



## Examining the Effect of Parent-supported Interactive Book Reading Program on Early Literacy Skills of Pre-school Children

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### Abstract

This research was carried out to separately examine the effect of the program prepared through interactive book reading activities applied to pre-school children and the effect of parent involvement on early literacy skills within the process. The research was conducted with a quasi-experimental design, one of the quantitative research methods, with a pre-test and post-test control group. In the study, a total of three groups were studied, two of which were the test groups and one was the control group. Interactive book reading activities were applied to test group 1 by their parents for eight weeks. On the other hand, interactive book reading activities were applied to test group 2 by the researcher. Of the sampling methods, convenience sampling and random sampling methods were utilized. A total of 53 children and 19 parents of test group 1 were involved in the study. The data collection tools used in the research were; Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool (ELSAT) developed by Karaman (2013) and Personal Information Form prepared by the researcher. When the findings of the research were examined, it was determined that there were statistically significant differences between the post-test scores of Test Group 1 to which interactive book reading activities were applied by the parents and the post-test scores of Test Group 2 to which interactive book reading activities were applied by the researcher when compared to the post-test scores of the Control Group. It was also noted that there were significant differences between the post-test scores of ELSAT and its sub-dimensions in the dual measurements performed between Test Group 1 and Test Group 2. It was only observed that there were no statistically significant differences in the "Comprehending the Story" and "Pre-Writing Skills" sub-dimensions between Test Group 1 and Test Group 2.

**Keywords:** Parental Support, Early Literacy, Interactive Book Reading, Children's Picture Book, Pre-school Education

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## Ebeveyn Destekli Etkileşimli Kitap Okuma Programının Okul Öncesi Çocuklarının Erken Okuryazarlık Becerilerine Etkisinin İncelenmesi

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### Öz

Bu araştırma okul öncesi dönem çocuklarına uygulanan etkileşimli kitap okuma etkinlikleri ile hazırlanan programın ve süreç içerisinde ebeveynlerin katılımının erken okuryazarlık becerilerine etkisini ayrı ayrı incelemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma, nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden ön test son test kontrol gruplu yarı deneysel desen ile yürütülmüştür. Araştırmada iki deney ve bir kontrol grubu olmak üzere toplamda üç grupta çalışılmıştır. Deney 1 grubuna sekiz hafta boyunca ebeveynler tarafından etkileşimli kitap okuma etkinlikleri uygulanmıştır. Deney 2 grubuna ise etkileşimli kitap okuma etkinlikleri araştırmacı tarafından uygulanmıştır. Örneklem belirleme yöntemlerinden kolay ulaşılabilir örnekleme ve rastgele örnekleme yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Araştırmaya toplamda 53 çocuk ve deney 1 grubunun 19 ebeveyni dâhil edilmiştir. Araştırmada kullanılan veri toplama araçları; Karaman (2013) tarafından geliştirilen Erken Okuryazarlık Becerileri Değerlendirme Aracı (EOBDA) ve araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan Kişisel Bilgi Formu olarak sıralanmaktadır. Araştırma sonuçları incelendiğinde, etkileşimli kitap okuma etkinliklerinin ebeveynler tarafından uygulandığı deney 1 grubunun son test puanları ile etkileşimli kitap okuma etkinliklerinin araştırmacı tarafından uygulandığı deney 2 grubunun son test puanlarının kontrol grubunun son test puanlarına kıyasla istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılıklar saptanmıştır. Deney 1 ve Deney 2 grupları arasında gerçekleştirilen ikili ölçümlerde EOBDA ve aracın alt boyutlarının son test puanları arasında anlamlı farklılıklar olduğu görülmektedir. Yalnızca deney 1 ve deney 2 grupları arasında "Öyküyü Anlama" ve "Yazı Yazma Öncesi Beceriler" alt boyutlarında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılıklar gözlemlenmemiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ebeveyn Desteği, Erken Okuryazarlık, Etkileşimli Kitap Okuma, Resimli Çocuk Kitabı, Okul Öncesi Eğitim

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## Introduction

Reading-writing and literacy are two different concepts used interchangeably in everyday language. Reading-writing is an action that takes place within the framework of the text, reader, and writer phenomena. Literacy, on the other hand, is a skill that gains new meanings in line with the needs of society and is open to continuous improvement in accordance with the development of the age (Kurudayıoğlu & Tüzel, 2010). Literacy is associated with various other fields such as scientific literacy, technology literacy, visual literacy, environmental literacy, etc. (Önal, 2010). One of these fields is early literacy, whose importance in early childhood is frequently mentioned.

Early literacy is a concept obtained by synthesizing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that children acquire before starting traditional reading and writing activities (Wilson & Lonigan, 2010). When children start primary school without completing their preliminary knowledge about reading and writing, they may experience deficiencies in reading skills and therefore may need particular interest (Lentz, 1988; as cited in Lonigan et al., 2000). Similarly, Pinto et al. (2017) have stated that early literacy skills predict reading success in primary school.

The term Emergent Literacy (early literacy) has been coined since the 1970s when the idea that the early literacy process develops with birth has become prominent (Karaman, 2015). Supporting the early literacy process, which starts with birth, during the pre-school period positively affects the academic life of children in the future. In their longitudinal research, Cunningham and Stanovich (1997) have found that reading success in primary school predicts academic success in high school. With the consensus that literacy begins to develop before primary school, scholars have begun to focus on studies regarding early literacy in the pre-preschool period.

Active learning, the importance of which has been mentioned for many years, is based on child-centered structures and the structures in which the child is active in the process, as the name signifies. One of the most important phenomena in terms of achieving active learning is the selection of accurate instructional methods and techniques (Açıkgöz, 2005; as cited in Polat, 2016). Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) have stated that plenty of methods have been developed to support early literacy. The most valid method developed has been suggested as interactive book reading. Book reading activities carried out by family members raise awareness regarding early literacy in children (Snow et al., 1998).

Interactive book reading is one of the methods in which children perform active learning in the process. The interactive reading method developed by Whitehurst, Lonigan, Falco, Fischel, DeBaryshe, Valdez, Menchaca, and Coulfield under the leadership of Grover J. Whitehurst is actively implemented in different countries except for the USA. However, it is not among the methods known by everyone in Turkey (Erdoğan, 2020).

One of the important elements of interactive book reading is children's picture books. Montag et al. (2015) have suggested in their research that picture books read to children make them gain more vocabulary types and vocabulary knowledge compared to verbal expressions. They have also stated that the texts in picture books may have an effect on children's future reading skills. In addition to its positive effects on language development, reading story books is associated with children's positive perspectives on reading, their literacy gains before the formal education process, and their future reading success (Clark, 1976; as cited in Sulzby & Teale, 1991). It is considered that the preferred

frequency of the interactive book reading method by parents and teachers in Turkey, which provides cost-effectiveness to the practitioners in many respects, should also be increased.

Ecological Theory, which has been put forward by Bronfenbrenner (as cited in Weigel et al., 2010), indicates that children develop in different social settings. The basic keystone of ecological theory is the microsystem. The microsystem involves families and constitutes the primary context for children. Children's interaction with their family members is among the factors that affect the development of literacy skills in them.

It can be said that literacy, which begins to develop with birth, is also affected by the experiences of children at home. The development of societies and nations occurs in chain situations that affect one another. One of the main points of development and progress is the literacy status of the members of the family unit (Damarlı-Oçak, 2007). Children's participation in reading activities at home from early years can support their literacy development at school (Hood et al., 2008). It has been observed that children who grow up in the settings where rich stimuli are presented during early childhood can adapt more easily to the traditional literacy process (Roskos et al., 2003). In the pre-school period, which is characterized as the critical period, the individuals with whom children interact the most are, beyond dispute, parents (Campbell, 2016). It is possible to talk about the environmental effects of parents as well as their biological effects on children. Being a role model for children in the home environment and providing them opportunities regarding daily routines greatly contribute to the development of their early literacy skills (Huisman, 2012).

According to the National Early Literacy Panel (2008), it is well-known that the children of parents who have various conversations with their children at home and read interactive books with their children perform better in terms of early literacy skills and language development compared to other children. Although children do not learn traditional literacy before starting primary school, they can have knowledge about the importance of reading in the home environment. Interactive book reading, which is implemented with the development of verbal language skills in infancy period, increases its functionality and prepares the ground for new learning environments (Dexter & Stacks, 2014).

Interactive book reading is not a method frequently used by parents, so parents should be informed about the method (Justice et al., 2009).

The results of the research conducted have revealed that there are also visual and auditory literacy tools in the home environments of children who start formal education by having acquired early literacy skills in the pre-school period (Çelenk, 2019). The children whose early literacy skills are assisted by their parents in the pre-school period have more positive future performance than the children who are not assisted. For this reason, research is needed to inform parents and caregivers in terms of early literacy (Haney & Hill, 2004).

Silinskas et al. (2012) have conducted a longitudinal study on 1436 children and their parents examining the children's reading skills according to the frequency of the parents' providing reading preparation activities at home concurrently while their children are receiving pre-school education. As a result of the research, it has been observed that as

the frequency of the activities applied increases, the positive attitude and success towards vocabulary learning and reading increase, too.

There are also studies in Turkey examining the effects of interactive book reading on early literacy skills (Efe, 2018; İşlek, 2021; Yalavaç, 2020). Besides, there are studies examining the effects of interactive book reading activities performed with parents on early literacy skills (Vural, 2021; Yumus, 2018). However, no research has been found in the literature in which the interactive book reading method and the effects of parents on the use of the method in the process are examined independently of each other.

In their research, Çalış and Gök (2020) have conducted a document review study by examining the postgraduate theses limited to the years of 2010-2019, in which the concept of early literacy is present in the title. Considering the results of the research, they have revealed the information that the studies conducted have increased in recent years, and they have recommended that parents should be involved in terms of the children's literacy skills in the postgraduate studies. In their research, Aslışen and Hakkoymaz (2020) have examined a total of 73 postgraduate theses on early literacy both in the national and international level between the years of 2015-2020. As a result of their analysis, it has been concluded that the awareness of families and teachers about literacy skills should be raised.

In the thesis studies conducted at different times, it has been agreed that the inclusion of parents in the early literacy process may be effective. However, no studies have been found in Turkey in which the interactive book reading method and the effect of parents on literacy skills in the process are examined separately in the same study. In this regard, it is therefore thought that the research will contribute to the literature.

### **The Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of the research; This study aims is to examine the effect of Parent-supported Interactive Book Reading Program on early literacy skills of pre-school children.

In order to achieve this main purpose, the answers for the following sub-purposes have been sought in the study.

#### ***Sub-purposes***

1. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the children in the Test Group 1 regarding Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool (ELSAT) and its sub-tests (phonological awareness skills, writing awareness, understanding the story, matching images, and pre-writing skills)?
2. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the children in the Test Group 2 regarding ELSAT and its sub-tests?
3. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the children in the Control Group regarding ELSAT and its sub-tests?
4. Is there a significant difference between the post-test scores of the children in the Test group 1, Test Group 2, and Control Group regarding ELSAT and its sub-tests?
5. Is there a significant difference between the post-test scores of the children in the Test Group 1 and Test Group 2 regarding ELSAT and its sub-tests?

6. Is there a significant difference between the post-test scores of the children in the Test Group 1 and Control Group regarding ELSAT and its sub-tests?
7. Is there a significant difference between the post-test scores of the children in the Test Group 2 and Control Group regarding ELSAT and its sub-tests?

## Method

### Research Model

Experimental research is the only alternative among all research methods to observe the effect of any variable (Fraenkel et al., 2019). The research was conducted with quasi-experimental design, which is one of the quantitative research methods, with pre-test and post-test control group.

**Table 1.** *The Procedures Applied to Study Groups*

Study Groups	Pre-test	The Procedure Applied	Post-test
T1	T1.1	PSIBRP	T1.2
T2	T2.1	IBRP	T2.2
C	C.1	Traditional Methods	C.2

T1.1 and T1.2 represents Test group – 1 pre-test – post-test measurements,  
T2.1 and T2.2 represents Test group – 2 pre-test – post-test measurements,  
C.1 and C.2 represents Control group pre-test – post-test measurements.

### Study Group

Two different sampling methods were used in the study. First of all, in one of the test groups (test group 1), convenience sampling method was used to determine the groups involved in the research since the parents had to actively participate in the process. Besides, random sampling method was used to determine which of the groups determined would be the test group 1, test group 2, and control group. Random sampling is a sampling method in which all the participants in the population have equal right to be selected. The opportunity of generalizing the groups selected with this method to the population is quite high compared to other methods (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018).

The test group 1 represents the group to which PSIBRP was applied, while the test group 2 represents the group to which IBRP was applied. The third group was determined as the control group. A total of 53 children and 19 parents of the children in the test group 1 in the three pre-school classes of the primary schools in Urla District of İzmir province were included in the study.

Some of the demographic characteristics of the participants in the study are presented below.

**Table 2.** *Gender-Age and Frequency-Percentage Distributions of the Children in the Test and Control Groups*

Age Range	Test Group 1		Test Group 2		Control	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
59-63 months	2	10,5	6	33,3	6	37,4
64-68 months	9	47,4	7	38,9	5	31,3
69-72 months	8	42,1	5	27,8	5	31,3
Total	19	100	18	100	16	100

Gender	Test Group 1		Test Group 2		Control	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Girl	12	63,2	14	77,8	6	37,5
Boy	7	36,8	4	22,2	10	62,5
<b>Total</b>	19	100	18	100	16	100

**Table 3.** Frequency-Percentage Distributions Regarding Age Range and Educational Status of the Mothers Involved in the Study

Age Range	Test Group 1		Test Group 2		Control	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
25-32	6	31,6	9	50	3	18,8
33-40	12	63,2	9	50	7	43,7
41-47	1	5,2	0	0	6	37,5
<b>Total</b>	19	100	18	100	16	100

  

Educational Status	Test Group 1		Test Group 2		Control	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Illiterate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Primary School	2	10,5	4	22,2	3	18,8
High School	6	31,5	10	55,6	11	68,7
Associate Degree	1	5,3	2	11,1	0	0
Undergraduate Degree	9	47,4	2	11,1	2	12,5
Postgraduate Degree	1	5,3	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	19	100	18	100	16	100

**Table 4.** Frequency-Percentage Distributions Regarding Age Range and Educational Status of the Fathers Involved in the Study

Age Range	Test Group 1		Test Group 2		Control	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
29-36	7	36,8	8	44,4	1	6,3
37-44	10	52,6	10	55,6	12	75
45-51	2	10,6	0	0	3	18,7
<b>Total</b>	19	100	18	100	16	100

  

Educational Status	Test Group 1		Test Group 2		Control	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Illiterate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Literate	0	0	0	0	2	12,5
Primary School	3	15,8	6	33,3	4	25
High School	9	47,3	9	50	7	43,7
Associate Degree	3	15,8	2	11,1	1	6,3
Undergraduate Degree	3	15,8	1	5,6	2	12,5
Postgraduate Degree	1	5,3	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	19	100	18	100	16	100

## The Preparation Process of Parent-supported Interactive Book Reading Program (PSIBRP)

Parent-supported Interactive Book Reading Program (PSIBRP) was prepared on the basis of the developing literacy theory. First of all, comprehensive literature on IBRP was provided by reviewing the national and international literature. After that, an outcome pool was created based on the Pre-school Education Program (2013). Of the outcome pool, those who were deemed appropriate were selected by the expert in the field of pre-school education, and the outcomes of the program were formed.

When the outcomes were determined, information was shared with the field experts who had publications in the fields of early literacy skills and children's literature for the preparation of the program. There are scientific meetings (panels, workshops, etc.) where information share is provided in different ways. Enabling interaction during information share is the principle of meetings (Özdemir, 2018). For the selection of appropriate children's picture books to be used in the research, first of all, an expert panel was held with the participation of the experts in the field of pre-school education (four experts in the field of pre-school education), and appropriate criteria were determined for the selection of books.

The decisions made in the expert panel can be ranked as determining appropriate children's picture books by taking the internal and external structure features into consideration, deciding according to which criteria to handle phonemes, and determining the appropriate phonemes for the selected books.

In accordance with the decisions made in the expert panel, a pool of books was created by the researcher, and a list of 50 books was obtained. The list was created in three stages. In the first stage; children's picture books, which could be accessed from Internet resources, were reviewed, and they were examined in line with their internal and external structure features.

In the second stage; the books that were deemed appropriate for the interactive book reading method were marked, and a new list was created. In the selection of appropriate books; the books whose texts and pictures were large enough for pre-school children to see clearly, those whose pictures and content were compatible with each other, those with information about the name, publisher, author, and illustrator on the cover page, those with themes, those with words and phrases that children were likely to hear in their lives but they did not know the meanings, and those with a logical sequence of storyline were preferred (Akoğlu, 2016).

In the third stage; appropriate phonemes for the books through which the interactive book reading method could be applied were determined. The Ministry of National Education (2019) categorized the letters in the traditional reading and writing period and created a total of five letter groups. In terms of preparation for primary school, the first two letter groups (e, l, a, k, i, n, o, m, u, t, ü, y) and the first four letters of the third group (ö, r, ı, d) were included. Great attention was paid to order the activities performed and the phonemes from the simplest to the most complex. The books were then categorized according to their early literacy components. These components were verbal language, phonological awareness, alphabet letter knowledge, and writing awareness. The final form of the list was then sent to expert view, and it was determined that the categories of writing awareness and alphabet letter knowledge should be combined.



Interactive book reading activities were prepared by the researcher with the 16 children's picture books determined in accordance with expert views. While preparing the activities, first of all, target words appropriate for the book and question patterns appropriate for the techniques of starting-continuing speech were created. The target words in the books ranged from eight to twelve. Following the book, common activities that both parents could apply in the home environment and that the researcher could apply in the school environment were prepared. In all the activities, great attention was paid to the activities in which the children would actively participate in terms of the phonemes determined. The prepared activities were presented to the views of the experts in the field of pre-school education, and the program was finalized by making the necessary corrections and revisions.

### **Data Collection**

All the children in the class designated as the Test Group 1 and their parents participated in the research process. After the necessary permissions were obtained, pre-tests were initiated. The pre-test applications were completed within a week by making one-to-one applications. After that, the books and materials provided by the researcher were applied to the Test Group 1 by their parents, two days a week (on Mondays and Thursdays) for a period of eight weeks.

Prior to initiating the application process, a meeting was held by the researcher to inform the parents of the Test Group 1 regarding the definition of the interactive book reading method, its effectiveness, brief examples from previous studies, and the application process. The books to be used in the application were introduced, and a pilot application was made. The information expressed at the meeting on such issues as the characteristics of the environment in which the book would be read, the positioning of the book during reading, meeting the pre-reading needs of the child, and etc. was sent to the families as notes every week.

All the children in the class designated as the Test Group 2 participated in the research process. After the necessary permissions were obtained, pre-tests were initiated. The pre-test applications were completed within a week by making one-to-one applications. After that, the books and materials provided by the researcher were applied to the Test Group 2 by the researcher, two days a week (on Tuesdays and Fridays) for a period of eight weeks. The application was carried out in large groups. The responses of at least three children were listened for each question in the plan. The duration of the applications ranged from 45 minutes to 75 minutes.

### **Data Collection Tools**

#### ***Personal Information Form***

Personal Information Form was prepared by the researcher. The form included the information regarding the age of the children and the duration of their pre-school education, and the information regarding the age, educational status, and occupation of the parents. Besides, the presence of a library at home and the frequency of reading books were also included under the heading of other information. Personal Information Form was filled by the parents of the children who participated in the research.

### *Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool (ELSAT)*

Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool (ELSAT) is a tool developed by Karaman (2013) with the aim of measuring the early literacy skills of 48-77 month-old children. The assessment tool is composed of a total of 96 items and five sub-tests.

The sub-tests of the assessment tool are; evaluating phonological awareness skills, writing awareness, understanding the story, matching images, and evaluating pre-writing skills. Explanatory and Confirmatory Factor Analyses were performed for the validity studies of the sub-tests of the assessment tool, and item discrimination values were determined for each item. Following the validity studies, KR-20, test-retest and split-half reliability values of the sub-tests of the assessment tool were calculated for the reliability studies. Based on the results of the analyses, it was determined that the "Evaluating Phonological Awareness Skills" sub-test was composed of 53 items and five factors, "Writing Awareness" sub-test was composed of 16 items and three factors, and "Understanding the Story", "Matching Images" and "Evaluating Pre-writing Skills" sub-tests were composed of nine items and one factor each. It was also determined that KR-20 reliability values varied between 0.61 and 0.91. When the item discrimination analyses were examined, it was found that each item was discriminating (Karaman, 2013). The scoring criterion of the assessment tool was expressed as; one point for each correct answer, and zero point for each incorrect answer.

In order to apply the Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool adequately and effectively, the researcher participated in the training conducted by Gökçe Karaman. After the training, necessary permissions were obtained to be able to use the assessment tool.

### **Data Analysis**

In the study, the pre-test and post-test measurements of Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool (ELSAT), which was applied to determine the effect of interactive book reading activities performed with children on their early literacy skills, as well as the findings regarding the demographic information were analyzed with SPSS 26.0 program. Arithmetic mean scores and percentiles were utilized for the information regarding the parents and children in the Personal Information Form.

In cases when the number of each sample group is below 30, deviations from normal distribution are experienced (Büyüköztürk, Çokluk & Köklü, 2018). Based on the results of the Shapiro-Wilk Test performed to determine whether the ELSAT post-test scores of the groups showed normal distribution, it was determined that the data were not normally distributed. The Shapiro-Wilk Test is accepted as one of the most effective tests used to determine whether the data show normal distribution (Özer, 2007).

**Table 5.** *The Results of Normality Test*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Shapiro-Wilk</b>		
	<b>Statistic</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Test Group 1</b>	,839	19	,004
<b>Test Group 2</b>	,821	18	,003
<b>Control Group</b>	,865	16	,023

In cases when the data are normally distributed, the analyses are performed with parametric tests. However, in this study, non-parametric tests were used since the data

did not show normal distribution. The Kruskal-Wallis Test is used to test whether at least two independent groups have a significant difference on the dependent variable (Can, 2020). It is accepted that it has an effect almost the same as the t test, which is one of the parametric tests (Tutar & Erdem, 2020). Therefore, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in the pre-test measurements of the test and control groups.

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test is used to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the interrelated measurement results (Tutar & Erdem, 2020). Therefore, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used to statistically determine the difference between pre-test and post-test measurements within each group. Mann Whitney U test was utilized to compare the post-test scores of the groups with each other and to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference.

## Findings

### Findings Regarding the First Sub-purpose

**Table 6.** *The Pre-test and Post-test Scores of the Test Group 1 Regarding Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool and Its Sub-tests*

	Pre-test – Post-test Measurement	<i>n</i>	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>
<b>Overall</b>	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	-3,826	,000
	Positive Ranks	19	10	190		
	Ties	0				
<b>Phonological Awareness Skills</b>	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	-3,829	,000
	Positive Ranks	19	10	190		
	Ties	0				
<b>Writing Awareness</b>	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	-3,840	,000
	Positive Ranks	19	10	190		
	Ties	0				
<b>Understanding the Story</b>	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	-3,354	,001
	Positive Ranks	14	7,50	105		
	Ties	5				
<b>Matching Images</b>	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	-3,573	,000
	Positive Ranks	16	8,50	136		
	Ties	3				
<b>Pre-writing Skills</b>	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	-3,872	,000
	Positive Ranks	19	10	190		
	Ties	0				

When Table 6 examined, according to the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test results, which was performed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the children in the Test Group 1 regarding Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool (ELSAT) and its sub-tests, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of Test Group 1 to which interactive book reading activities were applied by the parents regarding ELSAT and its sub-tests ( $z=-3,826$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $z=-3,829$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $z=-3,840$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $z=-3,354$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $z=-3,573$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $z=-3,872$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ).

### Findings Regarding the Second Sub-purpose

**Table 7.** *The Pre-test and Post-test Scores of the Test Group 2 Regarding Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool and Its Sub-tests*

	Pre-test – Post-test Measurement	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	p
<b>Overall</b>	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	-3,727	,000
	Positive Ranks	18	9,50	171		
	Ties	0				
<b>Phonological Awareness Skills</b>	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	-3,729	,000
	Positive Ranks	18	9,50	171		
	Ties	0				
<b>Writing Awareness</b>	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	-3,754	,000
	Positive Ranks	18	9,50	171		
	Ties	0				
<b>Understanding the Story</b>	Negative Ranks	1	3,50	3,50	-2,980	,003
	Positive Ranks	12	7,29	87,50		
	Ties	5				
<b>Matching Images</b>	Negative Ranks	1	4	4	-3,233	,001
	Positive Ranks	14	8,29	116		
	Ties	3				
<b>Pre-writing Skills</b>	Negative Ranks	3	7,33	22	-2,399	,016
	Positive Ranks	13	8,77	114		
	Ties	2				

When Table 7 examined, according to the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test results, which was performed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the children in the Test Group 2 regarding ELSAT and its sub-tests, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the Test Group 2 to which interactive book reading activities were applied by the researcher regarding ELSAT and its sub-tests ( $z=-3,727$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $z=-3,729$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $z=-3,754$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $z=-2,980$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $z=-3,233$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $z=-2,399$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ).

### Findings Regarding the Third Sub-purpose

**Table 8.** *The Pre-test and Post-test Scores of the Control Group Regarding Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool and Its Sub-tests*

	Pre-test – Post-test Measurement	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	p
<b>Overall</b>	Negative Ranks	5	10,80	54	-,727	,467
	Positive Ranks	11	7,45	82		
	Ties	0				
<b>Phonological Awareness Skills</b>	Negative Ranks	5	7,60	38	-,917	,359
	Positive Ranks	9	7,44	67		
	Ties	2				
<b>Writing Awareness</b>	Negative Ranks	8	7,25	58	-,899	,369
	Positive Ranks	5	6,60	33		
	Ties	3				
<b>Understanding the Story</b>	Negative Ranks	6	5,08	30,50	-,967	,334
	Positive Ranks	3	4,83	14,50		
	Ties	7				

<b>Matching Images</b>	Negative Ranks	6	6,83	41		
	Positive Ranks	8	8	64	-,744	,457
	Ties	2				
<b>Pre-writing Skills</b>	Negative Ranks	3	7	21		
	Positive Ranks	9	6,33	57	-1,429	,153
	Ties	4				

When Table 8 examined, according to the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test results, which was performed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the children in the Control Group regarding ELSAT and its sub-tests, it was found that there was not a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the Control Group regarding ELSAT and its sub-tests ( $z=-,727$ ,  $p > 0,05$ ;  $z=-,917$   $p > 0,05$ ;  $z=-,899$ ,  $p > 0,05$ ;  $z=-,967$ ,  $p > 0,05$ ;  $z=-,744$ ,  $p > 0,05$ ;  $z=-1,429$   $p > 0,05$ ).

### Findings Regarding the Fourth Sub-purpose

**Table 9.** *The Post-test Scores of the Test Group 1, Test Group 2, and Control Group Regarding Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool and Its Sub-tests*

	Group	<i>n</i>	Mean Rank	<i>df</i>	$X^2$	<i>p</i>
<b>Overall ELSAT</b>	Test Group 1	19	40,95	2	38,781	,000
	Test Group 2	18	28,72			
	Control Group	16	8,50			
<b>Writing Awareness</b>	Test Group 1	19	42,71	2	43,519	,000
	Test Group 2	18	26,86			
	Control Group	16	8,50			
<b>Understanding the Story</b>	Test Group 1	19	32,92	2	20,881	,000
	Test Group 2	18	31,94			
	Control Group	16	14,41			
<b>Matching Images</b>	Test Group 1	19	37,16	2	23,284	,000
	Test Group 2	18	28,72			
	Control Group	16	13,00			
<b>Pre-writing Skills</b>	Test Group 1	19	34,79	2	13,713	,001
	Test Group 2	18	28,39			
	Control Group	16	16,19			
<b>Phonological Awareness Skills</b>	Test Group 1	19	40,26	2	36,901	,000
	Test Group 2	18	29,25			
	Control Group	16	8,72			

When Table 9 examined, according to the Kruskal-Wallis Test results, which was performed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the children in the Test Group 1, Test Group 2, and Control Group regarding ELSAT and its sub-tests, it was found that there were statistically significant differences between the early literacy skills of the groups ( $X^2_{(2)}= 38,781$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $X^2_{(2)}= 43,519$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $X^2_{(2)}= 20,881$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $X^2_{(2)}= 23,284$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $X^2_{(2)}= 13,713$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $X^2_{(2)}= 36,901$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ).

### Findings Regarding the Fifth Sub-purpose

**Table 10.** *The Post-test Scores of the Test Group 1 and Test Group 2 Regarding Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool and Its Sub-tests*

	Group	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
<b>Overall ELSAT</b>	Test Group 1	19	24,95	474,00	58,00	,001
	Test Group 2	18	12,72	229,00		
<b>Writing Awareness</b>	Test Group 1	19	26,71	507,50	24,500	,000
	Test Group 2	18	10,86	195,50		
<b>Understanding the Story</b>	Test Group 1	19	19,47	370,00	162	,688
	Test Group 2	18	18,50	333,00		
<b>Matching Images</b>	Test Group 1	19	22,37	425,00	107	,038
	Test Group 2	18	15,44	278,00		
<b>Pre-writing Skills</b>	Test Group 1	19	21,21	403,00	129	,179
	Test Group 2	18	16,67	300,00		
<b>Phonological Awareness Skills</b>	Test Group 1	19	24,39	463,50	68,500	,002
	Test Group 2	18	13,31	239,50		

When Table 10 examined, according to the Mann Whitney U Test results, which was performed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the children in the Test Group 1 and Test Group 2 regarding ELSAT and its sub-tests, it was found that there were no statistically significant differences between the Test Group 1 and Test Group 2 in “Understanding the Story” and “Pre-writing Skills” sub-tests ( $U=162, p > 0,05$ ;  $U=129, p > 0,05$ ). However, it was revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the Test Group 1 and Test Group 2 in “Overall ELSAT” and in its “Writing Awareness”, “Matching Images”, and “Phonological Awareness Skills” sub-tests ( $U=13, p < 0,05$ ;  $U=24,500, p < 0,05$ ;  $U=107, p < 0,05$ ;  $U=29, p < 0,05$ ) in favor of Test Group 1.

### Findings Regarding the Sixth Sub-purpose

**Table 11.** *The Post-test Scores of the Test Group 1 and Control Group Regarding Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool and Its Sub-tests*

	Group	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
<b>Overall ELSAT</b>	Test Group 1	19	26,00	494,00	,000	,000
	Control Group	16	8,50	136,00		
<b>Writing Awareness</b>	Test Group 1	19	26,00	494,00	,000	,000
	Control Group	16	8,50	136,00		
<b>Understanding the Story</b>	Test Group 1	19	23,45	445,50	48,500	,000
	Control Group	16	11,53	184,50		
<b>Matching Images</b>	Test Group 1	19	24,79	471,00	23	,000
	Control Group	16	9,94	159,00		
<b>Pre-writing Skills</b>	Test Group 1	19	23,58	448,00	46	,000
	Control Group	16	11,38	182,00		
<b>Phonological Awareness Skills</b>	Test Group 1	19	25,87	491,50	2,500	,000
	Control Group	16	8,66	138,50		

When Table 11 examined, according to the Mann Whitney U Test results, which was performed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the children in the Test Group 1 and Control Group regarding ELSAT and its sub-tests, it was found that there were statistically significant differences between the Test Group 1 and Control Group ( $U= ,000$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ) in favor of Test Group 1.

### Findings Regarding the Seventh Sub-purpose

**Table 12.** *The Post-test Scores of the Test Group 2 and Control Group Regarding Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool and Its Sub-tests*

	Group	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
<b>Overall ELSAT</b>	Test Group 2	18	25,50	459,00	,000	,000
	Control Group	16	8,50	136,00		
<b>Writing Awareness</b>	Test Group 2	18	25,50	459,00	,000	,000
	Control Group	16	8,50	136,00		
<b>Understanding the Story</b>	Test Group 2	18	22,94	413,00	46	,000
	Control Group	16	11,38	182,00		
<b>Matching Images</b>	Test Group 2	18	22,78	410,00	49	,001
	Control Group	16	11,56	185,00		
<b>Pre-writing Skills</b>	Test Group 2	18	21,22	382,00	77	,017
	Control Group	16	13,31	213,00		
<b>Phonological Awareness Skills</b>	Test Group 2	18	25,44	458,00	1	,000
	Control Group	16	8,56	137,00		

When Table 12 examined, according to the Mann Whitney U Test results, which was performed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores of the children in the Test Group 2 and Control Group regarding ELSAT and its sub-tests, it was found that there were statistically significant differences between the Test Group 2 and Control Group ( $U= ,000$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $U= ,000$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $U= 46$ ,  $p < ,0,05$ ;  $U= 49$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $U= 77$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ;  $U= 1$ ,  $0,05$ ) in favor of Test Group 2.

### Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The research was carried out with the aim of determining the effect of interactive book reading activities applied to pre-school children aged 48-66 months on their early literacy skills. A total of three groups were included in the research process; namely the Test Group 1, Test Group 2, and Control Group. Interactive book reading activities prepared by the researcher were applied to the Test Group 1 by their parents, two days a week (on Mondays and Thursdays) for a period of eight weeks. The same activities were applied to the Test Group 2 by the researcher, two days a week (on Tuesdays and Fridays) for a period of eight weeks. The Control Group continued the regular education and training process throughout the study, and no intervention was made by the researcher. As a result of the statistical analyses performed, it was found that there were significant differences between the pre-test and post-test scores of the Test Group 1 and Test Group 2, whereas there were no significant differences in the Control Group. Yalavaç (2020) concluded that interactive book reading practices were effective on early literacy skills of the Test Group, which could be said to be in parallel with the findings of the current study. Interactive book reading supports children's language development (Tetik, 2015; Walker et al., 1994; Whitehurst et al., 1988) and early literacy skills (Akoğlu et al., 2014;

Baker et al., 1997; Bennett et al., 2002; Doğan, 2019; Sim et al., 2014; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). In the study by Şimşek (2017), which examined the effects of different reading techniques on language development, it was concluded that the most effective method was reading based on dialogue.

It was also found that there were statistically significant differences between the groups (in overall ELSAT and in the sub-tests of writing awareness, matching images, and phonological awareness skills of the assessment tool) in the pairwise comparison results of the Test Group 1 and Test Group 2, and the difference was on behalf of the Test Group 1 ( $p < 0.05$ ). The reason for the significant differences between the Test Group 1 and Test Group 2 was considered as that the parents performed one-to-one activities, but the researcher performed activities in large groups. In their study, Lorio and Woods (2020) examined the effects of an interactive book reading program on vocabulary acquisition, and they concluded that there were positive effects in the test process in which they studied with small groups (three-four people).

In addition to the positive effects of performing the activities one-to-one on the Test Group 1, the guidance of the parents in the activities was a very important factor. In their interactive book reading research with low-income families and their children, Lonigan and Whitehurst (1998) included a total of three test groups. In the first group, interactive reading in small groups was performed by the teacher; whereas in the second group, interactive reading at home with the parents was performed; and in the third group, interactive reading both at home and at school was performed. When the results of the research were considered, significant effects were observed mostly in the groups who performed reading with the parents. In this sense, it can be said that the findings of the research support the findings of the current study. Reese et al. (2010) conducted research on the development of children's early literacy skills by their parents within the context of reading, conversations, and writing skills performed together with the parents. As a result, they expressed the relationship between parents and early literacy development as "parents are the resources that cannot be utilized sufficiently". Morrow and Weinstein (1986) stated the positive effects of the home literacy program on children that encouraged the parents to the activities of reading aloud, different early literacy support activities, and library activities. For these reasons, parents should take a more active role in the process of providing early literacy skills to pre-school children.

In his research examining the effect of family-participated interactive book reading on early literacy skills, Vural (2021) performed a statistical analysis on writing awareness and understanding the story sub-tests of Early Literacy Skills Assessment Tool, and it was found that there were statistically significant differences in the test group compared to the control group. In their study with 48-60 month-old children who did not receive pre-school education and their mothers, Yılmaz et al. (2020) examined the effect of home-centered interactive book reading on children's ability to understand emotions. As a result of the research, significant differences were determined on behalf of the test group. Therefore, it was observed that home-centered interactive book reading contributed positively to children's ability to understand emotions. It was also revealed that parents had an active role in the implementation of interactive book reading activities, regardless of the dependent variable. Bus et al. (1995) conducted a meta-analysis study in their research involving parent-child reading activities together in the pre-school period. Considering the results of the study, it was found that reading together was effective on language development, early literacy, and future reading success. Based on this research,



it is thought that the research conducted may have positive effects on future reading performance and language development as well as supporting early literacy skills.

When the significant differences between Test Group 1 and Test Group 2 were examined, it was concluded that there were no significant differences in the sub-tests of "understanding the story" and "pre-writing skills" ( $p>0.05$ ). Since understanding the story and pre-writing skills were among the main outcomes of the interactive book reading method, it was thought that they created significant differences in both groups. In his study with primary school second-grade students, Yurtbakan (2021) examined the effects of interactive book reading activities performed with parents and teacher guidance on the students' reading skills. Considering the results of the research that included three groups (parents and teacher guidance, only teacher guidance, and control group), it was noted that there were significant differences on behalf of the group of parents and teacher guidance in fluent reading and speed and faultlessness dimensions, while there were no significant differences in the other sub-dimensions. The fact that parental guidance did not create significant differences in some sub-dimensions can be said to constitute a common ground with the current research.

In conclusion, it was found that there were significant differences between the post-test scores of Test Group 1, in which interactive book reading activities were applied by the parents, and the Group 2, in which interactive book reading activities were applied by the researchers when compared to the Control Group. It was also revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the post-test scores of Test Group 1 and Test Group 2, in overall ELSAT and in its sub-tests other than understanding the story and pre-writing skills sub-tests. It is possible to mention the positive effects of parental guidance and interactive book reading activities on early literacy skills throughout the process.

In line with the findings of the research, it is recommended that teachers and parents should frequently perform interactive book reading activities with children and possess the necessary theoretical knowledge about the method. In addition to this, it is also recommended that researchers can examine the effects of interactive book reading with different research groups (large-small) on early literacy, and they can use different research methods.

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