

A Study of Compatibility of Picture Storybooks Prepared for Children 3-8 Years Range in Early Childhood Period with the Indicators and Concepts Identified for Language and Cognitive Development in Ministry of Education 2013 Early Childhood Education Program

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Abstract

This research is conducted for the examination of the compliance of picture story books prepared for early childhood education period children and language-cognitive development area outcomes, indicator and concepts in MOE 2013 Early Childhood Education Program. It is thought that examination and analyzes of picture story books in terms of concepts; language-cognitive development area acquisitions and indicators will help how the educators follow a path and add the picture story books into their education programs. For the research, picture storybooks were chosen from the libraries and publishing houses, located in Ankara, made the first edition in the years of 2012-2013 and designed for 0-8 age group children. In total 96 picture storybooks were chosen by random sampling. As a data collection tool, "Acquisitions, Indicators and Description Table" and "Concepts of the Month Education Plan Availability Charts" has been used that were located in MOE 2013 Early Childhood Education Program. Every picture storybooks was examined by the researchers one by one and analyzed with SPSS 19.0 Package-Program and Microsoft Excel Working Sheet. In the research, percentage and frequency analyze were done. Scoring reliability of researchers was calculated 0,88. Research results show that 51.5% of 101 picture storybooks contain concepts. When the cognitive area acquisitions and indicators are examined, there are 22 acquisitions related to this area and 31.5% of the books include these acquisitions. Also, when the language area acquisitions and indicators are examined, there are 12 acquisitions related to this area and 50.7% of books include these acquisitions.

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Introduction

Preschool period between 0-6 years is known as critical period for all development zones of children. The most important reason of this is that personality development and formation, acquiring basic knowledge and skills and language acquisition occur in this period. One of the main purposes of preschool education is to ensure that the children in preschool period use language accurately and appropriately (Haktanır, 2012).

Language is an important tool for learning. Language development of children has a significant influence on reading skills and school success in following years. For this reason, starting from preschool time it is necessary to establish feasible educational environment in order to support language development of children. According to studies, having optimal level of basic language skills enables children to be inclined to progress and grow up comparing to their peers academically (Dice & Schwanenflugel, 2012).

In this day and age of rapid technological progress it is a common knowledge that reading-habit decreases due to abundance of stimulants. Especially gaining the habit of reading from an early age is crucial for continuance of reading-habit in the upcoming ages. Therefore, these habits need to be gained properly so as to pass from childhood to adulthood healthfully (Demircan, 2006). Books and reading-habit, which have so much influence on the lives of children must be implemented to the social lives of children starting from postpartum period (Gönen, 2013).

Language and reading-writing skills starting in early ages are under the influence of more than one development zone (Lennox, 2013). All of the changes in skills of perception, thinking, recollection, reasoning, decision making, problem solving are called cognitive enhancement (Ramazan & Demir, 2011). In the first years of life children improve their mental abilities by means of sensory perception and physical activities (Gönen, 2013). There is a meaningful relationship between developmental phase of children and reading habits. Reading habits of children not only improve verbal skills but also help children acquire high level mental abilities (Higham, Tönsing & Alant, 2010). Children structure their life through their interests, curiosity, needs, abilities and competences. Happening of this process is conditioned by culture, biological factors, and experience far more than direct guidance. In other words, personal experience and knowledge affecting the sole of life play a crucial role on shaping of a life (Gönen, 2013).

The most important source for children to improve their ideation and having a solid understanding is reading books. Illustrated children's books with which children encounter first have an important effect on child development (Veziroğlu & Gönen, 2012). Sipe (2001) has described illustrated children's books as "a common work of script, picture, cover, last page and details to provide children with aesthetically satisfying experience". Through the medium of the illustrated children's books, children enrich accumulation of knowledge about themselves, their environment and the world they live in.

Picture books have an influence on creativity of preschoolers. Picture books are both sensory tools stimulating with language and pictures, and also help children socialize (Gönen, 2013). That children are well in with illustrated children's books in childhood ensures children become individuals who enjoy reading and use the time efficiently to read rather than just someone who articulates letters and words correctly (Philips & Sturm, 2013). Illustrated children's books are one of the best tools for children to learn how to write. The children who have not interacted with books intentionally or unintentionally are prone to be unenthusiastic while learning how to read and write (Philips & Sturm, 2013).

This research has been done on the purpose of investigating illustrated children's books for preschoolers with regards to 3-6 age-group acquisitions and indicators under new Early Childhood Education Program (2013) which got off the ground at preschool education institutions in 2012. The main purpose of this study is to provide teachers guide information about what activities may assist illustrated children's books and how illustrated children's books can be incorporated into the preschool education program.

Research Question:

Are the picture storybooks used in early childhood qualified with designated indicators and concepts for language and cognitive enhancement in Ministry of Education Preschool Education Program (2013)?

Sub-questions in the Research:

* Do the picture storybooks used in early childhood cover the designated indicators for language development in Ministry of Education Preschool Education Program (2013)?

* Do the picture storybooks used in early childhood cover the designated indicators for cognitive enhancement in Ministry of Education Preschool Education Program (2013)?

* Do the picture storybooks used in early childhood cover the concepts in Ministry of Education Preschool Education Program (2013)?

Purpose of Research:

This research has been done on the purpose of investigating illustrated children's books in terms of acquisitions and indicators designated for language and cognitive development of 36-72 months-old children in 2013 Ministry of Education Preschool Education Program used in preschools and in terms of the concepts in program book. The analysis of picture storybooks in terms of the acquisitions and indicators of language and cognitive enhancement and the concepts in the program is considered to be helpful for teachers on ordering the books in the program while planning the activities in respect to this. It also provides educators with variation in use of books while teaching the concepts, acquisitions and indicators designated for language and cognitive development. It is aimed to find out to what extent the concepts, acquisitions and indicators issued in this research are supported in picture storybooks published recently and also to lead to increase the number of qualified editions.

Research Method

Target population of the Study

Target population of the study has been composed of 101 picture storybooks chosen using random sampling method among the picture storybooks which has been published between 2012-2013 for the first time for 0-8 age group, which are present in the libraries in Ankara and are sold in publishers. The findings of the study can be generalized to the books in the target population.

Data Collection Tool

As a data collection tool of the research, "Tables of Acquisitions, Indicators and Comments" and "Status List of Adding Concepts to the Monthly Training Scheme" in 2013 Ministry of Education Preschool Education Program have been used in the cause of covering the acquisitions and indicators of language and cognitive enhancement and the concepts in 2013 Ministry of Education Preschool Education Program, therefore enabling readers to check on what indicators and concepts are supported in what books.

i) Tables of Acquisitions, Indicators and Comments

This table which educators use to determine on the attachments and indicators they are going to add monthly training scheme in accordance with personal needs of children is presented with supplementary statements-12 at the end of the book of 2013 Ministry of Education Preschool Education Program. In the table there are 34 acquisitions and 180 indicators in total of which 73 indicators are for 12 acquisitions in language development and 117 indicators are for 22 acquisitions in cognitive development.

ii) Status List of Adding Concepts to the Monthly Training Scheme

This chart which educators use to determine on the concept they are going to add monthly training scheme is presented supplementary statements-5 at the end of the book of 2013 Ministry of Education Preschool Education Program. Using this chart, every month educators determine on the concepts to add training scheme in accordance with acquisitions and indicators. In the chart the concepts are scrutinized in the categories of color, figure, size, quantity, position/location, count/counting, sense, sensation, opposite and duration. In 11 categories of the chart there are 96 concepts including the colors determined by the researchers.

Implementation Process of the Research

The researchers have analyzed the books in the target population between November 2013 and December 2013. For each book some information like copyright page, subject matter and physical properties have been recorded. After having been read for once, each book has been marked for the concepts in Status List of Adding Concepts to the Monthly Training Scheme, and then indicators of cognitive and language enhancement has been analyzed according to Tables of Acquisitions, Indicators and Comments. Finally, every book has been read once again to review in case some indicators have been missed out or misevaluated.

iii) Scoring of Tables of Acquisitions, Indicators and Comments

In this table every indicator has been considered as an entry in 180 indicators differentiated according to development zones. The books have been examined

separately in terms of each entry and each entry present in the book has been given 1 point and each nonexisting entry has been given 0 point. The sum of all entries help to calculate the score of acquisitions and the sum of the acquisitions points refer to the scores of language and cognitive enhancement.

iv) Scoring of Status List of Adding Concepts to the Monthly Training Scheme

In this table every concept has been considered as an entry in categorized 96 concepts. The books have been examined separately with regards to each entry. Each entry present in the book has been given 1 point and each nonexisting entry has been given 0 point. The sum of all entries help to calculate the score of the category of concepts and the sum of the points of all categories refer to the total scores of the concepts.

Data Analysis

Picture storybooks prepared for the children aged 0-8 in the target population of the study have been analyzed using "Tables of Acquisitions, Indicators and Comments" and "Status List of Adding Concepts to the Monthly Training Scheme" in 2013 Ministry of Education Preschool Education Program. As for the analysis of the data collected SPSS 19.0 statistical package for social sciences and Microsoft excel worksheet have been used. Having been chosen via random sampling method, each book has been analyzed and percentage distributions have been evaluated by the help of SPSS 19.0 statistical package for social sciences and Microsoft excel worksheet. As a result of the analysis, it has been assessed how many indicators of language and cognitive enhancement are addressed to the concepts of each book, and to what extent 101 picture storybooks in the target population confirm concepts and indicators of language and cognitive enhancement.

Validity and reliability of "Tables of Acquisitions, Indicators and Comments" and "Status List of Adding Concepts to the Monthly Training Scheme" have been regarded as high since they are in 2013 Ministry of Education Preschool Education Program and used in all preschools connected with Ministry of Education. On the purpose of gaining credibility of scoring, among 5 different evaluation of 2 domain experts for 5 different books Pearson Correlation Analysis has been done, and there is a fairly high correlations of 0,88 between these ratings. When this rate is higher than 0,80, it is known that correlations between expert opinions is enough (Davis, 1992; As cited in Yurdugül, 2005).

Findings

Table 1: General information about books examined:

		f	Total f	%	Total %
Publishing year	2012	76	101	75,2	100
	2013	25		24,8	
Size	Small	20	101	19,8	100
	Medium	77		76,2	
	Large	4		4,0	
Aim of the book	Enjoying	11	101	10,9	100

	Teaching	71		70,3	
	Sensitive	14		13,9	
	Adventure	5		5,0	
Style	Simple	87	101	86,1	100
	Complex	14		13,9	
Grammar structure	Grammatical direct sentence	97	101	96,0	100
	Inverted sentence	4		4,0	
Description of the characters	Done	73	101	72,3	100
	Not done	28		27,7	
Understandability of the illustrations	Understandable	99	101	98,0	100
	Not understandable	2		2,0	
Accordance of illustration-text	Compatible	100	101	99,0	100
	Incompatible	1		1,0	
Type of cover	Thick cartoon	57	101	56,4	100
	Cardboard	13		12,9	
	Thin cartoon	31		30,7	
Quality of paper	Glossy coated paper	44	101	43,6	100
	Matte coated paper	50		49,5	
	Matte paper	7		6,9	

For this research, sample group consists of 101 picture story books published for 36-72 month-old-children in 2012 and 2013. In the demographic features of examined 101 books, first of all 76 of them are published in 2012 and 25 are published in 2013. When the size of books are examined; 19,8% of them are small (12x16 cm), 76,2% are medium (16x20 cm) and 4% are large (20x28 cm). Aim of the books is categorized as enjoying, teaching, sensitive and adventure. 10,9% of books are enjoying, 70,3% are teaching, 13,9 are sensitive and only 5% of them are adventure. Style of the books is categorized as simple and complex. 86,1% of all the books are simple and 13,9% of them are complex. When the style becomes simple, it is easy children to understand it and this is a good specialty for picture child books. When the grammar structure of the books is examined; 96% of them have grammatical direct sentences. 72,3% of all the books have description of the characters and 27,7 of them do not have the character description. Most of the books have understandable illustrations and only 2% of all books' illustrations are not understandable. Compatible between illustration and text is examined, 99% of all books have compatible between illustration and text. When the type of cover are examined, 56,4% of all books have thick cartoon cover and 30,7% have thin cartoon cover. When the quality of papers of books are examined only 49,5% of them have matte coated paper and 6,9% have mat paper. While reading with children, it is important the papers of book do not reflect the light and do not cause the problems children to see the illustrations and writings.

Table 2: Concepts placed in examined picture story books:

Concepts	Include f	Not Include f	Total f	Include %	Not Include %	Total %
Color	42	59	101	41,6	58,4	100
Geometric Shapes	11	90	101	10,9	89,1	100
Size	65	36	101	64,4	35,6	100
Quantity	53	47	101	53,5	46,5	100
Direction/Position in Space	73	28	101	72,3	27,7	100
Number/Counting	63	38	101	62,4	37,6	100
Sense	59	42	101	58,4	41,6	100
Emotion	63	38	101	62,4	37,6	100
Contrast	79	22	101	78,2	21,8	100
Time	63	38	101	62,4	37,6	100

When the 101 picture story books are examined, there are ten types of concepts chosen that place in MoNE 2013 Early Childhood Education Program Book. These concepts are Color, Geometric Shapes, Size, Quantity, Direction/Position in Space, Number/Counting, Sense, Emotion, Contrary and Time. When these 101 books are examined; it is found that 41,6% of the books include ‘color’ concept and these colors are mostly red, green, white and black. Also, it is found that 10,9% of the books include ‘geometric shapes’ concept and 89,1% of them do not include. Geometric shapes have the less percentage in the picture story books. When these 101 books are examined; it is found that 64,4% of the books include ‘size’ concept and these sizes are mostly large-medium-small and tall-short. When these 101 books are examined; it is found that 53,5% of the books include ‘quantity’ concept and these are mostly less-more, empty-full and part-all; rarely ağır-hafif, single-double and equal. When these 101 books are examined; it is found that 72,3% of the books include ‘direction-posititon’ concept and these are mostly up-down and inside-outside and rarely right-left, in-out and on the right-on the left. When these 101 books are examined; it is found that 62,4% of the books include ‘number/counting’ concept. When these 101 books are examined; it is found that 58,4% of the books include ‘sense’ concept and these senses are mostly hot-cold, wet-dry and loud-quiet; rarely salty, bitter, sour and slippery-grainny. When these 101 books are examined; it is found that 62,4% of the books include ‘emotion’ concept and these emotions are happy and sad; the lest embraced.

When these 101 books are examined; it is found that 78,2% of the books include ‘contrast’ concept and these are mostly beautiful-ugly, old-new and quick-slow; rarely straight-crooked, deep-shallow and light-dark. Also, when the ‘time’ concept is examined, 62,4% of the include mostly before-now-after and rarely day-night. As a result of examination it has been found out that in 101 picture storybooks 96 concepts have been issued at 51.5% rate. This rate in the picture storybooks which have an important place in concept acquisition of children is not enough.

Table 3: Cognitive development acquisition and indicators placed in examined picture story books:

Acquisitions	Number of Indicators	Include f	Not Include f	Include %	Not Include %	Total %
A1: Concentrates on object/situation/happening	3	97	4	96	4,0	100
A2: Makes a prediction about object/situation/happening	4	81	20	80,2	19,8	100
A3: Remembers perceives	3	48	53	47,5	52,5	100
A4: Counts objects	6	35	66	34,7	65,3	100
A5: Observes objects or creatures	12	73	28	72,3	27,7	100
A6: Matches objects or creatures according to specialities	14	35	66	34,7	65,3	100
A7: Groups object or creatures according to specialties	11	27	74	26,7	73,3	100
A8: Compares object or creatures according to specialties	11	32	69	31,7	68,3	100
A9: Sorts the objects according to specialties	5	6	95	5,9	94,1	100
A10: Apples the directions related to the position in the space	4	51	50	50,5	49,5	100
A11: Measures the objects	5	9	92	8,9	91,1	100
A12: Knows geometric shapes	3	4	97	4,0	96,0	100
A13: Knows the symbols used in daily life	2	5	96	5,0	95,0	100
A14: Creates patterns with objects	5	1	100	1,0	99,0	100
A15: Understands the part-all relationship	4	5	96	5,0	95,0	100
A16: Makes simple addition and subtraction using objects	2	1	100	1,0	99,0	100
A17: Understands the reason-conclusion relationship	4	54	47	53,5	46,5	100
A18: Examines concepts related to time	3	44	57	43,6	56,4	100
A19: Produces solutions to problem situations	7	81	20	80,2	19,8	100
A20: Prepares the object graphic	4	8	93	7,9	92,1	100
A21: Knows Atatürk	2	0	101	0	100	100
A22: Examines importance of Atatürk for	3	4	97	4,0	96,0	100

2013 MoNE Early Childhood Education Program has 22 cognitive development acquisition and 117 indicators related to cognitive development acquisitions. ‘Acquisition 6: Matches objects or creatures according to specialties’ has 14 indicators and it is acquisition containing most indicators. ‘Acquisition 5: Observes objects or creatures’ has 12 indicators; ‘Acquisition 7: Groups object or creatures according to specialties’ and ‘Acquisition 8: Compares object or creatures according to specialties’ have 11 indicators and they have also more indicators at all. ‘Acquisition 13: Knows the symbols used in daily life’ and ‘Acquisition 21: Knows Atatürk’ have the minimum number of indicators in total.

When the published in 2012 and 2013 totally 101 child picture books were examined in terms of containing indicators that place in MoNE 2013 Early Childhood Education Program Book, ‘A1: Concentrates on object/situation/happening’ is placed in 101 child picture books 96%. ‘A2: Makes a prediction about object/situation/happening’ and ‘A19: Produces solutions to problem situations’ are involved in 101 books 80.2%. ‘A3: Remembers perceives’ is placed in 101 child picture books 47.5%. ‘A4: Counts objects’ is placed 34.7%. ‘A5: Observes objects or creatures’ is placed 72.3%. ‘A6: Matches objects or creatures according to specialties’ is placed 34.7%. ‘A7: Groups object or creatures according to specialties’ is placed 26.7%. ‘A8: Compares object or creatures according to specialties’ is placed 31.7%. ‘A9: Sorts the objects according to specialties’ is placed 5.9%. ‘A10: Applies the directions related to the position in the space’ is placed 50.5%. ‘A11: Measures the objects’ is placed 8.9%. ‘A12: Knows geometric shapes’ and ‘A22: Examines the importance of Atatürk for Turkish society’ are placed 4%. ‘A13: Knows the symbols used in daily life’ and ‘A15: Understands the part-all relationship’ are placed 5%. ‘A14: Creates patterns with objects’ and ‘A16: Makes simple addition and subtraction using objects’ are placed 1%. ‘A17: Understands the reason-conclusion relationship’ is placed %53.5. ‘A18: Examines concepts related to time’ is placed 43.6%. ‘A20: Prepares the object graphic’ is placed 7.9%. ‘A21: Knows Atatürk’ is not placed in 101 child picture books.

Table 4: Language development acquisition and indicators placed in examined picture story books:

Acquisitions	Number of Indicators	Include f	Not Include f	Include %	Not Include %	Total %
A1: Distinguishes sounds	5	47	54	46,5	53,5	100
A2: Uses his/her voice properly	4	4	97	4,0	96,0	100
A3: Establishes sentences according to syntax rules	5	96	5	94,5	5,5	100
A4: Uses grammatical structures when speaking	10	90	11	89,1	10,9	100
A5: Uses language for communication	11	91	10	90,1	9,9	100
A6: Develops	6	50	51	49,5	50,5	100

vocabulary repertory							
A7: Understands the meanings of listened/watched	3	68	33	67,3	32,7	100	
A8: Expresses what is listened/watched in various ways	8	60	41	59,4	40,6	100	
A9: Shows phonological awareness	6	20	81	19,8	80,2	100	
A10: Reads visual materials	5	62	39	61,4	38,6	100	
A11: Shows reading awareness	4	11	90	10,9	89,1	100	
A12: Shows writing awareness	6	17	84	16,8	83,2	100	

2013 MoNE Early Childhood Education Program has 12 language development acquisition and 73 indicators related to language development acquisitions. 'Acquisition 5: Uses language for communication' has 11 indicators and it is acquisition containing most indicators. 'Acquisition 4: Uses grammatical structures when speaking' has 10 indicators; 'Acquisition 8: Expresses what is listened/watched in various ways' has 8 indicators and they have also more indicators at all. 'Acquisition 7: Understands the meanings of listened/watched' has 3 indicators; 'Acquisition 2: Uses his/her voice properly' and 'Acquisition 11: Shows reading awareness' have 4 indicators and these acquisitions have the minimum number of indicators in total.

When the published in 2012 and 2013 totally 101 child picture books were examined in terms of containing indicators that place in MoNE 2013 Early Childhood Education Program Book, 'A1: Distinguishes sounds' is placed in 101 child picture books 46.5%. 'A2: Uses his/her voice properly' is involved in 101 books 4%. 'A3: Establishes sentences according to syntax rules' is placed in 101 child picture books 94.5%. 'A4: Uses grammatical structures when speaking' is placed 89.1%. 'A5: Uses language for communication' is placed 90.1%. 'A6: Develops vocabulary repertory' is placed 49.5%. 'A7: Understands the meanings of listened/watched' is placed 67.3%. 'A8: Expresses what is listened/watched in various ways' is placed 59.4%. 'A9: Shows phonological awareness' is placed 19.8%. 'A10: Reads visual materials' is placed 61.4%. 'A11: Shows reading awareness' is placed 10.9%. 'A12: Shows writing awareness' is placed 16.8% in total.

Conclusion and Discussion

In the study frequency of use of cognitive development, language development and concepts existing in 2013 Ministry of Education Preschool Education Program in picture storybooks first published in 2012-2013 has been examined. As a result of examination it has been found out that in 101 picture storybooks 96 concepts have been issued at 51.5% rate. This rate in the picture storybooks, which have an important place in concept acquisition of children is not enough.

When it comes to the frequency of use of acquisition and indicators of cognitive development existing in 2013 Ministry of Education Preschool Education Program in

picture storybooks first published in 2012-2013, this domain having 22 acquisitions and 117 indicators has been issued at 31.5% rate. In the study of Vezirođlu and Gonen (2012), 250 children's books have been examined in terms of the target acquisitions in 2006 Preschool Education Program it has been observed that target acquisitions of cognitive development have been issued at 19.5% rate in the books.

As for the frequency of use of acquisitions and indicators of language acquisition existing in 2013 Ministry of Education Preschool Education Program in picture storybooks first published in 2012-2013, it has been found out that in this domain which has 12 acquisitions and 73 indicators has been issued at 50.7% rate. In the study of Vezirođlu and Gonen (2012), 250 children's books have been examined in terms of the target acquisitions in 2006 Preschool Education Program it has been observed that target acquisitions of language development have been issued at 26% rate in the books.

Among the picture storybooks first published in 2012-2013, a book themed Ataturk has not been found. Besides, some of the acquisitions, indicators and concepts have never been traced. Concepts of circle, rectangle, ellipsis and zero belonging to the domain of cognitive development have not been found in the following acquisitions and indicators: ninth acquisition and fourth indicator; ninth acquisition and fifth indicator; fourteenth acquisition and first, second, third and fourth indicators; fifteenth acquisition and second indicator; sixteenth acquisition and second indicator; first and second indicators belonging to twenty-first acquisition; first, second and third indicators belonging to twenty-second acquisition. Similarly, second acquisition-fourth indicator and twelfth acquisition-sixth indicator belonging to the domain of language development have not been found.

At the end of the study it has been emphasized that new books which are Ataturk-themed and many more books for concepts should be published. It has also been observed that present books are translation books. From this viewpoint, native writers could be supported. Considering book covers, it has been seen that there are very few cardboard covers. With regard to stability, publishing cardboard covered books could be suggested.

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