correlated with each other as well as with the literature, and the formations were perceived by including any different opinions and contrary statements.

FINDINGS

In this section, the findings obtained from the qualitative and quantitative data collected during the research are presented and interpreted in separate sections. First, the findings obtained from the quantitative data were presented, and then that of the qualitative data were interpreted.

Findings Obtained from the Quantitative Data

Findings on the effect of instruction reading activities on pre-service teachers' instruction reading behaviour

In order to find an answer to the question *"How do instruction reading activities affect pre-service teachers' instruction reading behaviour?"* an instruction reading achievement test was given to the pre-service teachers at the beginning and the end of the research process.

The data obtained from these assessments made as a pre-test and final test were analysed and interpreted using the SPSS Windows package program.

To determine whether there was a significant difference between the pre-assessment results of the achievement test and the final assessment results, the dependent sample t-test was conducted, and the results are presented in table 1.

As seen in Table 1, the pre-service teachers who participated in the study had a pre-test average score of 27 with a standard deviation of 22 and their final test average score was 46 with a standard deviation of 23. The findings show that there is an increase of 19 points in the final test scores for the instruction reading achievement test given to the participant group of 13 people. The "t" value was calculated in order to determine the statistical significance of the difference between the averages of the scores obtained from the achievement tests- pre-test and final test assessments made to evaluate the progress of the participants in reading comprehension skills was found to be significant at the significance level of 0.05. According to the findings, it can be said that instruction reading activities conducted during the action research influence the development of instruction reading skills of French teacher candidates.

Findings Obtained from Qualitative Data

The implementation process of this study, which aims to examine the development of independent instruction reading behaviours of the participants by conducting the instruction reading activities for French teacher candidates, started on February 25, 2019, and ended on April 29, 2019. This process of the research was carried out in the Text Grammar course. The implementation was carried out in one hour of the three hours weekly class on Mondays, and it took 11 weeks in total (pre-test + 9 weeks of practice + final test). A technique was determined for each week, and activities suitable for the technique were prepared and conducted. The findings regarding the implementation process are presented under the title of "Findings Regarding Instruction Reading Techniques".

To obtain data on the process of the research, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with six participants selected through maximum sampling from the classroom. The findings obtained from these interviews were presented under the title "Findings Regarding the Opinions of Pre-service Teachers on the Implementation Process".

Findings on teaching instruction reading techniques

In the study, a series of techniques suggested by Zakhartchouk (1990) were adapted and applied to improve

Table 1. Instruction reading achievement test dependent t-test results between pre-test and final test scores

Tests	N	X	S	T	p
Pre-test	13	27	22	-5	.000*
Final test	13	46	23		

instruction reading skills. The implementation was carried out in six phases listed below:

- Revealing perceptions about instruction reading
- Creating instructions
- Analysing Instructions
- Correlating all the information (symbolic-visual-structural) in the instructions
- Correlating the lesson with the exercise
- Designing the outcome

These phases were studied as techniques that were to be studied for reading and understanding instructions, aiming to reveal the difficulties encountered in instruction reading and to offer solutions to them.

Although each one is considered separately, it is also used in a highly interconnected and intertwined way. In this section, findings, and comments regarding the teaching of each technique are included.

The implementation process of the activities performed in nine weeks was generally carried out as given below:

- Greeting students
- Handing out the activity sheet to students
- Reading aloud the instructions for the activity
- Give students time to answer the activity
- Checking students' answers
- Giving correct answers to students and correcting their mistakes
- Discussion on wrong answers
- Questioning the purpose of the activity and asking students to draw conclusions

Findings on revealing the perceptions on instruction reading

Revealing perceptions about instruction reading is related to how the instruction is defined by students, how it is read, and what the students do in situations that are not understood (Zakhartchouk, 1990: 21). In the first two weeks of the implementation, three activities were used to create awareness in students and to reveal their general perceptions about the instructions. While the attention level of the participants in instruction reading was examined with the first activity, the types of instructions and questions that could be asked on the instructions were examined with the second and third activities. The activities were first made individually by the participants, then the answers were discussed with the participation of the whole class in the presence of the teacher.

After the first activity, the participants realized that they were not careful enough with reading the instructions, which they found quite surprising. The second researcher conveyed the participants' current reactions in his reflective diary as follows:

Some were surprised, some laughed, some got disappointed. They gave reactions saying, «So we were meant to write down when we saw the instruction "write"(écrivez)?» Some found it hard to understand what was going on even after the explanations and were unable to hide their confusion saying, «Ahh!» And some grumbled, saying, «Did we write them down for nothing?» It seems noticeably clear how careless students act while studying (25.02.2019).

The teacher candidates participated actively and willingly in the second and third activities. While trying to guess the types of instructions in the second activity, in the third activity, they evaluated the questions asked by the students in the classroom to understand the instruction. While some of the participants correctly understood the work to be done, some felt hesitation. Participants' attitudes towards this activity were reflected in the second researcher's diary as follows: *"Students participated more in this activity. They were sometimes hesitant and gave wrong answers. They responded like 'I would have asked it if it were me' and realized that they were asking unnecessary questions. I think this activity has achieved its purpose and demonstrated the expected." (4.03.2019)*

After the answers, the first researcher asked the students what kind of conclusions they drew from these activities. Some of the answers from the students are as follows:

P4: "If I were a teacher, I would try to write more clear instructions to avoid receiving such questions from students."

P5: "I will think twice when I ask a question."

It can be said that the activities aimed to reveal students' perceptions of instruction reading achieved their purpose, students gained awareness throughout the process, and they realized their perceptions and mistakes. This initial phase prompted the participants to question about instruction reading.

Findings on teaching instruction creation technique

The technique of creating instructions is related to the vocabulary, syntactic structure, readability, and presentation of the instructions. The technique of creating instructions was studied for two weeks. For this purpose, a total of four activities were conducted. In the first two activities in which the instruction creation technique was used, it was aimed to work on the writing and creation of the instruction to distinguish the various types of instructions and to examine the actions generally used in them.

The third activity consisted of a text and four questions asked in the context of this text. Students were asked to read and restate these questions in a different way while asking the same thing. In the fourth activity, there was a user manual of a tent type consisting of five stages. Each stage had four statements. These statements were given in the form of instructions, recommendations, and comments, and students were asked to strike out those that were not in the form of instructions.

In the third activity, most of the students wrote down the answers directly instead of rewriting the questions. Only one student understood what to do and was able to write different modes of articulation next to the questions. One of the students stated that he understood what to do but answered the questions irrelevantly, only not to give a blank paper as he could not give the right answer. The second researcher's observations and comments on this activity were reflected in his diary as follows: *"Somehow they tried to do something and secure themselves. Besides, as far as I understand from their behaviour, they were not 100% sure about what they were asked for." (11.03.2019)*

"I saw that the students paid a lot of attention to the shape/ format of the instruction. While answering, they first try to understand the instruction looking at the format instead of reading and understanding the instruction. Of course, while reading the instruction, the format can also give a clue or help, but focusing directly on the format can be misleading. For example, one of the students attributed his mistake to the absence of a line between the questions." (11.03.2019)

In the second week, the technique of creating instructions continued to be worked on, and two activities were conducted for this purpose. In the first activity, it was aimed to work on the way of writing and creating instructions and to let the students write instructions. In line with this intention, the students were given a series of question sentences and asked to convert these question sentences into imperative sentences. In this activity, it was observed that most of the students did not have difficulty and could provide correct answers. In the other activity, students were given a series of answers and asked to guess and write the instruction. The students worked in groups and wrote instructions, then the groups exchanged the instructions they wrote, and each group tried to answer the instructions written by another group. It was observed that the groups could write well-expressed instructions despite some of their shortcomings. It has been observed that the writers of the instructions proceeded on the right track in general terms but skipped some details and directions. As a matter of fact, when they saw the answers of their friends, they noticed it themselves and responded as "If we had known that they would answer, we would have written them more carefully." This activity aimed to enable students to see themselves in the position of both the writer and the answerer, and thus, they could think bilaterally.

Findings on teaching instruction analysis technique

Analysing the instructions is to focus on the function and meaning of each element in the instruction. It requires breaking down the instruction, establishing connections between the parts, and analysing them. The teaching of the instruction analysis technique, as in the previous ones, was used for two weeks and a total of four activities were conducted. In the first week when the instruction analysis technique was taught, the students were asked to distinguish between the basic (sine qua non) and additional information included in the instructions, and they worked on breaking out the instruction into its components. For this purpose, the students were provided with a series of instructions and asked to identify the explanation expressing the work to be done in the instruction, to circle the action stating the activity to be performed, and then to underline the complements of these actions.

It was seen that the students had difficulty in understanding what to do in this activity, the researcher intervened and led them to understand it step by step. The second researcher's notes on this activity were reflected in the diary as follows:

"They had difficulty both in understanding the directive and answering questions even after the instruction

was announced. So, students have trouble deciphering the instructions; they have difficulty in choosing the part of the instruction that indicates the actual action. Many verbs in the instruction have the same function. Many students had a hard time finding the sentence that conveyed the main action in the activity. One of the students asked the researcher why they did not mark the verb «dissent» in the additional information section of instruction A. When the researcher said it was additional explanatory information, he said, «Oh, I marked all the verbs.» Even though the instruction was clear about what to do, he made a mistake and looked at the format of the instruction without paying attention to the meaning and marked all the verbs. However, not all verbs lead the student to an action." (01.04.2019).*

In the second week when the instruction analysis technique was taught, the students were given three instructions and the answers were provided for these instructions. Students were asked to examine the instructions and the answers given, then to identify the mistakes.

In line with the decision made by the validity committee to include thinking aloud in the next process, the researcher explained the aloud-thinking-technique to the students after distributing the worksheets of this activity, and he applied the technique, reading an instruction to set an example. Then, he asked two students to read the first instruction in the activity using the same technique. In this process, it was observed that students had difficulty in performing the reading act using this technique. The researcher made a minor intervention and provided guidance.

After the aloud -reading exercise, they started to work on the activity. In this activity, students were asked to examine the worksheet and find mistakes in the answers, caused by misreading the instruction. However, some students thought that they had to answer the questions on the worksheet themselves, and then, by means of the researcher's explanations and help, they were able to fully understand what they were supposed to do. The activity was performed in company with the researcher and with the active participation of the students.

Findings on the teaching of the correlating technique concerning the information (symbolic-visual-structural) in the instruction

All the information in the instruction (symbolic-visual-structural) is related to the correlating technique, instruction, and its environment. It is based on establishing a connection between given symbolic, visual, and structural information and instructions. Three activities were carried out in two weeks to use this technique.

In the first week, eight instructions were given in one table and six responses in a separate table and students were asked to match the instructions and answers accordingly. A volunteer student was asked to read the instructions by thinking aloud. The statements of the student in question demonstrating the aloud-thinking-process are as follows:

P1: *"When starting, I looked at the table below before reading the instruction. Here were the letters A, B, C and I saw the numbers going as 1,2,3, below. I considered this as a pairing. I am looking at the instruction (reads the*

instruction). On the first table, there are consignments (instructions), on the second table there are answers and extracts, it says there are things that respond to consignments. It says, "Match the Consigne", for example, the letters A, B, C, and the numbers 1,2,3."

It was observed that P1 read in very correct order. Other students stated that they read similarly. The students completed this activity without much difficulty and in general, they were able to make the correct matches. This matter was reflected in the second researcher's diary as follows:

"The students had no trouble in understanding and answering this exercise. I attribute this to both the fact that the activity was not too complicated, and they were used to this activity type (pairing)" (Y.G. 15.04.2019).

In the second activity of this week, students were asked to find the question to which the answer was given, and in the third activity, they were asked to match the instructions regarding the given image. The instructions for these activities were also read by the students thinking aloud. After two of the students read the instructions using the aloud-thinking-technique, the students were able to respond without difficulty. The positive effects of aloud thinking in this activity were reflected in the second researcher's diary as follows:

"I think this method is beneficial and interesting for students. They listened to the instructions with interest and evaluated their reading friends. This process facilitated their understanding process too" (22.04.2019).

In addition, as revealed in Lefevre and Dixon's (1986) study, it was observed that examples are useful and important during the reading process. The example helps students understand better.

Findings on teaching the technique of correlating the lesson with the exercise

The technique of correlating the lesson with the exercise is based on establishing a connection between the exercise and any lesson and making sense of the exercise in this context. This technique was used during one class hour and one activity was deemed sufficient. In this activity, certain themes were given and the names under these themes were listed (for example theme of youth, and below the themes of literature, grammar, etc.). The students were asked to form groups of two/three and design an exercise suitable for that area within the framework of the theme given and to write an instruction.

When the response time was over, the answers between the groups were swapped and a form was given to each group to evaluate what the other groups came up with. In the form there were such questions as, "Is the exercise related to the given theme and area? Has the instruction been formed properly? Under what conditions can the exercise be done? (Which prior knowledge is required? What material should be used?)" With the help of this form, the students assessed each other's answers, and after the evaluation process, they returned the exercises to the group that prepared them to examine the assessments.

It was observed in this activity that the students were able to write appropriate instructions despite several mistakes. It

was also concluded that they were good at determining each other's mistakes and they could see their own mistakes better after the assessment. Most importantly, they listed the characteristics that an instruction must have as follows: the instruction should be clear, not confusing, it should be compatible with the subject and it should be regarded through the perspective of students.

Findings on teaching the technique of predicting the outcome

Predicting the outcome is to mentally design the product that will emerge during or after reading the instruction at the beginning of the activity. This technique was taught during one class hour and the time was considered sufficient for all the techniques are interconnected and intertwined. Therefore, this technique was indirectly used and studied in previous activities.

This activity was based on the ability to predict the desired task, plan, and predict the outcome in the instruction. In this activity, two documents were taken from a textbook (Alter Ego 2, 2006) for teaching French as a foreign language. The students were asked the following questions: In which lesson (grammar, reading, etc.) were these documents used? What should be known to do the exercise? What kind of product will come out at the end? Is the provided material required (graphic, advertisement)?

The notes in the second researcher's diary regarding last week's activity and the students' ability in instruction reading are as follows:

"Students now generally understand the work/task more easily, but they have difficulty in detail. In the beginning, they also had a hard time understanding the gist, and they had serious difficulties, which have been come over right now, there is still room for improvement for little details. At the same time, more practice are needed for reading comprehension because although we have been studying details for the last few weeks, we cannot cover much distance due to poor reading skills. For example, no student understood the meaning of the verb "échangez", so they could not make a correct inference. I think the lack of such linguistic skills prevents them from being better at instruction reading. (Y.G.29.04.2019).

During this last week of implementation, the Validity Committee members agreed that it would be appropriate to terminate the process. During the meeting, it was discussed that there was a recession in the last couple of weeks and there was no obvious improvement. Among the reasons for this, it was emphasized that there was some sort of satisfaction with some activities which achieved their purpose, but the source of the ongoing problems was related to other issues (lack of vocabulary and reading information, etc.).

Findings regarding the participants' views on the application process

The main themes and sub-themes that emerged as a result of semi-structured interviews with six participants selected in line with the results of the instruction reading achievement

test are presented in Table 2 and interpreted by supporting the expressions of the participants. As a result of the analysis, three main themes were obtained: the effect of instruction reading activities, instruction reading behaviours before application, and opinions on the application process.

The effect of instruction reading activities

During the semi-structured interviews, students were asked to make a general assessment of the activities to determine whether the activities influenced the instruction reading behaviour of the students. Based on the assessments of the students, the main theme of the effect of instruction reading activities and the effect of using strategies, the development of instruction reading awareness, the increase of vocabulary related to instruction reading, the increase of self-confidence regarding reading comprehension, contribution to professional development and the effect on academic achievement were received.

- **The effect of using strategy:** The students' ability to read the instructions correctly and to perform the intended work or task as being independent learners without the need for any intervention or explanation from the teacher, is directly related to the ability to use effective strategies. As a result of the study, it was seen that the students developed different strategies in this process based on their expressions. The interviews reveal that the students now focus on the actions that report work in the instructions, read more carefully, try to infer the meaning, and adopt a discriminative reading attitude.

The first and fourth participants stated that they focused on the actions reporting the task as follows:

P1: *I used to read more superficially; I was not focusing on the task that we were asked for. I was reading the entire instruction, but I was reading it superficially, then I focused on the answers and the question, but now I am focusing primarily on the instruction before the answer and the question.*

P4: *I realized many things, we should highlight it, circle it. It helped me realize the task better.*

Table 2. The theme and sub-themes resulting from data analysis

The effect of instruction reading activities
- Its effect on using strategy
- Developing instruction reading awareness
- Increasing vocabulary related to instruction reading
- Increasing vocabulary related to reading comprehension
- Contribution to their professional development
- Its effect on academic achievement
Pre-implementation instruction reading behaviours
- Internalizing instruction reading
- Considering instruction reading as a waste of time
- Disregarding instruction reading
- Lack of instruction reading knowledge and skills
Views on the implementation process
- Language level
- Application method
- Suggestions for the process

The first participant stated that he could now deduce the meaning of the words he did not know, with the following statements:

P1: *For example, I was having trouble without receiving any explanation for the instructions by the teachers, but now if I know the task and the meaning of the verb that is provided, I don't need any explanation. I understand it myself.*

- **Improving instruction reading awareness:** One of the aims of the activities throughout the study was to raise awareness among students. Because the studies conducted in the relevant field reveal that there happens to be a problem in this regard, that students do not read the instructions completely and are not aware of the importance of this process (Ercanlar, 2016). Based on the statements of the students, it is assumed that the activities have an influence on raising awareness. All the students expressed a positive opinion in this regard.

The first participant emphasized that he was not aware that he had a problem regarding this matter before the activities, but that he found out about the problems he encountered during the activity process with the following words:

P1: *First, when I started the activity, I never had such an expectation. Actually, we were told about the purpose of the activity, but I did not think I had a problem with it, I thought I read it correctly, I thought I had no problem with the instructions, but at the end of the activity, I realized that I used to have a problem with the instructions before, which helped me overcome it.*

Participant number four stated that he had skimmed the instruction before, but developed an awareness after the activities, and now he knew how important it was to read the instructions carefully.

P4: *Before we just read the question and did the exercise in our own way without reading the instruction, but now I don't start answering the question before reading the instruction for I failed in understanding many questions before.*

- **Increasing vocabulary related to instruction reading:** Two participants emphasized that instruction reading activities contributed positively to the development of French vocabulary. It is understood from the expressions of the students that there is a development in learning the meaning of the actions that are frequently used in the instructions.

P3: *For example, I learned the question verbs. I did not know any of the question verbs before. Other than that, there are some expressions such as 'underline or circle'. I was not paying too much attention to such details.*

P6: *Of course, there is. We know many verbs, but for example, it is written "montrer" on the instruction, we think of it as something we should write in general. It is written "indiquez" on the instruction and we know them all, but we might not know the exact meaning of these words or their nuances, which might be the reason for our mistakes.*

- **Increasing self-confidence regarding reading comprehension:** Another effect of instruction reading activities applied during the research was on students'

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self-confidence. Three students expressed their views on this issue. Two of them expressed positive opinions, whereas one student expressed a negative opinion. Two students who presented positive opinions stated that they felt more confident not only in this lesson but also in other lessons and exams.

P4*: Of course, I have high self-confidence when I am sure that I understand or when I know what to do in the exam. So yes, I can say that my self-confidence increased more in this respect.*

P6: *Yes. I feel more confident and relaxed after these activities for as our teacher has also mentioned in many lessons; these instructions are not only about the exam or the school. I feel more confident in many aspects for I read the instruction to understand the task, not only for the sake of reading.*

The student who expressed a negative opinion stated that he found the activities useful, but that the mistakes he made during the process had a negative effect on his self-confidence.

P5: *Frankly, I think it was useful in a way, but on the other hand, it made me feel less self-confident after a while for I always made mistakes in every activity from the first day and then I attended every lesson thinking, "Well, I will probably fail again." However, I can say that I read the instructions more carefully and I believe I paid more attention to the significant points.*

• **Contribution to professional development**: Another sub-theme reached by analyzing student views obtained through semi-structured interviews is that these activities contribute to the professional development of students. A student stated that these activities were beneficial in terms of professional development and that he could use this knowledge and skills for his teaching profession in the future.

P2:*The instruction is particularly useful because we are studying in the department of teaching and we will have to prepare instructions for our students in the future. You know, if we prepared instructions without this awareness, we would teach our students something wrong. We could cause a misunderstanding, but you have now shown us how the instruction must really be.*

• **Its influence on academic achievement:** It is possible to say that the application based on the expressions that students use while presenting their opinions contributes to their academic achievement. As can be understood from what the students expressed, this implementation made a significant contribution to the exams and their grades.

P1: *I can answer the questions more easily by reading and understanding the instructions correctly. Someone who does not understand the task may give unnecessary answers, which causes him or her to get a low grade. However, when I get the question right and fulfill the task clearly, I get a higher score though my answer may be short. In other words, not reading the instructions costs us time and effort.*

P6: *I can transfer it, and I really like it. First, out of habit, I jumped to the conclusion before reading the instruction*

carefully. *Then I thought it might be useful to read the instruction more carefully and once I did so, I saw that I was about to make a mistake, which would cost me a good score.*

Pre-implementation instruction reading behaviors

During the interview, the students were asked to compare their reading behaviors before and after the activities to determine whether the activities influenced instruction reading behaviors. As a result of the data obtained from the statements of the students, the second main theme, 'Pre-application instruction reading behaviors' has been obtained.

The theme consists of four sub-themes: inability to internalize instruction reading, considering it as a waste of time, not caring about reading the instructions, not having knowledge and skills of instruction reading.

• **Inability to internalize instruction reading**
Based on the statements of the students, it is understood that they did not use to read the instructions completely before the application. One reason for this behavior is their inability to comprehend the necessity of instruction reading and to internalize it as a behavior.

The second participant emphasizes that this negative behavior stems from the test techniques they have been taught so far.

P2: *We do not read the instruction properly; we directly look at the answers and then the questions for we are used to the test technique.*

• **Considering instruction reading as a waste of time:** Analysis of the obtained data reveals that another reason why students do not read the instructions from an analytical point of view is that they see this stage as a waste of time and they try to fulfill the work task as soon as possible.

P3: *The student also thinks, "We have limited time, we have to be fast, the question is more important than the instructions.*

P5*: I used to think that I would not be able to finish the exam on time for I always have a problem with time management. I am already a stressful person in normal life, but now I know that reading the instructions would never cost me time; it rather saves me time.*

• **Disregarding instruction reading:** Another reason why students do not read the instructions in detail before the activity, according to the data obtained from the interviews, is that they disregard this phase. The second participant clearly stated that he was aware of having a problem hereof but did not look for a solution.

P2: *We were aware of the problem, but we did not think about the ways we could handle it, we were not looking for a solution.*

The first participant emphasized that he had not read the instructions carefully enough before and was not aware of the importance.

P1:*... I used to read instructions superficially. I have been told this before, but not the way we have done here now, of course. I was also told before that I should read the instructions carefully, but not like that. I was just*

reading as if I was reading the question and I always thought I understood the task. But now I realized that once we learn to read the instruction properly, then everything gets easier.

- **Lack of instruction reading knowledge and skills:** During the semi-structured interviews, the answers given by the students to the question about comparing instruction reading behaviors before and after the activity revealed that the students did not have adequate knowledge and skills to read instructions before the implementation. As the students stated, instruction reading activities during the implementation had a positive influence on the instruction reading knowledge and skills.

P3: *I have never learned about this until now. I was not even aware of that the lectureres were trying to teach us this. I do not know, if they had tried to teach with such reinforcement exercises, it would have been better. I remember them reading the instructions, emphasizing the expression "not".*

Views on the implementation process

During the semi-structured interviews held with six students following the implementation, the students were asked to evaluate the implementation process. The third and last main theme obtained from the answers given by the students was named as "views on the implementation process". When the answers of the students were reviewed, it was seen that the students expressed opinions emphasizing different points. Accordingly, "opinions on the implementation process" are presented under three sub-themes, the main theme of which is language level, method of implementation, and suggestions for the process.

- **Language level:** Two students commented on the language level of the activities during the implementation. Based on these views, it is possible to say that the students had some problems in this respect.

The fourth participant stated that he had problems with the use of metalanguage (underlining sign pronouns, circling conjunctions…), but attributed this to his forgetfulness.

P4: *I have a problem in this respect. For instance, I forget the titles of some topics. I am a forgetful person. In fact, we do not pay attention to the words such as circle, underline in the questions, and as I said topic titles.*

Referring to the first activity of the implementation, the fifth participant said that he found the activity very misleading. However, the purpose of the related activity was not to surprise the reader but to emphasize the importance of careful reading.

P5: *It seems like you have done something very tricky, like pointing with a finger...*

- **Implementation method**: While evaluating the implementation of the activities, the students expressed their satisfaction about the organization of the activities, the opportunity for self-assessment, the opportunity to learn from their peers, the ability to apply their knowledge and skills to other lessons and exams, and to include the technique of aloud thinking. Based on all these views, it

can be said that the students were motivated throughout the process, they were satisfied with the implementation and found it useful.

P3: *Activities… I mean… there was one activity we did; I think it was an exceptionally good one. Three pieces of paper were given to each group, and they were constantly swapped, so the student did the activity understanding the other student, I think it was the best one.*

- **Suggestions for the process:** During the semi-structured interviews, questions were asked to the students to receive their opinions about what the teacher and student's responsibilities should be. The findings obtained from the answers given to these questions were collected under the sub-theme of "suggestions for the process". In the following statement, the first participant emphasizes the importance of the teacher's guidance in developing the student's instruction reading skills.

P1: Of course, the student can also study the subject alone. However, a guidance would be much better. It might also work without a guidance, but an activity like this we have just made would be great. As can be understood from the student views listed below, the students suggested that there should be individual efforts to develop correct instruction reading behaviors.

P2: *Speaking for myself, I tried to do the task given to us properly. If everyone did the same thing, the activity would be particularly useful. I mean I believe you could see the benefit of it if you do it heartedly.*

P1: *I think this should be implemented as a mandatory practice, even before the university, it should be implemented in the high school for it is necessary to understand the instruction to answer the question, it is necessary to read it correctly. It lays the foundation for doing questions. I think it should be widely implemented.*

The fifth participant stated that he was contented with looking through the instructions throughout his education life and waited for the teacher to explain them. The participant thinks that the teacher's explanations should be limited to words the students do not know the meaning of.

P5: *From the very beginning, they should have never explained their instructions in any exam. You know, when I take the exam, I first receive the exam paper and I skim through it, then I am waiting for the teacher to explain the instruction, I think it was a mistake that they helped us develop such a habit. But of course, what they have been doing is not bad, but I also think it does not do us any good. Some instructions are too long, and they contain words that we may not know; they can explain those words, but explaining the instruction as a whole does not so us any good for they make us free-riders.*

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Instructions are generally perceived in the educational environment as top-down directives and instructions conveyed from teacher to student. It is observed that written instructions in the classroom are not read by students as frequently as it should be. Studies in the literature also show that while students are reading questions and instructions during

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courses and exams, they expect guidance from teachers even at higher education (Author, 2016; Gorine, 2010; Lengagne, 2005; Zakhartchouk, 2000). The results of Author's (2016) study with higher education preparatory class students also reveal that French foreign language students do not know the correct instruction reading methods and do not develop the habit of instruction reading. The findings obtained from this study show that the awareness level of the students towards instruction reading is quite low. Participants stated that they read the instructions mostly carelessly and hastily, sometimes trying to understand the task by not reading them at all. In addition, as a result of the analysis of the interviews with the participants, it was seen that they got used to the teacher's reading and explanation of the instructions, and they developed such a habit starting from primary education.

In this section, the results obtained from the research findings, the discussion of them concerning the relevant literature, and the suggestions developed in this direction are included.

Results regarding the Effect of Instruction Reading Activities on Pre-Service Teachers' Instruction Reading Behavior

The fact that there is a significant difference in favour of the final test between the pre-test and final test assessment of the Instruction Reading Achievement Test, which was prepared to assess the development of the pre-service teachers' instruction reading skills, showed that instruction reading activities had a positive influence on the instruction reading behaviour of the pre-service teachers.

Research in the field indicates that it is particularly important for students to develop the habit of instruction reading and to learn the correct reading techniques. Zakhartchouk (2000; 2001; 2004) also argued that instruction reading behaviour is teachable and developable behaviour in many studies. If teachers help their students develop this correctly, they will be more successful in every field.

Results regarding Teaching Instruction Reading Techniques

During the process of the implementation, six techniques were planned to operate in order: revealing perceptions about instruction reading, creating instructions, analysing instructions, associating all the information in the instruction (symbolic-visual-structural), associating the lesson with the exercise, designing the final result. All these techniques follow an order from easy to difficult and one affects the other. Planning this way helped the participants learn the easiest first and the most difficult the last. During the conduction of each activity, the participants were first given time for individual study, and then the activity was discussed. This process created an awareness of the instruction in pre-service teachers and supported instruction reading behaviour. The participants who needed the teacher's support in the first weeks learned to act independently as the process progressed.

The activities aimed to reveal the participants' perceptions of instruction reading reached their goal, created awareness in the participants throughout the process, enabled them to notice their rights or wrongs, and improve themselves in this direction. The observation results showed that the participants were careless about reading the instructions at the very beginning of the implementation and they tried to make sense by looking at the form of the exercise rather than the meaning of the instruction. Participants also developed awareness on this matter over time and began to read the instructions more carefully. This finding of the study is similar to many studies in the field. The studies (Ganier et al., 2000; Heurley, 1994) show that the way the instruction is organized, the position of the information given, and the use of images are remarkably effective in understanding the instruction. These studies show that teachers and experts who write the instructions in the books are more careful about this issue and using tools that will facilitate understanding while preparing instructions are effective in the interpretation process.

It was also concluded that the pre-service teachers had poor reading skills and could not use reading strategies correctly and consciously before. Even if they have learned the correct instruction reading strategies with the help of this study, their reading skills and vocabulary are weak in general, which creates difficulties in understanding and analysing instructions. It was observed that using the aloud-thinking-technique and assessments of the person who used this technique by other participants was highly effective. According to the findings of this study, one of the most important problems faced by the participants while reading the instructions is not knowing the meaning of the words used and therefore not being able to deduce the correct meaning from the instructions. Studies in the literature also support this finding. Chaplier (2010) and Ganier & Heurley (2003) also stated that students have difficulty in instruction reading mostly due to a lack of vocabulary and terminology used in the instruction, which makes the instruction difficult to understand. Another of the findings of the study shows that the participants had difficulty in distinguishing important words while reading the instructions, in understanding the high-level language used in the instruction, and in designing the expected result. The results of the research conducted by Caumet (2001) show that students have difficulties in similar issues and these difficulties cause problems in understanding the instruction.

Finally, studies such as writing instructions and finding mistakes in the instructions created awareness among the participants as pre-service teachers and contributed to the development of their teaching profession knowledge. Towards the end of the study, it was observed that the purpose of the study was fulfilled, there was an improvement between before and after the implementation, the awareness of the participants about instruction reading improved, and they tried to use the strategies and methods they were taught during the activity. Both observation data and interviews support that even the timid and unwilling participants were then more willing to participate in the lesson.

Results regarding the Opinions of the Participants on the Implementation Process

Participants stated that instruction reading activities had positive effects on their academic achievement, strategy

use, and professional development. Besides, they stated that their self-confidence regarding reading comprehension and their vocabulary related to the instruction increased and that they developed instruction reading awareness. Participants questioned the instruction reading behaviours before the activity and revealed various problems. Before the activity, they stated that they did not have the necessary knowledge and skills to read instructions, they disregarded instruction reading, they could not internalize the instruction reading and they considered it as a waste of time. Some participants stated that they had difficulties regarding the language level of the activities used during implementation process. They also expressed that the use of high-level language in the instructions made it difficult to understand the instruction. While assessing the conduction of the activities, the participants expressed their satisfaction about the organization of the activities, the opportunity to learn from their peers, to benefit from the knowledge and skills they have acquired in other lessons and exams, and to include the technique of aloud thinking.

Participants made some suggestions regarding the conduction process and instruction reading training. Suggestions are as follows.

- Instruction reading activities should be conducted under the guidance of teachers,
- Students should make individual efforts in this direction,
- It should be ensured that all students can benefit from such a study,
- Reading habits of students should be developed, and
- Such practices should be compulsory starting from high school. Also, the participants stated that once the lesson starts, it would be effective to study the meanings of the words frequently used in the instructions and that teachers should stop the instruction-giving behaviour and only give the meanings of unknown words.

In addition, the suggestion, "teachers should stop the instruction-giving behaviour and they should only give the meanings of unknown words" expressed by the participants while reporting their opinions on instruction reading activities is similar to the suggestions in the literature. Yaiche and Mettoudi (2003) also revealed that teachers should act as mediators between the instruction and the student, do not accept the immediate answers after skimming the instruction, and direct them to think properly before they answer and to analyse the given information in the instruction. However, it has been suggested that special education should be given to students to develop effective behaviours for reading and applying the instructions (ibid.).

When the studies conducted in the literature were reviewed, it was seen that the studies for instruction reading were generally in the form of state determination and revealed the problems that were encountered during the process. There are many studies (Bissonette, 2005; Ganier & Heurley 2003; Yaiche & Mettoudi, 2003; Zakhartchouk 2000; 2004) that offer various suggestions to teachers and students for the solution and improvement of these problems. This study was designed and applied based on these suggestions. It can be said that the findings of the study support the

problems stated in the literature, the activities applied positively affect the instruction reading behaviour of the pre-service teachers and they found these practices useful.

ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

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