



## THE EVALUATION OF CHILDREN'S EXPECTATIONS ABOUT LITERACY ENVIRONMENT<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is, by means of a multi-faceted evaluation of the expectations of fourth-grade primary school students from their literacy environment, to put forward suggestions aimed at improving this environment. The study was carried out according to the homogeneous sampling method, which is one of the methods of purposive sampling. For this purpose, 103 pupils from the fourth grade of a school were contacted in order to determine their expectations from their literacy environment. For the research data, a data collection tool made up of 19 items of the gap-fill type was compiled from studies in the literature aimed at the literacy environment. Frequency tables were drawn up according to the responses given to these items by the students. The analyzed data revealed that children to read entertaining book the most, and preferred to read in their bedrooms. Results also indicated that children wanted their parents to be quiet while reading and they preferred their mothers mostly to read books to them as compared to their fathers.

**Keywords:** Literacy environment, reading, primary school students, students' parents.

### INTRODUCTION

A person's curiosity to know what is going on in the world, which begins at birth, continues with his efforts to understand what is going on around him. During the first years of life, babies react to their surroundings in various ways in order to satisfy their needs or their curiosity. By reading the way their reactions are responded to, they will develop behaviour in that direction. In this respect, we can state that reading begins at birth and that it is based upon needs and curiosity. The reading carried out may be called reading one's environment. When the literature is examined, it can be seen that not a great deal of time has passed since the view that reading begins to be acquired at birth first became predominant.

The idea that reading begins to be acquired at birth has been proposed via theories of reading. Theorists have influenced pedagogy with the new theories they formed during the last century (Black, 2006). Researchers focusing mainly on characteristics formed at birth and on type of surroundings (home and school) have developed views related to reading over time. In his study, Black (2006) dealt with the theories that he emphasized in historical order, commencing with the 1940s; 1. Maturationist Perspective, 2. Nativist Perspective, 3. Developmental Perspective, 4. Connectionist Perspective, 5. Psycholinguistic Perspective, 6. Emergent Perspective, 7. Social Constructivist Perspective, 8. Socio-cultural Perspective, and 9. Critical Literacy Perspective. The Maturationist Perspective, which he states was effective between 1940 and 1960, maintains the idea that in order for a child to gain the necessary knowledge and skills for reading, he must reach a certain maturity level. Besides this, the Socio-cultural and Critical Literacy Perspectives have continued to be effective since the 1990s up to the present day. The changes and challenges in theories over the past decades has also affected the types of approach of informed parents and teachers towards the child at the stage when the child is taught to read and write. The type of approach that is affected naturally affects the attitude of the child towards reading at the same time.

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The most important factor that determines reading success is the attitude of the child towards reading (Black, 2006; Klauda & Wigfield, 2012; Kush & Watkins, 1996; McKenna, Kear & Ellsworth, 1995; McKenna & Kear, 1990). It has been determined that while children have positive attitudes towards reading at the beginning of primary school, their attitudes turn to negative ones in later grades (Kush & Watkins, 1996; McKenna et al., 1995). In the studies carried out it has been suggested that girls display a more positive attitude towards reading than do boys (Black, 2006; Kush & Watkins, 1996; McKenna et al., 1995; Worrell, Roth & Gabelko, 2006). In McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang and Mayer's study (2012), middle school students' attitudes towards reading were evaluated in four categories. These were: entertaining and academic reading from printed sources, and entertaining and academic reading from digital sources. Findings indicated that male students displayed more positive attitudes towards entertaining reading from digital sources only, whereas female students displayed more positive attitudes than male students in the other three categories. The National Research Council of the USA discusses the attitudes and behaviours of parents that can affect the attitudes of children towards reading under four headings, namely 1. Value given to literacy, 2. Emphasis on success, 3. Accessibility and usability of reading material, and 4. Reading to children (Temple, Ogle, Crawford & Freppon, 2005 as cited in Başaran, 2006).

It is considered that in children's recognition of their literacy environment in the pre-school period, the largest role generally belongs to their parents (Carroll, 2013; Erkan & Kirca, 2010; Fitzgerald, Spiegel & Cunningham, 1991). This role carries special importance with regard to whether or not children will benefit from early childhood education. Due to the fact that in our country early childhood education is not within the scope of compulsory education, it can be said that for a percentage of children, encountering a conscious literacy environment begins with the process of formal education. When we speak about a literacy environment for a child, we mean the area that affects the child's attitude towards reading and writing at home, at school or around him/her, either existing spontaneously or formed consciously. When considering who determines the literacy environment presented to the child, we think first and foremost of the parents and teachers around him/her as the most important determiners. From this point of view, the formation of this environment without considering the needs and expectations of the child towards it may result in that child's developing a negative attitude towards literacy. The fact that as grade level increases, positive attitudes towards reading turn to negative ones may be shown as evidence of this situation (Kush & Watkins, 1996; McKenna et al., 1995). It is important to determine the self-perceptions and reading perceptions of students who describe themselves as readers and non-readers, together with the perceptions of their families and peers with regard to support for reading, and to reveal the differences if there are any, so as to be able to work towards taking precautions and making improvements (Clark, Osborne & Akerman, 2008:25). Particularly in the creation of reading perception and in the development of positive attitudes towards reading, literacy environment has a determining effect on whether or not these exist at a level which meets the needs of the child. In this context, in the present study, the aim is to make a multi-faceted evaluation of the expectations of fourth-grade primary students from their literacy environment and to put forward suggestions with regard to improving this environment.

## METHOD

This study, carried out with the aim of determining the expectations of fourth-grade primary students from their literacy environment, is presented in the form of a case study by using qualitative research methods. It can be stated that the case study is a research method, based on the questions "how" and "why", that enables the researcher to examine deeply a state of affairs or event outside his/her control (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

### Participants

The study was carried out according to convenience sampling method which one of the purposive sampling methods. In this method the researcher chooses a close and convenient case (Yıldırım &



Şimşek, 2013:141). A school manager who works at a school in Zonguldak wants to determine children's expectation about literacy environment. For this aim, 103 students who receive education at elementary 4<sup>th</sup> grade in 2014-2015 academic year spring semester.

### Instruments

For the research, a data collection tool made up of 19 items of the gap-fill type was prepared, based on studies directed towards literacy in the literature (Carroll, 2013; Clark & Foster, 2005; Kaaranen, 2001; Kennedy & Trong, 2010; Rashid, Morris, & Sevcik, 2005; Tarelli, & Stubbe, 2010; Wang, 2014). The items from Clark and Foster (2005) have adapted on "where children prefer to read, who they want to read them". These are items compiled with the aim of determining the children's expectations from their literacy environment.

### Analysis of Data

From the answers given for 19 items in data collection tool, frequency table of students' expectations about literacy environment was made. Findings about these results were put forward.

### RESULTS

The range of answers given by the students to the open-ended questions aimed at determining their expectations from their literacy environment is shown in the tables below.

**Table 1. Students' Favourite Authors and Reasons for Their Choices**

Favourite Author	Number of Students	%	Reason	Number of Students	%
Leyla FİDANAY	20	19	He/she writes very good books	38	37
Mehmet Akif ERSOY	9	9	He wrote the National Anthem	8	8
Onur SANCAK	9	9	I like his/her books	7	7
Seda ŞENER	7	7	He/she writes adventurous books	5	5
Ali IRMAK	6	6	He/she writes informative books	5	5
Fatih ACAR	3	3	He tells about history	3	3
Ömer SEYFETTİN	2	2	He writes enjoyable books	2	2
Ülkü ÇADIRCI	2	2	Her stories are suitable to children	1	1
Uğur BÜGET	2	2	The stories are verisimilitude	1	1
Ferruh SANER	2	2	The poem "Bayrağım" is quite popular	1	1
No author	1	1	Mathematics subjects are explained very well		
Name of single author	15	15	S/he is a famous author	1	1
			S/he is a good author	1	1
			The author is forgotten	1	1
			The text is not read	1	1
Unanswered	25	24	Unanswered	27	26

As a result of the analysis, it was determined that Leyla Fidanay was the favourite writer of about 19% of the students. Besides this author, it is seen that the students typically preferred Mehmet Akif Ersoy



(9%), Onur Sancak (9%), Seda Şener (7%) and Ali Irmak (6%). Each of the 15 student indicated separate author name. These authors were not given on the table (Appendix 1). One of the students said that he likes all authors.

**Table 2. Students' Favourite Books and Reasons for Their Choices**

Favourite Book	f	%	Reason	f	%
Nasrettin Hoca	12	12	Entertaining book	24	23
Müzedeki Sır (Mystery in the Museum)	5	5	Informative book	22	21
Keloğlan	4	4	Good book	21	20
Gönüllü Çevreciler (Volunteer Conservationists)	4	4	Response not understood	8	8
Atatürk'ün Anıları (Memories of Atatürk)	4	4	Very exciting	3	3
Pamuk Prenses (Snow White)	3	3	Adventurous book	3	3
Life of the Prophet Muhammed	2	2	Baby doll is made	1	1
Peter Pan	2	2	I feel myself inside the book	1	1
Mevlana	2	2	Things about club happen	1	1
Umuda Sarılmak (Clinging to Hope)	2	2	I like Keloğlan	1	1
Name of single book	52	50	It is about Snow White	1	1
			Too much fictional imageries	1	1
			Makes people live joy and sadness	1	1
			Too much pages	1	1
Unanswered	11	11	Unanswered	14	14

As a result of the analysis, it was revealed that in first place, about 12% of the students who answered the item liked books about Nasrettin Hoca, who occupies a very important place in Turkey's humour culture, the most, followed by Müzedeki Sır (Mystery in the Museum) (5%), Keloğlan (4%), Gönüllü Çevreciler (Volunteer Conservationists) (4%), Atatürk'ün Anıları (Memories of Atatürk) (4%), and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (3%). 52 of the students named different books. These books have not been given on the table (Appendix 2).

It can be seen that 14 of the students did not say why a particular book was their favourite. Students who responded to the question (23%) stated the reason as entertaining, 21% of the respondents stated that it was informative, and 20% that it was a good book.

**Table 3. Books that Students do not enjoy to Read and Reasons**

Book Read but not Enjoyed	f	%	Reason	f	%
No books disliked	17	17	Unintelligible response	9	9
Students who misunderstood the question	4	4	Not a good book	6	6
Students with illegible	3	3	Could not understand book	4	4



handwriting					
Mimar Sinan	2	2	Question misunderstood	4	4
Çizmeli Kedi (Puss in Boots)	2	2	Not entertaining	3	3
Name of single book	26	25	Tells about nonsense things	2	2
			Too boring	2	2
			Not exciting	1	1
			I do not like wolves	1	1
			It is faulty	1	1
			Always tells about family	1	1
			Tells about girls	1	1
			It is not suitable to my style	1	1
			It always tells about Keloğlan	1	1
Unanswered	49	48	Unanswered	64	64

As a result of the analysis, it was established that 49 of the students didn't answer the item in which they were asked which books they had read but not enjoyed. Nevertheless, approximately one third of the students who completed the item stated that there were no books that they did not like. Besides, 3% of the students could not be evaluated because their handwriting could not be read, while it was understood from the responses given by 4% of them that they had not understood the question. Almost all of the students who completed the item gave the names of different books. This works is not mentioned in the table (Appendix 3). Only about 25% of the students specified the name of the books that they did not like.

It was established that 64 of the students did not state a reason for not enjoying a book. It was determined from the answers given for questions that 9 of the students do not understand the question. It was determined that students do not like books mostly for these reasons: The book is not good (6%), the book is not understandable (4%) and the book is not enjoyable (3%).

**Table 4. Students' Preferred Places for Reading and Reasons for Their Choices**

Preferred Place for Reading	f	%	Reason	f	%
In their bedrooms	32	31	Because it is quiet	53	51
At the library	16	16	To better understand what is read	9	9
At home	12	12	To read with their friends	3	3
At school-in class	9	9	To be comfortable	3	3
In a quiet location	6	6	Lack of anything that might disturb them	2	2
In a quiet room	2	2	Nobody can get in (the room) without permission	2	2
At hall	1	1	Because there are a lot of books	2	2
In the garden	1	1	I can see well under light	1	1
At computer room	1	1	It is at my home	1	1
Near a river	1	1	I feel comfortable while reading	1	1
In Kars	1	1	It is my hometown	1	1
			There are teachers	1	1
			I can read aloud at school	1	1



			Everything enjoyable at the library	1	1
Unanswered	21	20	Unanswered	22	21

One in five of the students did not mention where they mostly like to read book. On the other hand, students stated that they mostly like to read in their room (31%), at the library (16%) and at home (12%). It was determined that students prefer these places because they are quite (51%) and they can understand what they read better (9%).

**Table 5. Students' Preferred Activities after School Time**

Preferred Activities after School time	f	%	Preferred Activities after School time	f	%
Studying	43	42	Doing sport	1	1
Reading books	34	33	Listening to music	1	1
Playing games	19	18	Enjoying themselves	1	1
Watching TV	9	9	Cycling	1	1
Relaxing	5	5	Going to the shop	1	1
Eating and cooking	4	4	Caring for kittens	1	1
Getting changed	3	3	Drawing	1	1
Going around	2	2	Doing jigsaws	1	1
Students with illegible handwriting	2	2	Eating fruit	1	1
			Unanswered	11	11

As shown in Table 5, 11% of the students who participated in the study did not answer this item. Due to the fact that some of the students completing the item stated that they liked more than one activity after school, 130 responses were given. Students stated that they mostly like studying (42%), reading book (33%) and playing games (18%) after school.

**Table 6. Books that Students Would Like to Add to their Libraries**

Books chosen	f	%	Books chosen	f	%
Nasrettin Hoca	13	13	Life of the Prophet Muhammed	3	6
Keloğlan	6	6	Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs	2	4
Pinocchio	4	4	Atatürk	2	4
Mevlana	4	4	The Most Beautiful Cake in the World	2	4
Red Riding Hood	3	3	Osman Hamdi Bey	2	4
Aladdin and the Magic Lamp	3	3	Name of single book	43	42
			Unanswered	55	53

More than half of the students did not answer this question, 11 of them gave the name of a single book. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the four works most mentioned were Nasrettin Hoca, Keloğlan, Pinocchio and Mevlana. 43 of the students gave the name of different books. These books have not been given on the Table (Appendix 4).



**Table 7. People with whom Students First time went to the Library**

Person they first time went to the Library with	f	%	Person they first time went to the Library with	f	%
Friend	17	17	Cousin	4	4
Mother	12	12	Aunt/Uncle (1+2)	3	3
Family	11	11	Alone	3	3
Did not go	9	9	Big sister	3	3
Father	4	4	Big brother	2	2
Teacher	4	4	Unanswered	37	36

It appears that 37 of the students did not answer this question. Findings indicated that the students first went to the library most often with their friends (17%), mother (12%) and family (11%). On the other hand, about 9% of the students stated that they had never been to the library.

**Table 8. Frequency of Students' Visits to the Library**

Frequency of visit to library	F	%	Frequency of visit to library	f	%
Rarely/now and then	20	19	When going to do research	1	1
Never	8	8	Once a week	1	1
Often/all the time	6	6	Once a year	1	1
When going to read a book	4	4	Once a month	1	1
In the holidays	3	3	When bored	1	1
In their free time	2	2	At exam times	1	1
Absence of library	1	1	At homework times	1	1
			Unanswered	52	50

Half of the students did not answer this question. 8% of the students stated that they did not go to the library, 19% of them stated they sometimes, 6% frequently go to library and 4% stated that they go to library when they would read book.

**Table 9. Students' Expectations from their Mothers, Fathers and Teachers when Reading**

Expectations from Mothers	f	%	Expectations from Fathers	F	%	Expectations from Teachers	f	%
To be quiet	29	28	To be quiet	25	24	To be quiet	19	18
To read with them	12	12	To read with them	11	11	To listen to them	10	10
To listen to them	11	11	To listen to them	9	9	For the teacher to read the book as well	8	8
To prepare food	10	10	To turn the TV down/off	8	8	To explain the lesson	7	7
Not to do anything	3	3	To stay next to them	5	5	To follow their progress	4	4
Not to stay next to them	3	3	To sleep	4	4	To mark/prepare exams	3	3



To help them	3	3	Not to stay next to them	3	3	To get annoyed with the noisy ones	3	3
Unintelligible response	3	3	Not to do anything	3	3	To correct their mistakes	3	3
To stay next to them	3	3	To explain the book to them	2	2	Not to do anything	3	3
To make cake	2	2	To play with them	2	2	To get them to answer questions	1	1
To sit down	1	1	To help them	2	2	Not to put on cartoons	1	1
To take an interest in them	1	1	To read the newspaper	2	2	To get homework ready	1	1
To kiss them	1	1	To listen to music	1	1	To walk around among them	1	1
To make fruit juice	1	1	To help their mothers	1	1	To give them a book	1	1
To peel fruit for them	1	1	To watch a film on the computer	1	1	To have them read aloud	1	1
To entertain their brother/sister	1	1	To say “well done” to them	1	1	Not to hit them	1	1
To do their work	1	1	To kiss them	1	1	Not to stay next to them	1	1
To turn the TV down	1	1	To watch the match	1	1			
			To play with their brother/sister	1	1			
Unanswered	16	16	Unanswered	20	19	Unanswered	35	34

As shown in Table 9, 16 students (16%) did not mention their expectations from mother, 20 students (19%) from their father and 35 students (34%) from their teacher while reading. Students expect their mother, father and teachers to be quiet while reading book. Given in rates, 28% of students expect their mother, 24% expect their father and 18% expect their teacher be quiet. At the first two ranks, students expect their mother-father to read together with them and expect their teachers to listen to them.

**Table 10. Types of books that student’ mothers read to them and its frequency**

Types of books	F	%	Frequency	f	%
Book	40	39	Sometimes/now and then	11	11
Story	7	7	All the time/every day/evening	9	9
Fairy tale	7	7	Once a week	2	2
Never read	4	4	Often/very often	2	2





Novel	2	2	Every three days	1	1
Poem	1	1	In their free time	1	1
Unanswered	42	41	Unanswered	77	75

It appears that 41% of students did not answer this item, 4% of them stated their mother never read book to them. 39% of students did not mention the type of book their mother read. According to the answers given by the children, their mothers mostly read stories (7%), fairy tales (7%) and novels (2%), in that order.

Great majority of students did not mention how often their mother read to them. 11% of the students stated their mother sometimes read book to them, 9% stated they read book every time/day/evening.

**Table 11. Types of books that students' fathers read to them and its frequency**

What fathers read	f	%	Frequency	f	%
Book	23	22	Sometimes/now and then	11	11
Never read	10	10	At bedtime/all the time	5	5
Story	8	8	Once a week	1	1
Fairy tale	4	4	Once a fortnight	1	1
Newspaper	3	3	At the weekends	1	1
Poem	1	1			
Novel	1	1			
Unanswered	53	51	Unanswered	84	82

Half of the students did not answer this item, 10% of them stated their father did not read them anything. 22% of students did not state the type of book their father read them. The students stated that their fathers mostly read stories and fairy tales to them.

Great majority of students (84) did not mention how often their father read them books. 11% of students stated their father sometimes read books and 5% stated they read books every time / when they went to bed.

**Table 12. Students' television viewing preferences in relation to their book-reading**

TV viewing preferences in relation to book-reading	Number of Students	%
Preferred	19	18
Not preferred	12	12
Seen as bad in relation	2	2
Seen as not similar	2	2
Seen as similar	2	2
Seen as important in relation	1	1
Those seeing them as two separate things	1	1
Unanswered	64	62

As shown in Table 12, more than half of the students did not answer this item. As a result of the analysis, 18% of the students preferred watching TV to reading books, while 12%, on the other hand, stated that they preferred reading books to watching TV.

**Table 13. Students' preferred to do instead of reading book**

In preference to reading books.....	f	%	In preference to reading books.....	f	%
Studying	39	37	Caring for animals	1	1
Watching TV	7	7	Computer	1	1
No preference	7	7	Going out in the car	1	1
Relaxing/sleeping (2+1)	3	3	Writing poetry	1	1
Eating	2	2	Eating fruit	1	1
Playing games	2	2	Unanswered	40	38

It appears that 40 students did not complete the item. Findings indicated that 37% of the students preferred studying to reading books. On the other hand, while 7% of the students stated that they preferred watching TV instead of reading books, 7% did not state a particular preference to reading books.

**Table 14. Types of books that students would read to their students if they were teachers and its frequency**

Types of books	F	%	Frequency	f	%
Book	40	39	All the time/every day	9	9
Story	12	12	Frequently/most of the time	6	6
Fairy tale	6	6	Now and then/sometimes	5	5
Turkish text	3	3	In Turkish lessons	2	2
Life of the Prophet Muhammed	2	2	In the last lesson	2	2
Whatever their students asked for	2	2	In free lessons	2	2
Atatürk and his Reforms	1	1	Twice a week	1	1
Anecdotes			30 minutes a day	1	1
Unanswered	37	36	Unanswered	75	73

As shown in Table 14, one in three students did not complete the item. Findings indicated that 39% of the students stated that they would read books to their students if they were teachers, while in second and third places came stories (12%) and fairy tales (6%) respectively.

Most of the students did not complete that them how often they would read the material they would choose to read, as teachers, to their students. On the other hand, only 9% of the students who completed the item stated that they would read to their students all the time or frequently if they were teachers.

**Table 15. Types of books that students would read to their children if they were mothers or fathers and its frequency**

What they Would Read to Children if they were Mothers	f	%	What they Would Read to Children if they were Fathers	f	%
Book	38	37	Book	38	37
Fairy tale	13	13	Story	11	11
Story	12	12	Fairy tale	3	3
Anecdote	2	2	Poem	1	1



Lullaby	1	1	Newspaper	1	1
Favourite things	1	1	What the child wants	1	1
Novel	1	1	Novel	1	1
Unanswered	35	34	Unanswered	47	46
Frequency	f	%	Frequency	f	%
All the time/every day or evening	9	9	All the time/every day or evening	9	9
Now and then/sometimes	7	7	Frequently/most of the time	5	5
Often	4	4	Now and then/sometimes	3	3
After finishing their work	2	2	When coming home from work	2	2
In their free time	2	2	In their free time	2	2
Three times per week	1	1	Six days a week	1	1
Once per week	1	1	Once per week	1	1
Every two days	1	1			
Unanswered	76	74	Unanswered	80	78

One in three students did not answer what they would read to their children if they were mother. As it is seen in Table 15, 37% of the students stated that they would mostly read books to their children if they were mothers. Following books were fairy tales (13%) and stories (12%). It is striking that 74% of the students did not state with what frequency they would read to their children if they were mothers.

It appears that 47 students did not answer what they would read to their children if they were father. Findings indicated that students would mostly read books to their children if they were fathers. Stories and fairy tales followed this in second and third place respectively. On the other hand, most of the students did not state with what frequency they would read to their children if they were fathers.

**Table 16. Range of people that students would most like to read to them**

Preferred Person	Number of Students	%	Preferred Person	Number of Students	%
Mother	37	36	Maternal aunt	2	2
Father	13	13	Family member	2	2
Friend	6	6	Brother/sister	1	1
Big brother	4	4	Paternal aunt	1	1
Big sister	4	4	Themselves	1	1
Teacher	3	3	Unanswered	32	30

It appears that 32 of the students did not complete this item. The analysed data revealed that 36% of the students stated that they would most like their mothers to read to them. Following this in second place were students who wanted their fathers to read to them, followed by their friends in third place. Only 3% of the students wanted their teachers to read to them.

## DISCUSSION

The students' most popular reason for liking certain authors was that they wrote very good books. This result will ensure that when they come across books that they like, they will reach an adequate level of



self-perception as readers, since both the value they give to reading and the frequency with which they read will increase when they enjoy reading. Besides, the fact that the children specified only Turkish authors shows that they had not come across any translated works or that there were no translated works that they enjoyed. Yet 28% of the 100 basic books recommended for primary school children consist of well-known foreign works (such as *My Sweet Orange Tree*, *Oliver Twist*, *Robin Hood*, *Tom Sawyer*, *the Three Musketeers*) (MEB, 2005).

The fact that the students participating in the study mostly preferred entertaining and adventurous books like *Nasrettin Hoca*, *Mystery in the Museum* and *Keloğlan* shows that the children gained more enjoyment out of reading entertaining books. The 4th and 5th grade students who took part in Kartal and Çağlar Özteke's (2011) study stated that among the most important features that should be found in the books that they had read or would read were mostly (38%) that they should be entertaining, adventurous and exciting. Therefore, it is considered that students have reached the "reading anecdotes, riddles, nursery rhymes, fairy tales, etc. for entertainment" level of attainment (Programme and Key for Primary School Turkish Lessons, 2009:87). Besides, in Arı and Okur's (2013) study, carried out for the purpose of determining whether students had achieved the aim of the 100 basic works specified by the Ministry of Education in its 2005 memorandum, "to ensure that students acquire the reading habit", or whether the students had read the books in the list, it was determined that in the first three places among the 30 most frequently read books were *Pinocchio* (66.7%), *Tales of Keloğlan* (64.9%) and *Tales of Dede Korkut* (63.1%); and that in the first three places among the 15 most frequently read native books were *Tales of Keloğlan* (64.9%), *Tales of Dede Korkut* (63.1%), and *Tales of Nasreddin Hoca* (57.6%). This result also reveals that in different regions of our country, a significant section of students receiving education mostly prefer entertaining books and that their needs are for these.

A significant number of the students who took part in the study did not state a reason for not liking the books that they did not enjoy, besides which about half of the students who completed this item stated that there was no book that they had read but not enjoyed. Just as this may show that the students read only books that they were interested in, it may also show that they read very few books or that there were no books that they did not enjoy because they did not read. On the other hand, the fact that some of the students stated that they did not enjoy a book because it was not a good one or because they did not understand it, gives rise to the opinion that not enough attention had been paid to the students' interests, needs and levels of development in their choices of books. Besides, the fact that about one in ten of the students stated that they did not enjoy a book because it was not entertaining, is confirmed by the opinion of Gönen et al. (2011:253) that "In bringing up children at primary school level as individuals who obtain enjoyment out of reading, the role of books designed to bring reading to a pleasurable and enjoyable level is important".

The fact that two thirds of the students who took part in the study stated that they preferred to read in their rooms, at the library or at home shows that a significant number of the students feel the need for quiet locations as places to read. The fact that about 44% of the students stated that they preferred to read in their rooms or at home shows that the home literacy environment is important. In the home literacy environment, the frequency with which the family reads to the child and performs reading-writing activities, their socio-economic situation, their living conditions, and the attention and reading habits of the child's carer, affect the development of children's early literacy skills and spoken language (Carroll, 2013:42, taken from Phillips & Lonigan, 2009). This result also shows that the school environment is not quite enough for students to be able to read in comfort. For example, in Behiç Ak's work, *the Sleepwalking Elephant* (2007), it is narrated that in a country there was a big, noisy city, and that because the city was so noisy, people could not hear what they were saying to each other, and so they spoke even more loudly, and that because of the noise, all the animals left the city. Thus in a children's book, too, it is narrated in this way that noise has negative effects on people and other creatures. From this point of view, there is a need for care to be taken for reading environments



to be kept away from noise that might disturb readers at school or in the home.

The students stated that they most enjoyed studying, reading books and playing games after school, in that order. The fact that the students most enjoyed studying may be due to their having more responsibilities with regard to homework. Aytaş (2005) states that among the main reasons why our country lags behind in terms of development may be counted the fact that reading instruction is made by being based mostly on texts found in school books. Yet Gönen and Uyanık-Balat (2002), have stated that adults are primarily responsible for bringing children and books together; that the love of books is formed by activities to be carried out at home and at school; and that at school, by increasing times for reading and listening to literary works suitable for children, more place could be given to activities geared towards reading in education programmes.

While the fact that half of the students who took part in the study did not answer the question asking them which two books they would like to add to their libraries may show that they had no idea as to any particular type of work, it may also show that they did not want to buy books because they already had enough in their libraries. On the subject of buying books, the fact that among the works they specified, the names of Nasrettin Hoca and Keloğlan filled the first two places, supports the idea that among the features they sought in the books that they wanted to read was that they should be entertaining. This result also shows that the students answered the questions carefully by way of sentence completion.

In the first three places, the students said that they first went to the library with their friends, mothers and families, while 14% of them stated that they had never been to the library. Along with those students who did not answer this question, it may be said that almost half of the students had not come across a library. This situation also shows that the fourth-grade students taking part in the study had not been taken to the library by their teachers throughout their education so far. Together with this, the fact that about half the students did not state how often they went to the library and that 16% said that they never went to the library tallies with the ratios for the people they first went to the library with. Whilst the responses given may show that a culture of going to the library had not yet been formed in fourth-year students, it may also show that when it is considered that the effective periods for gaining the reading habit, in other words the desire to read, are childhood, youth and adulthood; and that the effective social institutions for bringing about the formation of this desire are the family, school and the neighbourhood, teachers and families are not effective as role models in this subject. The results of the study carried out by Yılmaz (2000), with the aim of determining the reading and usage of the library habits of fourth-grade primary school pupils in Vienna, show similarity with the results of the existing study. It was determined that the Turkish students who participated in the study did not possess the habits of reading or going to the library, and that the families and teachers did not take a sufficient interest in the students.

The students' expectations from their mothers and fathers while reading at home, and from their teachers while reading at school, are mostly that they should remain quiet. These answers tally with those stating that they prefer quiet locations for reading. When the three different items measuring their expectations from their mothers, fathers and teachers are compared, the fact that the highest number of students did not complete the item measuring their expectations from their teachers may be interpreted as the fact that they had few expectations from their teachers, that they had more expectations from their parents, or that they could not express their expectations from their teachers because they were afraid of them. In second place, the students expected that their parents should read with them when reading at home. Besides, Russell and David (1994:14-15) pointed out that in order for book-reading behaviour to develop, it is necessary for each of the adults at home to be a good model, that otherwise, in the absence of this, it is difficult to expect reading to develop into a habit, and that for this, determining times for reading in the family is rather an effective method (as cited in Gönen & Uyanık-Balat, 2002). McKool (2007), in a study of 199 fifth-grade primary-school pupils



aimed at determining the factors affecting what they wished to read outside school, revealed that of the students who participated in the study, those who read voluntarily outside school were supported by their parents at home, their parents also read to them and thus were role models for their children, their parents recommended suitable books for their children, after reading the books they had discussions about the books with their parents, they had similar discussions about the books at school with their friends, and they were presented with the opportunity to buy the books they wanted or liked. In second place among students' expectations from their teachers was that their teachers should listen to them. These answers show that the students wanted their teachers to devote more time for listening to them while reading.

The students' wishes, both for their parents to read with them, and for their teachers to listen to them while reading reveals the importance of social feedback provided by the family and the school on the subject of reading (Keskin & Atmaca, 2014), and the extent to which students feel the need for this feedback. Yet the fact that class teachers, who are the key factor in the formation of reading skills, are ineffective in this subject, will negatively affect the students' reader self-perceptions in the short and long terms, as well as pave the way for permanent effects in the same direction with regard to their attitudes towards reading. 7% of the students who responded stated that their mothers never read to them. 38% of the students said that their mothers read to them, without specifying any particular genre. According to the responses given by the students, their mothers mostly read stories, fairy tales and novels, in that order. One third of the students who replied stated that their mothers read to them all the time/every day/ every evening, whilst about half of them said that their mothers read to them from time to time. This result shows that a significant percentage of the students did not frequently receive support from their mothers on the subject of reading. In the research carried out by Işıkoğlu, Erdoğan et al. (2016) with the aim of examining story-reading activities of parents and teachers together, it was established that almost half of parents of pre-school children completed the activity after reading the book without doing anything further, yet none of the parents, after reading the story, carried out the technique of "asking the child to retell the story and asking him/her to act it out". In fact, in a study carried out in which pre-school home literacy activities and children's literacy development was observed over a three-year period, it was established that there was a relationship between the vocabulary level of first-grade pupils and whether their parents read to them or not (Hood, Conlon, & Andrews, 2008).

One fifth of the students who responded stated that their fathers never read to them. The number of students who said that they were read to is very low. Whilst 24% of the students stated that their fathers read to them, without specifying a particular genre, others said that their fathers mostly read stories and fairy tales. Approximately 58% of the students who replied stated that their fathers read to them from time to time, while 26% said that their fathers read to them at bedtime/all the time. According to these responses, fathers read books to their children at home with less frequency than their mothers. Yet it has been stated that in the language, literacy and cognitive development of children at an early age, the most effective elements are the commencement of reading to them at an early age and the continuation of this (Duursma, 2014). In studies carried out in USA, it has been shown that reading to children by parents, especially the vocabulary used by fathers while reading, significantly affects children's linguistic development (Duursma, Pan, & Raikes, 2008; Pancsofar et al., 2010 as cited in Duursma, 2014).

About half of the students who responded stated that they would read books to their students if they were teachers, while in second and third places came stories and fairy tales respectively. On the other hand, over half the students who answered the question stated that they would read all the time or frequently to their students if they were teachers. This result shows that students who would read with this frequency were aware of the desire for reading and of the need to be read to. In Ülper's (2011) study, carried out with the aim of determining the factors that motivated students to read, of the students who took part, students in first grade stated that teachers' reading to them, and explaining the



books that they had read, awakened their desire to read. The fact that in the present study, a significant percentage of the students did not respond to this part, may also derive from the fact that the application was carried out in class while their teachers were present.

In response to the question asking them what they would read to their children if they were mothers, 35 students did not reply, whereas almost half of them did not answer the question asking them what they would read to their children if they were fathers. In the study carried out by Prusinski, Bramastyo and Dowd (2012), with the aim of determining at which level students became readers, what relationship this level had with the home literacy environment and how this could be improved, it was determined that the home literacy environment was a determinant in the development of all skills, that 20-25% of children were not supported in terms of home literacy environment, and that 49% of them could not read a text at their grade level and could read only 28 words in one minute. The present study may show that the reason why a great number of students did not respond to the question asking them what they would read to their children if they were mothers or fathers may be that they were not adequately supported in terms of home literacy environment and that for this reason they did not observe effective roles or models in their families. About half of the students who responded to the question about mothers, and over half of those answering the question about fathers, stated that they would most often read books to their children, followed by fairy tales and stories. It may be considered that the students who answered this question would prefer their fathers to read to them. The fact that the great majority of the students (two thirds) did not reply to the question asking them how often they would read the material they had chosen to read to their children if they were parents may be explained by the fact that their parents did not read to them and that they had no experience of this subject. This result corresponds with the results of the questions asking them about their parents reading to them and about their wishing to read when with their parents. This shows that the students participating in the study gave considered and informed answers to the questions.

In first place, over half the students said that they would most like their mothers to read to them, followed by their fathers and friends in second and third places, respectively. Hood, Conlon and Andrews (2008) stated that in the matter of supporting children with literacy activities, the mother is the most effective family member. In the same study, three quarters of the children who participated believed in the idea that their mothers were good readers to them, while three fifths believed that their fathers were. In the study carried out by Clark, Osborne and Akerman (2008), students who described themselves as readers, as well as those who said they were not, stated that in their families, they were most of all supported by their mothers, followed by their fathers on the subject of reading. Similarly, fourth and fifth-grade students who took part in Klauda and Wigfield's (2012) study stated that they received more support for reading from their mothers than from their fathers.

Unfortunately, only three of the students who took part in the present study said that they wanted their teachers to read to them. In fact, the person who is, in the first place, to be associated with reading activity and who is expected to be the first role model for primary school students on this subject is the Class Teacher. This result gives rise to the opinion that teachers do not read children's literary works in class, especially those other than class books. Furthermore, the fact that students most of all wanted their mothers to read to them gives rise to the opinion that from the child's viewpoint, the mother-figure is also the person he or she most wishes to have beside him/her while reading and that the child expects the most support from the mother.

In order that children learning to read can contribute to the collective memory of society through books and that therefore, by recognising the collective past, this past can be revived with each reading (Manguel, 2010:34), there is first of all a need for an approach by which the need for reading is met, and for this need to be satisfied through suitable resources. In bringing up primary school children as individuals who gain pleasure out of reading, the role of books designed to make reading pleasurable and entertaining is great (Gönen et al., 2011), as is the distinct importance of making these works



familiar to children, through the parents from the first months of their lives and through the teachers at school. In the studies made, it has been established the most determining factors in a student's success is not his/her family's income or social status, but rather the family's encouraging the child to learn, the establishing of a high level of communication, the existence of a home environment in which acceptable expectations regarding his/her success and future career can be created, and the participation of the parents in the education of the child in society and at school (Sanders & Epstein, 1998, as cited in Clark, Osborne & Akerman, 2008:54).

It can again be seen in this study, too, that it is vitally important that reading activity be introduced during the first years of life, even while still in the mother's lap, and that suitable support be given in this matter. Perhaps the first step to be taken in this regard, in a practice-based education process, is to instil the consciousness in prospective parents, before their babies are even born, that they are the first and most effective teachers of their children, by making those parents aware of how reading to their children and reading along with their children affects their children's development throughout their lives. Furthermore, with teachers' opinion that one of the most effective methods of lifelong learning is being a good reader, taking into consideration the fact that they bring up good readers and that they directly affect feelings and attitudes towards reading, there is need for individuals who first of all themselves feel the need for lifelong learning.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

*Authors who are not named in the named in Table 1, most favored by the students and whose frequency is 1*

Mehmet Sırrı Dumlu, Gökhan Tok, Yasemin Çakır, Salih Aydoğan, Meltem Bilir, Hayri Eden, Sadrettin Celal, Ayşe Yamaç, Hakkı Çebi, Evliya Çelebi, Yusuf Tavaslı, Damla Yıldız, Atilla Damar, Bestami Yazgan, Hakkı Çelebi

### Appendix 2

*Books which are not named in the Table 2, most favored by students and whose frequency is 1*

Heidi, Sabırsız Sabri, Geçmişe Yolculuk, Masal Ormanı, Anderson Masalları, Beyaz Kartal, Kralın Hediyesi, Ayşegül'ün Maceraları, Kuşlar Kralı, Temizlikçi Cadı, Futbol Sahası, Masallar Diyarı, İçimdeki Ses, Ben Mustafa, Hop Hop, Kedi ile Fare, Parmak Kız, Gökyüzünde Panik, Dikenli Çalı, Hayalet Avcısı, Güven ve Yarışçı Çocuklar, Pinokyo, Barkın Uçuyor, Temiz Deniz Çocuk Kulübü, Kırk Bir Oda, Bahçede Kamp, Yeni Bir Hayat İçin Hazırım, Anneannem Süsleniyor, Dünyanın En Güzel Pastası, Sihirli Saz Perisi, Masal Sever Ejderha, Azmin Zaferi, Küçük Deniz Kızı, Bağdat Sarayı, Bremen Mızıkacıları, Alaattinin Sihirli Lambası, Yunus Emre, Anı Çiçekleri, 100 Hadis, Osman Hamdi Bey, Dört Kardeşiler, Kırmızı Başlıklı Kız, Okul, Peygamberler Tarihi, Mimar Sinan, Falaka, Ali Baba Kırk Haramiler, Yedi Denizler, Masal Kitabı, Hacivat Karagöz, Tom Sawyer,



## Şehirlerin Şifreleri

### Appendix 3

*Books which are not named in the Table 3, least favored by students and whose frequency is 1*

Soğuktan Dönen Köpek, Anneannem Süsleniyor, Çirkin Ördek Yavrusu, Sevgi Ağacı, Gülbaharın Gülleri, Nane ve Limon, Dede Korkut Hikayeleri, Kırmızı Başlıklı Kız, Mavi Tüllü Balerinler, Yazın Kış Olur mu, Çiftçi ve Hayvanları, Azmin Zaferi, Sunanın Serçeleri, Sabahın İlk Nefesi, Masal Seven Ejderha, Gündüzü Getiren Kent, Pamuk Prenses, İbni Sina, Sevgi Yolu, Dost Irmak, Yasaklar, Kayalıklardan Gelen Ses, Mevlana, Keloğlan Masalları, Robinson Cruose, Şehirlerin Şifreleri

### Appendix 4

*Books which are not named in the Table 6, which the students would add to their library and whose frequency is 1.*

Bisikletim, Kırmızı Bisiklet, Kurşun Asker, Dede Korkut Hikayeleri, Sağlık Kitabı, Kül Kedisi, Okumanın Önemi, Aslan ve Kurt, Yavaş Kaplumbağa, Kırmızı Pikap, Bilmece Kitabı, Hayalet Avcısı, Güven ve Yarışçı Çocuklar, İki Kız Bir Kurt, Kemik Avcısı, Gönüllü Çevreciler, Umuda Sarılmak, Safari Yolculuğu, Saftirik, Canavarların Saldırısı, Tekerlemeler, Tahta Kaşık, Bremen Mızıkacıları, Yunus Emre, Şiir Kitabı, Ağustos Böceği ve Karınca, Fıkralar, Ayşegül, Kardelen, Define Avcıları, Hz. İsa, Don Kişot, Ali Baba ve Kırk Haramiler, Rapunzel, Namaz Nasıl Kılınır, Müzedeki Sır, Pancarcı Çocuk, 80 Günde Devri Alem, Yedi Denizler Adası, Dracula, Tom Sawyer, Deniz Altında Bin Fersah, Hacivat ve Karagöz