

An Analysis of the Art Elements of the Bologna Ragazzi Award Winning Picture Book: Focusing on Korean Writers

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Abstract

This study analyzes the art elements present in picture books by Korean authors who received the Bologna Ragazzi Award. A total of 35 award-winning books were analyzed with respect to four key elements: color, line, space, and texture. The results of the analysis are as follows. First, among the art elements, the most common chromatic colors feature four or more hues. Second, in terms of line, free lines were the most prevalent, followed by neat lines, no lines, and mixed lines, respectively. Third, regarding spatial representation, three-dimensional depictions were more common than two-dimensional ones. Lastly, in the category of texture, drawing materials were predominantly used, while collages, graphic elements, and photographs appeared in smaller proportions. These findings provide insights into the art elements in picture books created by Korean authors recognized by the Bologna Ragazzi Award. This study aims to support early childhood educators in understanding the importance of art elements in picture books and in selecting books that offer a diverse range of artistic experiences.

Keywords : *Bologna Ragazzi Award, Picture Book, Art Elements, Korean Writers*

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Introduction

Picture books are an excellent educational resource for young children. High-quality picture books not only offer children opportunities to explore the world but also help them develop an appreciation for art. Teachers should consider both the artistic elements and the stories when selecting picture books for children. It is important for teachers to focus not only on the narrative but also to engage children in discussions about the artistic elements of the books as they read together. When early childhood educators choose books that combine both content and artistic qualities for educational activities, they can refer to globally recognized awards for quality picture books.

Global awards for outstanding picture books include the Caldecott Medal, the Hans Christian Andersen Award, the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, and the Bologna Ragazzi Award. Among these, the Bologna Ragazzi Award is one of the most prestigious international awards in the field of children's literature. Presented annually at the Bologna Children's Book Fair, this award recognizes creative and exceptional children's books. It evaluates not only the content of the books but also their illustrations, design, and overall creativity, ensuring that winners are recognized for their artistic value. The Ragazzi Award selects the best works from among children's books published in a given year, during the Bologna International Book Fair, which is the largest children's book fair in the world.

Among various international picture book awards, the Bologna Ragazzi Award was selected for this study because it places a distinctive emphasis on the artistic quality of illustrations, book design, and visual creativity as core evaluation criteria, rather than focusing solely on narrative content. In addition, Korean authors have shown sustained and increasing recognition at the Ragazzi Awards since 2004, making it a particularly meaningful context for examining the art elements of Korean picture books within a global framework.

The Ragazzi Award is divided into four categories: fiction, non-fiction, comics, and opera prima. Starting in 2024, a new category for toddlers has been added, bringing the total number of categories to five: fiction, non-fiction, comics, opera prima, and the toddler category. For each of the five categories, two to three books are selected as winners or special mentions. Additionally, the New Horizons Award is given to works that demonstrate innovation, and special media-themed categories are recognized each year.

The history of Korean authors in the Bologna Ragazzi Awards began in 2004 when

『Grandma and the Tiger』, written by Cho Ho-Sang and illustrated by Yun Mi-suk, became the first Korean work to receive a special mention in the Fiction category. Since then, many Korean authors have gained recognition in various categories. In 2011, Kim Hee-kyung's 『The House of the Mind』 won the grand prize, marking a significant milestone in Korean children's literature. In 2024 alone, three Korean authors were honored, highlighting the growing prominence of Korean works in the Ragazzi Awards. Given the increasing recognition of Korean authors, further research is needed on this topic, particularly focusing on works by Korean authors who have won the Ragazzi Award, with a particular emphasis on the art elements that play a key role in these works.

Reflecting the high level of interest in literature surrounding the Ragazzi Awards, several studies have already been conducted in Korea. These studies include analyses of endpaper types in Bologna Ragazzi Award-winning Korean picture books (Nam & Kim, 2022), the meanings of 'para-texts' in children's picture books by Korean authors who have won the Bologna Ragazzi Awards (Kim & Shin, 2016), the role of picture book illustration in terms of iconotext (Park, 2012), and a comparative study of the Ragazzi Award and the Caldecott Medal (Yoon, 2001). Additionally, research has focused on specific authors of Ragazzi Award-winning books (Kwon, Lee, & Lee, 2016; Jang, 2022).

A picture book should not be regarded merely as a text with accompanying illustrations but as an integrated form of art in which words and images work together to create a unified meaning (Jeon, 2021). To explore the art elements of picture books, we looked for works by Korean authors who have won the Bologna Ragazzi Award. Picture books are artistic works in which the text and illustrations are organically connected to create meaning. Therefore, to fully understand and appreciate picture books, one must comprehend not only the written language but also the visual language of the illustrations. Understanding illustrations requires a foundational knowledge of the art elements that they embody (Shin, 2001). These art elements are fundamental components that visually structure all things in the world (Doosan Encyclopedia, n.d.), and they are commonly referred to as “artistic elements” or “art elements” in illustrations.

Analyzing picture books in terms of various art elements such as color, line, space, and texture can deepen our understanding of the role illustrations play in picture books. This recognition can enhance the perception of illustrations as integral components rather than mere supplements to the text. Moreover, this understanding can be applied effectively in

educational contexts. Given that the Ragazzi Award selects works based on artistic merit and creativity, more research is needed to examine the artistic and creative elements of picture books, particularly their visual aspects. While there has been research on the art elements of picture books, especially studies analyzing Caldecott Medal winners (Jeon, 2021), research focusing on the visual elements of Ragazzi Award-winning books remains limited.

This study aims to examine the art elements in the picture books of Korean authors who have won the Bologna Ragazzi Award. Through this analysis, the study seeks to assist teachers in considering art elements when selecting picture books for educational purposes, ensuring that young children can experience and appreciate these elements in ways that support their developmental needs. The research questions for this study are as follows:

The research question is as follows:

1. What are the characteristics of the art elements (color, line, space, texture) that appear in the Korean writer's picture books among the Bologna Ragazzi Award-winning books?

Research Method

Research subjects

To explore the art elements of picture books, we searched for works by Korean authors that have won the Bologna Ragazzi Award, from the first award in 2004 to the most recent in 2024. The total number of works by Korean authors who won the Bologna Ragazzi Award from 2004 to 2024 is 35. Out of the total 35 books, two were collaborative works between foreign and Korean authors: 『The house of the mind』(Kim Hee-kyung, Iwona Chmielewska, 2011) and 『Uroma』(Cha Woo-won Xuan, Lee Suzy, 2021). Both of these books were included in the analysis.

The titles of picture books by Korean authors who have won the Bologna Ragazzi Award are sometimes phonetically represented in Korean on the Bologna Ragazzi Award website. However, in this study, the Korean titles have been translated into English to facilitate understanding of the content of the picture books. The books analyzed in this study are shown

in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Book information*

Number	Book Title	Author	Award Category
1	The Grandma and the tiger	Cho Ho-Sang, Yun Mi-suk	2004 Fiction Special Mention
2	The subway rushes	Shin Dong-Jun	2004 Non-Fiction Special Mention
3	The enchanted bottle	Ko Kyung Sook	2006 Fiction Special Mention
4	Mathematics at the art museum	Majoongmul, Yoon Ju Kim	2009 Not Fiction Special Mention
5	Seokguram	Kim Mi Hye, Choi Mi Ran	2010 Fiction Special Mention
6	A house of the mind: Maum	Kim Hee-kyoung, Iwona Chmielewska	2011 Non-Fiction Winner
7	The stories shouldn't be true	The KyungSu Gang	2011 Non-Fiction Special Mention
8	Grimmie's white canvas	Lee Hyun-ju	2012 Opera Prima Special Mention
9	The thorn mountain	Park Sunmi	2013 Opera Prima Special Mention
10	Dust kid	Jung Yumi	2014 New Horizons Winner
11	My little doll's house	Jung Yumi	2015 Fiction Special Mention
12	The little wall	Jee Kyung-ae	2015 Fiction Special Mention
13	A dandelion is a dandelion	Jangsung Kim, Hyun-gyung Oh	2015 Non-Fiction Special Mention
14	Teruteru	Park Yeoncheol	2015 New Horizons Special Mention
15	Look up!	Jung Jinho	2015 Opera Prima Special Mention
16	The biggest cake in the world	Young-Eun Ahn, Seong-Hee Kim	2015 Books & Seeds Special Mention
17	Teeth hunters	Won Hee Jo	2017 Fiction Special Mention
18	Tree dancing	Bae Yoo Jeong	2018 New Horizons Winner
19	Wall	Jin-ho Jung	2018 Braw on Art Special Mention
20	Who are you	An Hyo-lim	2018 Opera Prima Special Mention
21	The moon over the apple orchard	Kwon Jung-saeng, Yoon Mi-sook	2019 Fiction Special Mention
22	A shadow	Chae Seung-yeon	2019 Opera Prima Special Mention
23	Iparapa yamooyamoo	Lee Gee-eun	2021 Comics Winner
24	The yulu linen	Cao Wenxuan, Suzy Lee	2021 Fiction Special Mention
25	Rice rice rice	Bamco	2021 Non-Fiction Special Mention
26	So much snow	Hyunmin Park	2021 Opera Prima Special Mention
27	Summer	Suzy Lee	2022 Fiction Special Mention
28	Father's big hands	Choi Deok-Kyu	2022 Non-Fiction Special Mention
29	Moving away	Ji Yeon Lee	2023 Fiction Special Mention
30	The blue: Bench	mia	2023 Opera Prima Special Mention
31	The shadow theater	Kyu-Ah Kim	2023 Comics Special Mention
32	House of dracula	5unday; Heedae Yun	2023 Comics Special Mention
33	Mo story	Yeonju Choi	2024 Opera Prima Special Mention
34	Rice cake house of a tiger	Seo Hyun	2024 Comics Special Mention
35	As you drive	Ji-an Kim	2024 Comics Special Mention

Research tools

Generally, art elements include points, lines, shapes, forms, colors, textures, volume, perspective, light and shadow, and space. Prior studies on picture book illustration have proposed various classifications of artistic elements. According to Bromley (1991), the most commonly observed art elements in picture book illustrations are color, line, shape, texture, arrangement, and overall effect. Kang, Gil, and Jang (2022) identified color, line, and space as the key art elements in picture book illustrations. Seo and Nam (2020) categorized color, line, arrangement, framing, shape, and form as the artistic elements of picture books. Yu (2012) analyzed the characteristics of award-winning picture books in children's literature, examining color, line, form, space, and texture as artistic elements. Jeon (2021) analyzed Caldecott-winning picture books by dividing their art elements into color, line, space, and texture.

Among these frameworks, this study adopted the criteria proposed by Yu (2012) and Jeon (2021) because both studies focused specifically on award-winning picture books and employed art-element categories that are widely applicable to comparative visual analysis. In addition, their analytical frameworks demonstrate conceptual clarity and have been empirically applied in previous picture book research, supporting their validity as analytical criteria.

Based on these prior studies, the analysis criteria for this study were developed by modifying and supplementing their original frameworks to better suit the characteristics of Korean Bologna Ragazzi Award-winning picture books. Specifically, the art elements were categorized into colors (achromatic color, chromatic color, mixed color), lines (neat lines, free lines, mixed lines, no lines), spaces (2D space, 3D space), and textures (drawing materials, collages, prints, designs, photographs). For texture, in cases where multiple types of texture were used in a single picture book, overlapping checks were performed to calculate the results. The art elements and details of each are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *The art elements of picture books*

	The art element
Color	achromatic color
	chromatic color (1–3 colors)
	chromatic color (4 or more)
	mixed colors (chromatic color and chromatic color)
Line	neat line
	free lines
	mixed lines
	no line
Space	2D Space
	3D Space
Texture ¹	textures by drawing materials (paint, crayons, colored pencils, pencils, pastels, etc.)
	collages
	prints
	designs (using various media such as computer graphics)
	photographs

Procedures

For this study, from April 2024 to May 2024, the researcher collected picture books by Korean authors that have won the Bologna Ragazzi Award and analyzed and organized their art elements over the course of about a month. The process for cataloging and analyzing the materials is as follows:

First, the picture books were classified by year of award, award category, title, and author. Second, two researchers collaboratively established the analysis criteria and detailed coding guidelines for the art elements, which were reviewed by experts in early childhood education and art. Third, each researcher independently conducted a first round of analysis of the illustrations based on the finalized criteria. Fourth, the level of agreement between the researchers’ analyses was assessed, and the initial agreement exceeded 80%. Disagreements mainly occurred in cases involving mixed color usage and overlapping texture types. Fifth,

¹ conduct overlapping checks on analysis criteria

all discrepant cases were discussed, ambiguous definitions were clarified, and a second round of analysis was conducted, resulting in over 90% agreement. Finally, the results of the second analysis were reviewed by two early childhood education experts, and minor revisions were made to the wording and operational definitions of certain categories to enhance clarity. The finalized criteria and results were used in the analysis.

Results

The analysis of the 35 award-winning picture books was presented according to the four elements of art: color, line, space, and texture.

Color

Among the four art elements of picture books, colors were analyzed first. The colors of picture books were examined by dividing them into four types: achromatic colors, chromatic colors (1-3 colors), chromatic colors (4 or more colors), and mixed colors. In this study, mixed colors are defined as the intentional use of both chromatic and achromatic colors within a single illustration to create visual contrast, mood, or compositional balance. The results of analyzing the colors of 35 picture books are shown in Table 3.

About half of the 35 picture books(45.71%) used more than four colors. Next, about a third of the picture books(34.29%) used chromatic color(1-3 colors). And 4 books(11.43%) used achromatic color, 3 books(8.57%) used mixed color.

Among the examples of four types of colors in the picture books, the first example of achromatic colors can be seen in 『Dust kid (2014)』 and 『The thorn mountain (2013)』. By using limited chromatic colors from 1 to 3 colors, such as 『Moving away (2023)』 and 『Who are you(2018)』, the writers also help the children focus on the message that they want to express in the picture book. Children's picture books mainly use four or more chromatic colors to express a bright feeling, as seen in 『Grimmie's white canvas (2012)』 and 『Iparapa yamunyamu (2021)』. Mixed colors refer to the use of achromatic colors throughout picture books, but chromatic colors are used only in scenes that the writer wants

Table 3. *The color elements of picture books*

	Achromatic color	Chromatic color (1–3 colors)	Chromatic color (4 or more)	Mixed colors (Achromatic color and chromatic color)
The Grandma and the tiger			✓	
The subway rushes			✓	
The enchanted bottle			✓	
Mathematics at the art museum			✓	
Seokguram		✓		
A house of the mind: Maum		✓		
The stories shouldn't be true		✓		
Grimmie's white canvas			✓	
The thorn mountain	✓			
Dust kid	✓			
My little doll's house	✓			
The little wall		✓		
A dandelion is a dandelion			✓	
Teruteru			✓	
Look up!	✓			
The biggest cake in the world			✓	
Teeth hunters			✓	
Tree dancing		✓		
Wall		✓		
Who are you		✓		
The moon over the apple orchard		✓		
A shadow				✓
Iparapa yamooyamoo			✓	
The yulu linen				✓
Rice rice rice			✓	
So much snow		✓		
Summer			✓	
Father's big hands				✓
Moving away		✓		
The blue: Bench		✓		
The shadow theater			✓	
House of dracula			✓	
Mo story		✓		
Rice cake house of a tiger			✓	
As you drive			✓	
Total (%)	4(11.43)	12(34.29)	16(45.71)	3(8.57)
		35(100.00)		

Examples of picture books

Achromatic
colors



[Dust kid, 2014]



[The thorn mountain, 2013]

Chromatic
colors
(1-3 colors)



[Moving away, 2023]



[Who are you, 2018]

Chromatic
colors
(4 or more
colors),



[Grimmie's white canvas, 2012]



[Iparapa yamunyamu, 2021]

Mixed colors
(mixture of
Achromatic
colors and
chromatic
colors)



[Look up!, 2015]

to emphasize. The picture book 『Look up! (2015)』 is an example of using mixed colors. In this book, achromatic colors are used to express the dark emotions of a child with a disability, and the writer used chromatic colors to express that the main character's emotions became bright like pink flowers after he went out and met people at the end. Discussing the relationship between story and color while looking at picture books with young children could help deepen their understanding of visual meaning.

Line

The lines in the picture books were examined by dividing them into four types: neat lines, free lines, mixed lines, and no lines. Neat lines refer to controlled and uniform line work, while free lines indicate spontaneous and expressive strokes. Mixed lines denote the intentional coexistence of both types within a single illustration. The results of the analysis of the lines in the 35 picture books are shown in Table 4.

Of the 35 picture books, 42.86% predominantly used free lines, making it the most common style. Following this, 40% utilized neat lines. Mixed lines (a combination of neat and free lines) were found in 1 book (2.86%), while 5 books (14.28%) used no lines at all.

Examples of neat lines can be seen in 『The subway rushes(2004)』. Free lines are prominently featured in 『Summer(2022)』, where line precision or uniformity is not prioritized. Instead, variations in line direction, thickness, length, and color capture the intended impression. For instance, the flowing water is depicted with free lines, using techniques such as rough, thick lines, thin lines, and splattering to express the refreshing and untamed streams of summer.

The mixed lines (combination of neat and free lines) are evident in 『Wall (2018)』. In this picture book, space is represented by neat lines, while the main character is depicted with free lines, creating a contrasting effect between the character and the walls or space and guiding the reader's focus to each element.

An example of no line is 『Seokguram (2010)』 and 『Enchanted Bottle (2006)』. 『Seokguram (2010)』 employs soft, natural shading to clearly distinguish objects and the background without outlines, presenting a highly realistic style that almost evokes the feeling of viewing real stone within a cave.

Table 4. *The line elements of picture books*

	Neat lines	Free lines	Mixed lines	No lines
The Grandma and the tiger		✓		
The subway rushes	✓			
The enchanted bottle				✓
Mathematics at the art museum	✓			
Seokguram				✓
A house of the mind: Maum	✓			
The stories shouldn't be true		✓		
Grimmie's white canvas	✓			
The thorn mountain	✓			
Dust kid	✓			
My little doll's house	✓			
The little wall		✓		
A dandelion is a dandelion	✓			
Teruteru				✓
Look up!		✓		
The biggest cake in the world	✓			
Teeth hunters				✓
Tree dancing				✓
Wall			✓	
Who are you		✓		
The moon over the apple orchard		✓		
A shadow	✓			
Iparapa yamooyamoo		✓		
The yulu linen		✓		
Rice rice rice		✓		
So much snow		✓		
Summer		✓		
Father's big hands	✓			
Moving away		✓		
The blue: Bench	✓			
The shadow theater	✓			
House of dracula	✓			
Mo story		✓		
Rice cake house of a tiger		✓		
As you drive		✓		
Total	14(40.00)	15(42.86)	1(2.86)	5(14.28)
(%)	35(100.00)			

Examples of picture books

Neat lines



[The subway rushes, 2004]

Free lines



[Summer, 2022]

Mixed lines



[Wall, 2018]

No lines



[Seokguram, 2010]



[The enchanted bottle, 2006]

Space

The space was analyzed into two categories: 2D space and 3D space. 3D space was the most prevalent, accounting for 65.71%, while 2D space represented 34.29%. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. *The space elements of picture books*

	2D Space	3D Space
The Grandma and the tiger	✓	
The subway rushes	✓	
The enchanted bottle	✓	
Mathematics at the art museum		✓
Seokguram		✓
A house of the mind: Maum		✓
The stories shouldn't be true		✓
Grimmie's white canvas		✓
The thorn mountain		✓
Dust kid		✓
My little doll's house		✓
The little wall		✓
A dandelion is a dandelion		✓
Teruteru		✓
Look up!		✓
The biggest cake in the world		✓
Teeth hunters		✓
Tree dancing	✓	
Wall		✓
Who are you	✓	
The moon over the apple orchard	✓	
A shadow		✓
Iparapa yamooyamoo		✓
The yulu linen		✓
Rice rice rice	✓	
So much snow	✓	
Summer	✓	
Father's big hands		✓
Moving away	✓	
The blue: Bench		✓
The shadow theater		✓
House of dracula		✓
Mo story	✓	
Rice cake house of a tiger	✓	
As you drive		✓
Total	12(34.29)	23(65.71)
(%)	35(100.00)	

Examples of picture books

2D Space		
	[The subway rushes, 2004]	[Tree dancing, 2018]
3D Space		
	[My little doll's house, 2015]	[A dandelion is a dandelion, 2015]

Illustrations in 2D space depict objects without shading or perspective. For example, 『The Subway Rushes (2004)』 simplifies the forms of subways, stations, and people into flat designs. 『Tree Dancing (2018)』 abstracts its subjects, portraying trees and flowers with flat, abstract designs rather than giving them a three-dimensional look. In both, there is no sense of background depth. In contrast, 『My little doll's house (2015)』 and 『A dandelion is a dandelion (2015)』 exemplify 3D space, presenting scenes with a sense of depth that enhances realism, allowing readers to feel more immersed in the illustrations.

Texture

Texture was analyzed by categorizing it into drawing materials, collages, prints, designs, and photographs. Print refers to illustrations created using printmaking techniques such as woodcut or screen printing. Designs indicate graphic or digitally generated visual patterns used as a primary illustrative technique. Photographs refer to the direct use of photographic images as part of the picture book illustrations. Unlike other art elements, texture allowed multiple coding, as multiple texture types could co-occur within a single picture book. In particular, while most picture books employed textures created with drawing materials, some

Table 6. *The texture elements of picture books (multiple coding)**N* = 35

	Textures by drawing materials	Collages	Prints	Designs	Photographs
The Grandma and the tiger	✓				
The subway rushes		✓			
The enchanted bottle	✓				
Mathematics at the art museum	✓	✓			
Seokguram	✓				
A house of the mind: Maum	✓	✓			
The stories shouldn't be true	✓	✓			
Grimmie's white canvas	✓				
The thorn mountain	✓				
Dust kid	✓				
My little doll's house	✓				
The little wall	✓	✓			✓
A dandelion is a dandelion	✓				
Teruteru					
Look up!	✓				
The biggest cake in the world	✓	✓		✓	
Teeth hunters	✓				
Tree dancing	✓				
Wall	✓				
Who are you	✓				
The moon over the apple orchard	✓				
A shadow	✓				
Iparapa yamooyamoo	✓				
The yulu linen	✓				
Rice rice rice	✓				
So much snow				✓	
Summer	✓	✓			
Father's big hands	✓			✓	
Moving away	✓				
The blue: Bench				✓	
The shadow theater	✓				
House of dracula				✓	
Mo story	✓				
Rice cake house of a tiger	✓			✓	
As you drive	✓				
Total (%)	30(85.71)	7(20.00)	0(0.00)	6(17.14)	1(2.86)

Examples of picture books

Drawing materials



[My little doll's house, 2015]



[As you drive, 2024]

Collages



[The biggest cake in the world, 2015]



[The house of a mind: Maum, 2011]

Designs



[Rice cake house of a tiger, 2024]



Photographs



[Teruteru, 2015]

also incorporated collages, designs, or photographs alongside drawing techniques. As shown in Table 6, drawing materials were the most common texture element, appearing in 85.71% of the picture books. Collages were identified in seven books (20.00%), either as standalone techniques or in combination with drawing materials. Photographs appeared in only one book (2.86%) and were used alongside drawing materials and collages. No print textures were observed.

In the case of drawing materials, various tools were used, which can be broadly divided into transparent effects with pencils, colored pencils, or pastels and watercolor paint, and bold color expressions with oil or acrylic paints. For example, 『My little doll house (2015)』 uses pencil to depict objects in meticulous detail, creating a sense of realism akin to black-and-white photography. 『As you drive (2024)』 utilizes watercolor to achieve a transparent look, emphasizing aspects such as emphasis, perspective, and the characteristics of background and objects through paint density. Conversely, 『Mo story(2024)』 applies thick, opaque paint, clearly defining boundaries between background, objects, and characters, allowing readers to easily interpret the embedded message.

Collages are also present, as seen in 『The biggest cake in the world (2015)』 and 『A house of the mind: Maum (2011)』, where paper or pictures are added on top of illustrations. With advancements in computer and graphic technology in the 2000s, picture books like 『Rice cake house of a tiger (2024)』 also showcase digital graphic design, offering flexibility to combine various textures, such as drawing, torn paper effects, printmaking, and collage, within a single illustration. 『Teruteru (2015)』 uses a traditional Korean fabric quilt (Jogakbo) background with wooden and paper dolls arranged and photographed, making the textures of each material vividly distinct. The photographic realism enhances familiarity for young children, allowing them to recall their own doll play experiences as they view the illustrations.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the art elements of the picture books by Korean artists among those that won the Bologna Ragazzi Award. To meet this goal, researchers analyzed the art elements of 35 picture books by Korean authors who won the Bologna Ragazzi Award,

dividing them into color, line, space, and texture. The key findings and discussions from the study are summarized below.

First, among the art elements of the Bologna Ragazzi Award-winning books, the use of four or more colors was the most prevalent, accounting for approximately half of the total. Following this, books utilizing one to three colors comprised about one-third of the selection. These findings are consistent with the studies conducted by Seo (1996), which analyzed the artistic elements of Caldecott award-winning books from 1938 to 1995, and by Jeon (2021), which examined the artistic elements of Caldecott winners through 2020. Lee (2022) analyzed the literary and artistic characteristics of bestselling picture books from three major bookstores in Korea and found that most of these bestsellers also employed four or more colors. This study reflects a similar trend in the use of color as observed in previous research.

Color is the art element that young children recognize most quickly (Seo & Ko, 2022). By experiencing diverse color palettes in picture books, children can appreciate the aesthetic qualities of color. Moreover, children can grasp the mood of the story by observing the colors in the illustrations and feel changes in events or the passage of time. Through color, young children recognize the emotions of the protagonists and understand the dynamics among characters. In particular, the intentional use of achromatic colors may emphasize emotional restraint, tension, or psychological depth, allowing readers to focus on the characters' inner states or the thematic seriousness of the narrative. Conversely, chromatic color schemes tend to highlight vitality, movement, and emotional expressiveness, thereby reinforcing narrative development and emotional transitions.

Furthermore, the use of mixed colors can be interpreted as a deliberate artistic strategy to balance realism and imagination, or to visually accentuate specific scenes, characters, or symbolic moments within the story. Such combinations enable illustrators to create visual contrasts and rhythmic variation, thereby enriching the aesthetic and narrative dynamics of the picture book. From this perspective, color in picture books is not merely a decorative element but a meaningful visual language through which authors convey artistic intention, emotional nuance, and narrative emphasis.

Second, among the art elements of the Bologna Ragazzi Award-winning books, free lines were the most prevalent, followed closely by neat lines, although the two categories appeared almost equally. Instances of mixed line usage or the absence of lines were less common. This finding is consistent with Jeon (2021), but does not align with Lee (2022). Both Jeon (2021)

and Lee (2022) speculate that the advancement of graphic techniques has led to an increasing prevalence of neat line representations in picture books. The Bologna Ragazzi award-winning books in this study are primarily those where the authors have employed drawing techniques, suggesting that free lines are more frequently represented than in books characterized by prominent graphic design.

Lines are the fundamental elements used to create shapes. Depending on the type of line, young children can perceive a variety of sensations that differ from those conveyed by color. Since lines can convey qualities such as stillness, vitality, liveliness, and calmness, children are able to grasp the mood of the picture book, the characterization of the protagonists, and the overarching themes of the work.

Third, among the art elements of the Bologna Ragazzi Award-winning books, the representation of space exhibited a 2:1 ratio of 3D to 2D elements. This finding aligns with previous studies analyzing the artistic elements of picture books (Jeon, 2021; Lee, 2022) and reflects the spatial tendencies within picture book art.

The representation of space within picture books allows young children to indirectly experience visual perspectives of space (Seo et al., 2009). By observing three-dimensional or two-dimensional spaces, children can develop foundational skills related to depth, height, and perspective. Additionally, expressing their understanding of space after engaging with picture books can further enhance their spatial perception abilities.

Finally, among the art elements, texture was predominantly represented by drawing materials, while collages, graphics, and photographs appeared in smaller proportions. Although there are general trends typical of picture books, it was evident that drawing accounted for a higher proportion compared to other studies analyzing Caldecott award winners or bestselling titles. This may be attributed to the Bologna Ragazzi Award's emphasis on illustration in picture books.

Through picture books, young children can experience a variety of drawing mediums (such as pencil, brush, crayon, marker, pastel, and charcoal) as well as paint (including watercolor, oil paint, and acrylic). Additionally, children can appreciate the harmonious integration of not only drawing but also collage, photography, and models within the illustrations. Recently, there has been an increase in works that utilize graphic techniques alongside hand-drawn illustrations, expanding the range of textures that children can encounter (Arizpe & Styles, 2023).

This study is significant in that it found that picture books by Korean artists among the Bologna Ragazzi award-winning books contain various art elements, which were analyzed in detail. In relation to the purpose of this study, which aimed to support teachers in considering artistic elements when selecting picture books for educational purposes, these findings provide an empirical basis for understanding how specific art elements are systematically embedded in high-quality picture books. By identifying recurring patterns in color, line, space, and texture, the study offers concrete reference points that educators can draw upon when evaluating picture books in terms of both artistic quality and developmental appropriateness for young children. Beyond their function as educational materials for young children, picture books that have won the Bologna Ragazzi Award can be viewed as works of art that invite aesthetic appreciation alongside reading. Previous studies have emphasized that award-winning picture books are often evaluated not only for their narrative quality but also for their artistic originality, visual innovation, and expressive power (Kim & Shin, 2016; Nam & Kim, 2022; Park, 2012).

From this perspective, the picture books by Korean authors analyzed in this study possess both educational value and artistic significance, positioning them at the intersection of early childhood education and visual art. Emphasizing this dual status strengthens the legitimacy of examining their art elements in depth and supports the view that such analyses contribute not only to educational research but also to a broader understanding of contemporary picture-book art. These award-winning picture books enable children to appreciate diverse art elements and serve as effective mediums through which one can experience a range of emotional expressions. These findings suggest that when teachers intentionally attend to such art elements during picture-book selection or shared reading, they can better support children in noticing how visual cues convey emotions, narrative flow, and thematic meaning. Rather than treating illustrations as supplementary to text, this perspective encourages educators to frame picture-book reading as an integrated meaning-making process in which visual and verbal texts jointly support children's comprehension and aesthetic experience.

Furthermore, it was found that art elements, alongside language, function as an indirect means of conveying the story, themes, character emotions, emotional changes, and narrative development in picture books (Sipe, 1988). Previous studies have conceptualized picture-book illustrations as a form of visual text that operates in close interaction with written language, jointly constructing meaning for the reader (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006; Nodelman,

1988; Sipe, 1998). From this perspective, art elements such as color, line, space, and texture play a critical role in mediating narrative meaning by visually embodying characters' emotions, shaping the overall mood of the story, and guiding readers' interpretations of unfolding events.

For example, variations in color intensity and palette can signal emotional shifts or changes in narrative tension, while the quality of line and spatial composition may suggest movement, stillness, intimacy, or distance between characters. Texture further contributes to this process by evoking sensory impressions that deepen readers' emotional engagement with the story world. Through these interwoven visual cues, readers are able to infer characters' emotional states, anticipate narrative developments, and experience the atmosphere of the story beyond what is explicitly stated in the text.

Another important observation is that in picture books, Korean characteristics are expressed through art elements such as color, line, space, and texture. The unique Korean atmosphere is reflected through picture books that utilize traditional Korean colors ("Obangsaeg," the five traditional Korean colors) and those created with "Hanji," Korea's traditional paper. Furthermore, the Korean atmosphere is evident in the representation of the main character as a traditional doll and in patchwork quilts known as "Jogakbo". It is anticipated that these elements will allow young children to indirectly experience various aspects of Korean culture while engaging with the picture books.

The results of this study are expected to primarily assist early childhood teachers in selecting picture books for young children and in planning children's literature education. Various art elements enhance children's interest in picture books (Kim, 2013; Nodelman, 1988). Furthermore, children experience immediate enjoyment when reading picture books as they discover and interpret the art elements in the illustrations (Yoon et al., 2016). By interpreting the art elements of picture books and relating them to the text, children come to understand that illustrations serve as an alternative language, which can also enhance their visual literacy. This, in turn, may contribute to increased interest in reading and improved reading skills in adulthood (Seo & Nam, 2020). Therefore, selecting picture books that allow children to experience diverse art elements is crucial. Based on the findings of this study, such selection can be approached not as an intuitive or subjective decision, but as an informed process grounded in an understanding of how art elements function within picture books. In this sense, the study does not prescribe specific teaching methods, but rather provides a

conceptual framework that supports teachers' reflective decision-making regarding picture-book selection and use. This study aims to help early childhood educators recognize the importance of art elements in picture books and to select books that provide a variety of artistic experiences.

Additionally, to prevent the achievements of current Korean picture book authors from becoming isolated instances, this study is expected to help both new and established authors identify trends in previous works when creating diverse and experimental pieces. Overall, this study is anticipated to serve as foundational data for the future growth and development of K-picture books.

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