ISSN: 1307-4474

EGE EĞİTİM DERGİSİ
EGE JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

25(3), 2024, 198 - 212

Examining the Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, and Retelling Skills of Primary School Students *

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Abstract

This study investigates the reading fluency, reading comprehension, and retelling skills of 135 typically developing primary school students in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades. It aims to evaluate their current levels and examine the relationships among these skills. The study was conducted using a relational survey design, which is one of the quantitative research methods. Data for the study were collected through narrative texts, reading comprehension, and retelling forms appropriate for each grade level. Audio recordings were taken to determine the students' reading fluency and retelling levels, while their reading comprehension levels were assessed in written form. Statistical software was used for data analysis. The results indicated that a significant portion of the students demonstrated instructional-level reading fluency, reading comprehension, and retelling skills. Moreover, a positive and significant relationship was found between the students' reading fluency and their reading comprehension and retelling skills. Based on these results, the retelling technique was used as an assessment tool in this study. However, it is recommended that it be employed as a teaching tool to develop students' retelling skills. Additionally, various methods and techniques can be utilized to improve students' reading fluency and retelling skills.

Keywords

Reading fluency
Reading comprehension
Retelling skills
Primary school

Article Info

Received
May 20, 2024
Accepted
November 08, 2024
Article Type
Research Paper

İlkokul Öğrencilerinin Okuma Akıcılığı, Okuduğunu Anlama ve Anlatma Becerilerinin İncelenmesi *

Öz

Araştırmada ilkokul öğrencilerinin okuma akıcılığı, okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma becerilerinin belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu doğrultuda 2, 3 ve 4. sınıf düzeyinde öğrenim görmekte olan, toplam 135 tipik gelişim gösteren ilkokul öğrencilerinin mevcut akıcı okuma ve okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma düzeyleri incelenmiştir. Ayrıca öğrencilerin akıcı okuma, okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma arasındaki ilişki ortaya konmuştur. Çalışma nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden ilişkisel tarama deseninde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın verileri her sınıf düzeyine uygun öyküleyici metinler, okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma formları aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Öğrencilerin akıcı okuma ve okuduğunu anlatma düzeylerini belirlemek için ses kaydı alınmış, okuduğunu anlama düzeyleri ise yazılı olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Verilerin analizinde istatistik programından yararlanılmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda öğrencilerin büyük bir kısmının akıcı okuma, okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma becerilerinin öğretimsel düzeyde olduğu belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca öğrencilerin akıcı okuma ve okuduğunu anlama ile okuduğunu anlatma arasında pozitif ve anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu sonuçlar doğrultusunda çalışmada yeniden anlatım tekniği bir değerlendirme aracı olarak kullanılmıştır. Ancak, öğrencilerin yeniden anlatma becerilerini geliştirmek için bir öğretim aracı olarak kullanılması önerilmektedir. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin okuma akıcılığı ve yeniden anlatma becerilerini geliştirmek için çeşitli yöntem ve tekniklerin kullanılabileceği belirtilmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Akıcı okuma
Okuduğunu anlama
Okuduğunu anlatma
İlkokul öğrencileri

Makale Hakkında

Gönderim Tarihi
20 Mayıs 2024
Kabul Tarihi
08 Kasım 2024
Makale Türü
Araştırma Makalesi

Citation: Kodan, H., (2024). Examining the Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, and Retelling Skills of Primary School Students. *Ege Journal of Education, 25*(3), 198-212. doi: https://doi.org/10.12984/egeefd.1487290

* Makalenin bir bölümü 19. Uluslararası Sınıf Öğretmenliği Eğitimi Sempozyumu'nda sözlü bildiri olarak sunulmuştur. [A part of the article was presented as an oral presentation at the 19th International Classroom Teacher Education Symposium.]

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Genişletilmiş Türkçe Özet

Giriş

Günümüz dünyasında kişisel bağımsızlık etkin okuma becerisiyle mümkündür. Bireylerin toplumsal yaşama uyum sağlayabilmesi, akademik gelişimlerini destekleyebilmeleri için okuma önemlidir. Akyol (2018), okumayı; okuyucunun ön bilgilerini kullandığı, yazar ve okuyucu arasında aktif iletişime dayalı, belirli bir yöntem ve amaca göre düzenlenmiş bir ortamda gerçekleştirilen dinamik bir anlam yaratma süreci olarak tanımlamaktadır. Okuma süreci harf veya sembollerin algılanmasıyla başlar, kelime ve cümlelerin anlamlandırılmasıyla devam eder. Bu süreçte metindeki bilgiler okuyucunun ön bilgileriyle bütünleştirilir (Güneş, 2009).

Okuduğunu anlamanın gelişimi, kod çözmenin otomatikliği ve dil yeteneklerinin artışıyla ilişkilidir (Hoffman, 2009). Schwanenflugel ve diğerleri (2006) akıcı okumanın okuduğunu anlamayı desteklediğini ifade ederken, Bellinger ve Diperna (2011) sesli akıcı okuma beceri puanlarının okuduğunu anlamanın yeterli bir göstergesi olduğunu belirtmiştir. Öğrencilerin okuma gelişimini izlemek ve müdahaleler sağlamak için okuduğunu anlamanın doğru bir şekilde değerlendirilmesi gereklidir (Cao ve Kim, 2021). Dolayısıyla bu çalışma kapsamında öncelikle öğrencilerin okuma düzeylerinin tespit edilebilmesi için okuma hızı, yanlış okunan kelime sayısı, kelime tanıma yüzdeleri gibi kriterler incelenmiştir. Öğrencilerin akıcı okuma düzeylerinin tespitinin ardından da okuduğunu anlama düzeyleri belirlenmiştir. Okuduğunu anlama düzeyini belirlemenin diğer bir yöntemi de okuduğunu anlatmayı değerlendirmektir. Bu sayede, öğrencilerin metin bilgilerini özümseme ve yapılandırma yetenekleri daha kapsamlı bir şekilde ortaya konulabilir.

Okuduğunu anlatma hem bir öğretim stratejisi hem de bir değerlendirme aracı olarak uygulanabilir. Okuduğunu anlatma, metin bilgilerini özümseme ve yapılandırma yeteneğini değerlendirir. Bu strateji, öğrencilerin dikkatlerini metni bütünsel bir biçimde yeniden yapılandırmaya yönlendirir (Gambrell, ve diğer., 1991). Yeniden anlatmayla ilgili temel varsayım; okuyucunun metin bilgilerini özümsemesi ve yeniden yapılandırması hakkında bir çaba gösterdiği ve dolayısıyla bu durumun da anlamayı yansıttığıdır (Cohen ve diğer., 2009). Çocukların hikâyeleri yeniden anlatmaya teşvik edilmesi, hikâyeleri hatırlama ve ana yapısal unsurları anlama becerilerini geliştirir (Morrow, 1985b). Yeniden anlatma, öğrencilerin yazılı metinleri ne kadar anladıklarını değerlendirmek için bir ölçüt olabilir. Ancak, yeniden anlatma, öğrencinin anlama düzeyini değerlendirmek için kullanılabilir ancak tek başına yeterli olmayabilir (Cao ve Kim, 2021). Bu nedenle araştırmada öğrencilerin okuma sürecindeki akıcılık, metinleri anlama ve bu anladıklarını ifade etme yeteneklerini bir bütün olarak ele alınmıştır. Bu bağlamda, çalışmanın amacı ilkokul öğrencilerinin akıcı okuma, okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma düzeylerinin kendi sınıf düzeylerine uygun hikâyeler aracılığıyla belirlenmesidir.

Yöntem

Çalışmanın Modeli

Bu araştırma, ilkokul 2, 3 ve 4. sınıf öğrencilerinin okuma, okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma becerilerini tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Creswell'e (2016) göre tarama modeli, seçilen örneklem üzerinden evren genelindeki eğilimleri ve tutumları nicel olarak betimlemeye olanak tanır. Bu çalışmada, iki veya daha fazla değişken arasındaki ilişki müdahale olmaksızın incelenmiştir (Büyüköztürk ve diğer. , 2009). Bu çalışmada ilkokul öğrencilerinin akıcı okuma, okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma düzeylerini belirlemek (2021-2022 eğitim öğretim yılı güz dönemi) ve bu değişkenler arasındaki ilişkinin ortaya konması amacıyla tarama modelinden yararlanılmıştır.

Örneklem

Araştırma, Bayburt ili Merkez ilçesindeki üst sosyo-ekonomik düzeyden öğrencilerin devam ettiği bir ilkokulda, gönüllülük esasına dayalı olarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmaya, nörolojik, fiziksel, zihinsel sorunları veya özel öğrenme güçlüğü bulunmayanve tipik gelişim gösteren 2, 3 ve 4. sınıftan toplam 135 öğrenci katılmıştır.

Veri Toplama Araçları

Öğrencilerin akıcı okuma, okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma düzeylerini değerlendirmek amacıyla; Karasu ve diğerleri (2013) tarafından geliştirilen 4. sınıf için "İpek Ormanda", 3. sınıf için "Ömer ve Güvercin" ve 2. sınıf için "Gamze ve Arkadaşı" metinleri kullanılmıştır. Ekwall ve Shanker (1988) tarafından geliştirilen ve Akyol (2003) tarafından Türkçeye uyarlanan Yanlış Analiz Envanteri (İnformal Okuma Envanteri), öğrencilerin akıcı okuma ve okuduğunu anlama düzeylerini belirlemek için uygulanmıştır. Okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma formları Karasu ve diğerleri (2013) tarafından geliştirilmiştir. Metinlere uygun hazırlanan okuduğunu anlama soruları metinle doğrudan ilişkili dört açık uçlu soru, çıkarım gerektiren dört kapalı uçlu soru ve önceki bilgi ve deneyimlere dayanan iki soru içermektedir. Okuduğunu anlatma formu ise öğrencilerin anlatılarını karakterler, ana olaylar ve detaylar olmak üzere üç alanda toplam 100 puan üzerinden değerlendirmeye olanak tanımaktadır.

Bulgular

İlkokul 4. sınıf öğrencilerinin önemli bir kısmının (%65, n=30) hatalı okuduğu kelime sayılarının 3-23 arasında değiştiği, kelime tanıma yüzde oranlarının %91-98 arasında olduğu dolayısıyla okuma düzeylerinin öğretim düzeyinde olduğu belirlenmiştir. Öğretim düzeyi; bir öğretmen veya yetişkin desteğiyle istenilen nitelikte okuma ve anlamanın gerçekleşebileceğini ifade eder (Akyol, 2016). Öğrencilerin okuduğunu anlama sorularına yazılı olarak verdikleri cevaplar değerlendirildiğinde öğrencilerin %63'ünün (n=29) 100 puan üzerinden 89-51 puan aralığında oldukları görülmektedir. Aynı zamanda metni yeniden anlatma puanlarının ise %78'inin (n=36) 89-51 puan aralığında olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

İlkokul 3. sınıf öğrencilerinin büyük bir bölümünün (%53, n=25) hatalı okudukları kelime sayısının 3 ile 17 arasında değiştiği ve kelime tanıma oranlarının %91 ile %98 arasında olduğu, dolayısıyla okuma düzeylerinin öğretim düzeyinde olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bu bulgu, öğrencilerin çoğunun bir öğretmen veya yetişkin yardımına ihtiyaç duyduğu şeklinde yorumlanabilir. Öğrencilerin dakikada okudukları kelime sayıları incelendiğinde ise %92'sinin (n=43) 50-110 kelime arasında yoğunlukta olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Öğrencilerin okuduğunu anlama sorularına yazılı olarak verdikleri cevaplar değerlendirildiğinde öğrencilerin %79'unun (n=37) 100 puan üzerinden 89-51 puan aralığında oldukları görülmektedir. Aynı zamanda metni yeniden anlatma puanlarının ise %62'sinin (n=29) 89-51 puan aralığında olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

İlkokul 2. sınıf öğrencilerinin çoğunluğunun (%64, n=27) hatalı okuduğu kelime sayılarının 2-11 arasında değiştiği, kelime tanıma yüzde oranlarının %91-98 arasında olduğu dolayısıyla okuma düzeylerinin öğretim düzeyinde olduğu belirlenmiştir. Öğrencilerin okuduğunu anlama sorularına yazılı olarak verdikleri cevaplar değerlendirildiğinde öğrencilerin %76'sının (n=32) 100 puan üzerinden 89-51 puan aralığında oldukları görülmektedir. Aynı zamanda metni yeniden anlatma puanlarının ise %66'sının (n=28) 89-51 puan aralığında olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Ayrıca, ilkokul 4. sınıf öğrencilerinin okuma hızı ile okuduğunu anlama arasında zayıf düzeyde pozitif ve anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu ($r = .297$, $p < .05$) gözlemlenmiştir. Öğrencilerin okuma hızı ile kelime tanıma yüzdeleri arasında ise orta düzeyde pozitif ve anlamlı bir ilişki ($r = .668$, $p < .01$) tespit edilmiştir. İlkokul 3. sınıf öğrencilerinin kelime tanıma yüzdesi ile okuduğunu anlatma ve okuduğunu anlama arasında orta düzeyde pozitif ve anlamlı ilişkiler olduğu ($r = .362$, $p < .05$; $r = .444$, $p < .01$) belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca, bu öğrencilerin okuma hızı ile okuduğunu anlatma, okuduğunu anlama ve kelime tanıma yüzdeleri arasında da orta düzeyde pozitif ve anlamlı ilişkiler olduğu ($r = .305$, $p < .05$; $r = .321$, $p < .05$; $r = .491$, $p < .01$) saptanmıştır. İlkokul 2. sınıf öğrencilerinin okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma arasında orta düzeyde pozitif ve anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu ($r = .448$, $p < .01$) görülmektedir. Bunun yanı sıra, bu öğrencilerin kelime tanıma yüzdeleri ile okuduğunu anlatma arasında da orta düzeyde pozitif ve anlamlı bir ilişki ($r = .374$, $p < .05$) tespit edilmiştir. Okuma hızı ile okuduğunu anlatma ($r = .280$, $p > .05$) ve okuma hızı ile okuduğunu anlama ($r = .212$, $p > .05$) arasında ise zayıf düzeyde pozitif ama anlamlı olmayan ilişkiler bulunmaktadır.

Tartışma ve Sonuç

Bu araştırmanın amacı, ilkokul öğrencilerinin akıcı okuma, okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma düzeylerini belirlemek ve bu beceriler arasındaki ilişkileri incelemektir. Araştırma bulgularına göre, 2, 3 ve 4. sınıf öğrencilerinin akıcı okuma, okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma becerilerinin öğretimsel düzeyde yoğunlaştığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu durum, öğrencilerin akıcı rehber desteğine ihtiyaç duyduğunu göstermektedir. Öğrencilerin okuma hızlarının, sınıf seviyeleri arttıkça yükseldiği gözlemlenmiştir. Seçkin Yılmaz ve Baydık (2017), düşük okuma performansına sahip 3. sınıf öğrencilerinin ortalama okuma hızını 39.23, yüksek performans gösterenlerin ise 98.23 kelime olarak belirlemiştir. Mevcut çalışmada 3. sınıf öğrencilerinin ortalama okuma hızı 80.37 olarak bulunmuş ve bu değerin düşük ve yüksek performanslı öğrenciler arasında bir denge oluşturduğu söylenebilir. Babayiğit'in (2019) çalışmasında, ilkokul öğrencilerinin sesli okuma hızları yarıyıl öncesi ve sonrası değerlendirilmiştir. İkinci sınıf öğrencilerinde okuma hızı 74'ten 85 kelimeye, üçüncü sınıfta 89'dan 93 kelimeye, dördüncü sınıfta ise 86'dan 99 kelimeye yükselmiştir.

Araştırmada, öğrencilerin akıcı okuma, okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma becerileri arasındaki ilişki incelenmiştir. 4. sınıf öğrencilerinin akıcı okuma bileşenlerinden okuma hızının, okuduğunu anlama ve kelime tanıma düzeyleriyle ilişkili olduğu belirlenmiştir. 3. sınıf öğrencilerinin ise akıcı okuma bileşenlerinden kelime tanıma ve okuma hızının, okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma ile ilişkili olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca, ilkokul 2. sınıf öğrencilerinin akıcı okuma bileşenlerinden kelime tanıma düzeyi ile okuduğunu anlatma arasında bir ilişki olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Daha hızlı ve doğru okuyan çocukların daha az akıcı okuyan çocuklara oranla okudukları metni daha iyi anladıkları söylenebilir (Roberts ve diğ., 2005). Kayıran ve Ağaçkıran (2018), birinci sınıf öğrencilerinde okuduğunu anlama ile okuma hızı arasında orta düzeyde pozitif bir ilişki bulmuştur. Akyol ve Baştuğ (2015), 3. sınıf öğrencilerinde doğru okuma ile okuduğunu anlama arasında anlamlı bir ilişki tespit ederken, Başaran (2013) akıcı okumanın, okuduğunu anlamanın bir göstergesi olduğunu belirtmiştir. Elli dört çalışmanın incelendiği meta sentez çalışmasında, yeniden anlatmanın standartlaştırılmış okuduğunu anlama ölçümleriyle orta düzeyde, kod

çözme ve akıcılıkla da düşük düzeyde ilişkili olduğu sonucuna ulaşmışlardır (Reed ve Vaughn, 2012). Bellinger ve Diperna (2011), akıcılığa dayalı yeniden anlatım ile okuma anlama puanları arasında düşük düzeyde bir korelasyon bulmuş ve bunun okuma anlama becerilerinin güçlü bir göstergesi olmayabileceğini ifade etmiştir. Bu bulgu, okuma akıcılığı ile anlama ve ifade becerileri arasındaki ilişkiyi desteklemektedir.

Mevcut araştırmanın sonuçları, ilkokul öğrencilerinin okuma akıcılığı, okuduğunu anlama ve anlatma becerilerinin genel olarak öğretim seviyesinde olduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca akıcı okuma bileşenlerinden kelime tanıma yüzdesi, hatalı okunan kelime sayısı ve okuma hızları ile okuğunu anlama ve anlatma arasında ilişkilerin olduğu genel sonucuna varılabilir. Bu genel sonuç bağlamında çeşitli öneriler sunulmıştur. Çalışmada, öğrencilerin akıcı okuma ve okuduğunu anlama düzeyleri yazılı sorular ve sözlü yeniden anlatma yöntemleriyle değerlendirilmiştir. Sadece öyküleyici metinlerin kullanılması çalışmanın sınırlılığı olarak görülmekte, gelecekte bilgilendirici metinlerin dahil edildiği boylamsal çalışmalar önerilmektedir. Ayrıca, yeniden anlatımın değerlendirme aracı olarak kullanıldığı bu yöntemin öğretim aracı olarak da incelenmesi tavsiye edilmektedir.

Introduction

The main criterion for achieving personal independence in today's world is knowing how to read effectively. Reading has important functions for individuals to adapt to social life and supports academic development. There are various definitions of reading in the literature. Akyol (2018) defines reading as a dynamic process of constructing meaning, which relies on active and effective communication between the author and the reader. This process utilizes prior knowledge and occurs within a structured environment, guided by suitable methods and objectives. Reading is the process of making sense of words and sentences by concentrating one's attention, starting with the perception of letters or symbols. In this process, prior knowledge and the information in the text are integrated and reinterpreted (Güneş, 2009). Considering these definitions, it is seen that the sense-making dimension of reading is particularly emphasized.

Comprehension, according to the National Reading Panel (2000), is a fundamental aspect of reading that encompasses phonemic awareness, phonetics, vocabulary, and fluency. Various studies have focused on the concepts of comprehension and reading fluency, which are among the basic elements of reading (Akyol & Kayabaşı, 2018; Arabacı, 2022 ; Çankal & Aktaş, 2019; Kaya & Yıldırım, 2018; Sağlam et al., 2020). Fluency serves as a convenient bridge between word recognition and reading comprehension, as readers can read fluently and then follow the text better (Polloway et al., 2014). Fluent reading is characterized by both accuracy and automaticity, which are fundamental components crucially linked to the primary objective of reading: comprehension. For beginning readers, the correlation between the number of words read correctly while reading aloud and comprehension was found to be significantly higher compared to successful readers. However, fast and accurate word recognition does not always result in high levels of comprehension, nor does less accurate word recognition necessarily indicate poor comprehension (Paris et al, 2005). This may reflect the fact that beginning readers devote all or most of their attention to sounding out words correctly, leaving less time and resources to think about the meaning (Florit & Cain, 2011; Paris et al., 2005). There is a link between fluency and text comprehension. If readers do not read words correctly, they cannot grasp the author's intended meaning, and misread words can lead to misinterpretation of the text. Poor automaticity in word reading or slow, laborious movement through the text challenges the reader's capacity to construct the meaning of the text (Hudson et al., 2005). In a study conducted with adolescents taking the PISA exam, it was found that not all – or even most – of the adolescents who participated in the study were slow readers, yet they performed poorly in reading comprehension. The reason for their low performance might be unrelated to decoding difficulties; slow readers can still succeed in reading comprehension tasks (Torppa et al., 2020). Understanding text involves multiple cognitive processes, including attention, memory, critical analysis, inferencing, and visualization, alongside motivation factors such as reading purpose, interest, and perceived competence. A reader's knowledge base, encompassing vocabulary, subject matter, linguistic understanding, and comprehension strategies, as well as prior experiences, significantly influences reading (RAND, 2002). Low reading comprehension performance may stem from these factors. Reading comprehension develops with the automatization of decoding and improvements in cognitive and linguistic abilities (Hoffman, 2009). Moreover, fluency is strongly linked to comprehension, as fluent reading has been shown to enhance understanding (Schwanenflugel et al., 2006), and oral reading fluency scores are considered reliable indicators of comprehension (Bellinger & Diperna, 2011). Monitoring students' reading progress is essential for accurately assessing comprehension and implementing timely interventions (Cao & Kim, 2021). Accordingly, this study evaluated reading fluency through criteria such as reading speed, word recognition accuracy, and misread words, followed by assessments of comprehension levels.

Various methods are available to assess reading comprehension, each with distinct advantages and limitations. Common techniques include fill-in-the-blank sentences, true-or-false questions, sentence verification, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions (Cain & Oakhill, 2006). Schools often rely on question-based assessments, complemented by informal tools such as recall, retelling, informal reading inventories, think-aloud protocols, sentence verification, and classroom performance evaluations (Leslie & Caldwell, 2009). In this study, reading comprehension was assessed using questions and informal evaluation through retelling.

Retelling, or expression, serves as both a teaching strategy and an assessment tool, allowing students to verbally reconstruct information from texts, reorganize knowledge, and present a holistic understanding (Gambrell et al., 1991). Retelling assumes that readers assimilate and reconstruct textual information, reflecting comprehension (Cohen et al., 2009). While retelling measures students' understanding of texts, it alone cannot fully capture reading comprehension (Cao & Kim, 2021). Common evaluation methods assign scores based on aspects such as the total number of words, idea units, story structure elements, and overall quality (coherence, accuracy, and clarity) (Cao & Kim, 2021). Scoring challenges arise due to a lack of consensus, with methods including total words retold, percentage of content words, and percentage of idea units (Fuchs et al., 1988). This study assessed retelling skills using the scoring of idea units. Students' reading fluency, comprehension, and retelling levels were evaluated using narrative texts, as these are easier for children to understand and elaborate on than informational texts (Best et al., 2008; Kucer, 2014; Olson, 1985). Narrative texts promote comprehension through familiarity

with story components, which improve with age (Whaley, 1981). Encouraging retelling enhances recall and understanding of structural story elements (Morrow, 1985b). In this study, the aim was to determine the reading fluency, reading comprehension, and retelling levels of primary school students using stories appropriate for their grade levels. In line with this general goal, the following questions were asked:

1. What are the reading fluency, reading comprehension, and retelling levels of fourth-grade primary school students?
2. What are the reading fluency, reading comprehension, and retelling levels of third-grade primary school students?
3. What are the reading fluency, reading comprehension, and retelling levels of second-grade primary school students?
4. Is there a significant relationship between each of the reading fluency components of second-grade primary school students and their reading comprehension and retelling levels?
5. Is there a significant relationship between each of the reading fluency components of third-grade primary school students and their reading comprehension and retelling levels?
6. Is there a significant relationship between each of the reading fluency components of fourth-grade primary school students and their reading comprehension and retelling levels?Method (Style 2)

Method

Research Design

A relational survey model was used in this study, which aimed to determine the reading fluency, reading comprehension, and retelling levels of primary school students in the second, third, and fourth grades. Survey models provide a quantitative or numerical description of the tendencies, attitudes, or opinions in the general population through studies conducted on samples selected from a specific population (Creswell, 2016). In studies where relational screening is used, the relationship between two or more variables is examined without intervening in any way (Büyüköztürk et al., 2009). In this study, a screening model was employed to assess the reading fluency, reading comprehension, and retelling levels of primary school students in the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. Additionally, the study aimed to explore the relationships among these variables.

Sample

This study was conducted at a primary school in Bayburt's central district with voluntary participation. After informing the school administrator, teachers were briefed on the study's aims and procedures. The school primarily serves students from an upper socioeconomic background, and 135 second, third, and fourth graders participated. Students with neurological, physical, or mental issues, or specific learning disabilities, were excluded. Table 1 presents the students' demographic details.

Table 1
Students' Demographic Information

Grade level	Gender	n	Total	%
Fourth grade	Female	26	46	34.08
	Male	20		
Third grade	Female	29	47	34.81
	Male	18		
Second grade	Female	21	42	31.11
	Male	21		
Total			135	100.00

A total of 135 students, 76 of whom were female and 59 were male, participated in the study. Forty-six of the students were in the fourth grade, 47 were in the third grade, and 42 were in the second grade. The reason for not including first-grade students was that they are still in the stage of acquiring their first reading and writing skills. At the time of this study, students in the first grade were still learning letters.

Data Collection Instruments

This study aimed to assess students' reading fluency, comprehension, and expressive skills. Narrative texts suitable for each grade level were employed for evaluation purposes. In order to determine the reading fluency, reading comprehension, and retelling levels of the students, the texts "İpek Ormanda" (İpek in the Forest) for the fourth grade, "Ömer ve Güvercin" (Ömer and the Pigeon) for the third grade, and "Gamze ve Arkadaşı" (Gamze and Her Friend) for the second grade were used.

To assess students' reading fluency and comprehension levels, the Informal Reading Inventory, originally developed by Ekwall and Shanker (1988) and later adapted into Turkish by Akyol (2003), was utilized. The texts, reading comprehension questions and retelling forms used in this study were developed by Karasu et al. (2013). To determine the suitability of the texts, validity and reliability studies were conducted in terms of criteria such as sentence structures, word types, text structures, age, cultural characteristics, and suitability for grade levels. Reading comprehension forms containing questions about the texts were used to determine students' reading comprehension levels while students' retelling levels were evaluated using retelling forms.

Detailed information on the measurement of students' reading fluency, reading comprehension, and retelling levels is presented below.

Miscue Analysis Inventory. The Miscue Analysis Inventory is used to determine readers' reading and comprehension levels. These levels are assessed by analyzing word errors made during oral reading and by evaluating responses to comprehension questions after silent reading. Errors while reading aloud include errors such as skipping, adding, repeating, misreading, and inverting. The frequencies and types of reading errors made by students while reading were determined with this inventory. This inventory identifies three reading levels. An evaluation is made based on the word recognition percentages obtained by dividing the number of correctly read words by the total number of words in the text. According to this evaluation, if the word recognition rate of the reader is 99% or above, it is considered to reflect an independent reading level, while 91-98% is an instructional level and below 90% is an anxiety level (Akyol, 2018).

Reading Speed. Students were given texts appropriate for their grade levels and asked to read them aloud. Students' voices were recorded during these readings. The number of words that students read in 1 minute was determined. The goal here was to obtain data on whether they were reading at the appropriate speed. Güneş (2009) stated that by the end of the academic year, second-grade students should read 80 words per minute, third-grade students should read 100 words per minute, and fourth-grade students should read 120 words per minute, the numbers of words read by the students per minute were compared.

Reading Comprehension. After reading aloud, students also silently read narrative texts appropriate for their grade levels. They were told that they would be asked comprehension questions about the texts after reading. Students were given reading comprehension forms after silent reading. The reading comprehension questions in the study consisted of four open-ended questions directly related to the text, four closed-ended questions that required inference, and two questions based on prior knowledge and experiences (Karasu et al., 2013). Open-ended questions refer to queries whose answers can be directly located within the text, whereas closed-ended questions imply answers that are not explicitly stated in the text but can be inferred. Finally, questions based on past knowledge and experience are questions that students can answer by blending their existing knowledge with the information that they have read.

Retelling. Students were also asked to retell the texts that they had read. The Reading Retelling Form developed by Karasu et al. (2013) was used to evaluate students' retellings. The form allows students to evaluate narratives in three areas: characters, main events, and details, with a total of 100 points. Characters are scored out of 25 points, main events out of 50 points, and details out of 25 points. Students' oral retellings are evaluated on a total of 100 points. In cases where there is missing information in the descriptions of characters and events, half of the points indicated in the rubric are computed.

Data Collection Process

Before implementing the study, necessary approvals were obtained from the Bayburt University Ethics Committee, the Ministry of National Education, school administrators, and all participants involved. Data were collected from the participating students in a suitable classroom environment conducive to quiet and focused work. Throughout the data collection process, students were explicitly informed that the study was not an examination or a competition, and that the data gathered would not be utilized for assessment purposes. It was emphasized that the results obtained would remain confidential, would only be used within the context of the study, and would not be disclosed to any third parties. It was also stated that the voice recordings of the students would be used for better data analysis. Students were told that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. In the data collection process, first, a text appropriate for their grade level was read by the students one by one. Audio recordings were taken during the readings. Then the students were asked to read silently once more, and after reading, they were asked to answer the reading comprehension questions in writing. Finally, they were asked to retell the text verbally. The data obtained from the students were examined by researcher who was an expert in the relevant field and two classroom teachers. The analyses were converted into descriptive statistical data using the Miscue Analysis Inventory.

Data Analysis

The Miscue Analysis Inventory was used to analyze the reading aloud of the texts applied in this study. The data obtained from the inventory are presented as descriptive statistical data below. Detailed information about the reading fluency, reading comprehension, and retelling skill levels of the students participating in the study is also presented below. To ensure the reliability of the research, the reading comprehension questions and retelling forms were scored separately by the researcher and two classroom teachers. In quantitative studies, the intraclass correlation coefficient is used to assess the consistency of raters' evaluations among a group of objects (Field, 2009; 2005). The average ICC value for retelling and reading comprehension was measured to be excellent for reading comprehension; ICC = 0.97 (0.93–0.97) with a 95% confidence interval, F (134, 134) = 56.037, p < .001. The Cronbach's alpha value was also found to be .98, indicating high reliability. For retelling; ICC = 0.98 (0.97–0.98) with a 95% confidence interval, F(134, 134) = 32.292, p < .001. The Cronbach's alpha value was also found to be .98, indicating high reliability.

Findings

The first sub-problem of the study was "What are the reading fluency, reading comprehension, and retelling levels of fourth-grade primary school students?" In order to answer this question, the text "İpek Ormanda," which consists of 239 words, was read aloud by fourth-grade students and audio recordings were analyzed. The number of errors made by the students, the number of words read per minute, and their word recognition percentages are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Data On The Reading Levels Of Fourth-Grade Primary School Students

Number of misread words			Words read per minute			Percentage of word recognition			Reading level		
0-2 errors	3-23	24 and above	70-120 words	50-70 words	30-50 words	99-100 %	98-91%	90% and below	Independent	Instructional	Frustration
8	30	8	39	6	1	8	30	8	8	29	8

Table 2 shows that 65% (n=30) of students misread 3 to 23 words, with word recognition rates between 91% and 98%, indicating instructional-level reading. At this level, teacher or adult support is needed for effective reading and comprehension (Akyol, 2018). Additionally, 85% (n=39) of students read 70–120 words per minute, aligning with grade-level expectations for fourth graders (Akyol et al., 2014).

After assessing reading levels, students silently read "İpek Ormanda" and completed a 10-question Reading Comprehension Form. They then retold the text, with their responses recorded and evaluated against comprehension criteria. Data on reading comprehension and retelling skills are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Data On Reading Comprehension and Retelling Levels of Fourth-Grade Primary School Students

Reading comprehension score			Retelling score		
90 and above	89-51	50 and below	90 and above	89-51	50 and below
1	29	16	-	36	10

Table 3 reveals that 63% (n=29) of students scored 51–89 out of 100 on the written reading comprehension questions, while 78% (n=36) scored in the same range for verbal retelling. These findings suggest that students' verbal retelling skills are more advanced than their written skills.

Table 4

Data On the Reading Levels of Third-Grade Primary School Students

Number of misread words			Words read per minute		Percentage of word recognition			Reading level		
0-2 errors	3-17	18 and above	50-110 words	30-50 words	99-100%	98-91%	90% and below	Independent	Instructional	Frustration
14	25	8	43	4	14	25	8	14	25	8

The second sub-problem of this study examined the reading fluency, comprehension, and retelling levels of third graders. For this purpose, students read aloud the 177-word text "Ömer ve Güvercin," and audio recordings were analyzed. Table 4 presents data on reading errors, words read per minute, and word recognition percentages.

Table 4 shows that 53% (n=25) of students misread 3–17 words, with word recognition rates between 91% and 98%, indicating instructional-level reading and the need for teacher support. Additionally, 92% (n=43) read 50–110 words per minute, aligning with grade-level expectations for third graders (Akyol et al., 2014). However, four students read below grade-level speed.

After assessing reading levels, students silently read "Ömer ve Güvercin" and completed a 10-question Reading Comprehension Form. They then retold the text, with their responses recorded and evaluated based on comprehension criteria. Data on reading comprehension and retelling skills are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Data on Reading Comprehension and Retelling Levels of Third-Grade Primary School Students

Reading comprehension score			Retelling score		
90 and above	89-51	50 and below	90 and above	89-51	50 and below
1	37	9	1	29	17

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that 79% of the students (n=37) fell in the range of 89-51 points out of 100 points when their written answers to the reading comprehension questions were evaluated. At the same time, it was determined that 62% (n=29) of their scores for retelling the text were in the range of 89-51 points. Considering these findings, it can be said that, unlike the fourth-grade students, these students' written retelling skills are more developed than their verbal retelling skills.

The third sub-problem of the study was "What are the reading fluency, reading comprehension, and retelling levels of second-grade primary school students?" In order to answer this question, the text "Gamze ve Arkadaşı," which consists of 122 words, was read aloud by second-grade students and audio recordings were analyzed. The number of errors made by the students, the number of words read per minute, and their word recognition percentages are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Data on The Reading Levels of Second-Grade Primary School Students

Number of misread words			Words read per minute		Percentage of word recognition			Reading level		
0-1 errors	2-11	12 and above	30-80 words	under 30 words	99-100%	91-98%	90% and below	Independent	Instructional	Frustration
9	27	6	41	1	9	27	6	9	27	6

Table 6 shows that 64% (n=27) of students misread 2–11 words, with word recognition rates between 91% and 98%, indicating instructional-level reading and the need for teacher support. Additionally, 98% (n=41) read 30–80 words per minute, aligning with grade-level expectations for second graders (Akyol et al., 2014). Only one student read below grade level.

After assessing reading levels, students silently read "Gamze ve Arkadaşı" and completed a 10-question Reading Comprehension Form. They then retold the text, with responses recorded and evaluated based on comprehension criteria. Data on reading comprehension and retelling skills are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Data on Reading Comprehension and Retelling Levels of Second-Grade Primary School Students

Reading comprehension score			Retelling score		
90 and above	89-51	50 and below	90 and above	89-51	50 and below
5	32	5	1	28	13

Table 7 shows that 76% (n=32) of students scored 51–89 out of 100 on written reading comprehension, while 66% (n=28) scored in the same range for verbal retelling. These findings indicate that students' written retelling skills were more developed than their verbal skills.

Reading fluency components, including word recognition percentage and words read per minute, were analyzed to determine students' reading levels. Data on these components and reading levels are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Data on Reading Fluency Components According to Grade Levels

Grade level	Variables	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	N
Second grade	Words read per minute	28.0	122.0	66.33	18.36	
	Percentage of word recognition	71.0	100.0	95.16	5.39	42
	Reading level	1.0	3.0	1.92	0.60	
Third grade	Words read per minute	37.0	128.0	80.17	18.90	
	Percentage of word recognition	75.0	100.0	94.04	6.22	47
	Reading level	1.0	3.0	1.85	0.69	
Fourth grade	Words read per minute	33.0	116.0	85.41	17.81	
	Percentage of word recognition	84.0	100.0	95.0	4.42	46
	Reading level	1.0	3.0	2.0	0.55	

Table 8 shows that words read per minute increase with grade level, while third-grade word recognition percentages are slightly lower than those of second and fourth grades but remain above 94% across all levels.

The study's fourth sub-problem examined the relationship between fourth graders' reading fluency components and their reading comprehension and retelling levels. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted, and the results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Data on The Correlations Between Reading Fluency Components and Reading Comprehension and Retelling for Fourth-Grade Students

Variables	Retelling	Reading comprehension	Word recognition	Reading speed
Retelling	-			
Reading comprehension	.175	-		
Word recognition	.069	.247	-	
Reading speed	.018	.297*	.668**	-

*p<.05 **p<.01

Table 9 shows a weak positive significant correlation between reading speed and comprehension ($r = .297$, $p < .05$) and a moderate positive significant correlation between reading speed and word recognition ($r = .668$, $p < .01$).

The fifth sub-problem explored the relationship between third graders' reading fluency components and their comprehension and retelling levels. Pearson correlation results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Data on the Correlations Between Reading Fluency Components and Reading Comprehension and Retelling for Third-Grade Students

Variables	Retelling	Reading comprehension	Word recognition	Reading speed
Retelling	-			
Reading comprehension	.274	-		
Word recognition	.362*	.444**	-	
Reading speed	.305*	.321*	.491**	-

*p<.05 **p<.01

Table 10 reveals moderate positive and significant correlations between third-grade students' word recognition percentage and both retelling and reading comprehension ($r = .362$, $p < .05$; $r = .444$, $p < .01$). Similarly, moderate positive correlations were found between reading speed and retelling, reading comprehension, and word recognition percentages ($r = .305$, $p < .05$; $r = .321$, $p < .05$; $r = .491$, $p < .01$).

For the sixth sub-problem, which examined the relationship between second-grade students' reading fluency components and their reading comprehension and retelling levels, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. Table 11 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients between these variables.

Table 11

Data on The Correlations Between Reading Fluency Components and Reading Comprehension and Retelling of Second-Grade Students

Variables	Retelling	Reading comprehension	Word recognition	Reading speed
Retelling	-			
Reading comprehension	.448**	-		
Word recognition	.374*	.235	-	
Reading speed	.280	.212	.099	-

*p<.05 **p<.01

Table 11 shows a moderate positive and significant correlation between reading comprehension and retelling (r = .448, p< .01) and between word recognition percentages and retelling (r = .374, p< .05). However, weak and non-significant correlations were found between reading speed and both retelling (r = .280, p> .05) and reading comprehension (r = .212, p> .05).

Conclusion and Discussion

This study aimed to examine the reading fluency, reading comprehension, and retelling levels of primary school students and the relationships between these variables. The first three sub-problems focused on identifying students' levels of these skills by grade. Findings revealed that reading fluency, comprehension, and retelling were generally at an instructional level across grades. Reading speed (words per minute), word recognition percentage, and misread words were assessed to measure fluent reading. Results showed that as grade levels increased, reading speed also improved, with word recognition and misread words remaining at an instructional level.Similar findings were reported in Babayiğit's (2019) study, which compared oral reading speeds of primary students before and after a semester. Second-grade students' speeds increased from 74 to 85 words per minute, third graders from 89 to 93, and fourth graders from 86 to 99. The lower speeds in Babayiğit's study are attributed to measurements taken early in the semester. Overall, the present study aligns with Babayiğit's findings. Seçkin Yılmaz and Baydık (2017) compared third-grade students with and without low reading performance, finding average reading speeds of 39.23 and 98.23 words per minute, respectively. In this study, the average reading speed for third-grade students was 80.37, balancing students with low and good reading performance. Similarly, Büyükalan Filiz and Boz (2019) reported an average reading speed of 92.8 words per minute for fourth-grade students. Baş et al. (2023) found that fourth graders, who were third graders during the COVID-19 pandemic, had reading speeds below grade level, a trend also reflected in this study. Güneş (2009) recommended reading speeds of 80, 100, and 120 words per minute for second, third, and fourth graders, respectively, by the end of the academic year. It is anticipated that students may reach these levels by year's end.

In the remaining three sub-problems, the study examined the relationship between reading fluency components and students' reading comprehension and retelling skills across different grade levels. Findings indicated that among fourth-grade students, reading speed showed a positive and significant relationship with reading comprehension and word recognition levels. For third-grade students, both word recognition and reading speed were positively and significantly related to reading comprehension and retelling. Lastly, among second-grade students, a positive and significant relationship was found between word recognition and retelling ability, as well as a moderate positive and significant relationship between reading comprehension and retelling skills. Based on all these results, it can be said that children who read faster and more accurately understand the text better than those who read less fluently (Roberts et al., 2005). Riedel (2005) identified that reading speed and accuracy are strong predictors of reading comprehension in a study conducted with 1,518 first-grade students. Kayıran and Ağaçkıran (2018) found a moderate positive and significant relationship between reading comprehension and reading speed among first-grade students. Baştuğ and Keskin (2012), in their study with fifth graders, reported a positive, moderate relationship between fluent reading skills and reading comprehension. Akyol and Baştuğ (2015) demonstrated a significant relationship between reading accuracy and reading comprehension success in third-grade students. Similarly, Başaran (2013) stated that reading fluency is an indicator of reading comprehension. These findings align with the results of the present study. Reed and Vaughn (2012) reviewed 54 studies on retelling as an indicator of reading comprehension, focusing on inter-rater reliability, validity, its relationship with decoding or fluency, comparisons between students with and without learning disabilities, and text variations. They concluded that retelling is moderately related to reading comprehension but has a low relationship with decoding and fluency, aligning with this study's findings. Similarly, Aşıkcan and Bakkaloğlu (2023) found a low positive correlation between reading comprehension and reading accuracy but a high positive correlation with reading speed among Syrian students. Kucer (2009) stated that reading speed strongly correlates with comprehension. The current findings suggest that reading fluency components significantly influence comprehension and retelling skills, though this may not always hold true. Applegate et al. (2009) noted that students with high reading performance faced difficulties in reading comprehension in their study involving fourth graders. This finding suggests that reading speed or word recognition percentage is not the sole predictor of reading comprehension.

Bellinger and Diperna (2011) found a low correlation between fluency-based retelling tasks and reading comprehension, suggesting that fluency-based retelling may not strongly indicate comprehension skills. This aligns with the current study's findings on the relationship between reading fluency components, comprehension, and retelling skills. Similarly, Hagtvet (2003), in a study with 9-year-olds categorized by decoding proficiency, found that poor decoders scored lower than average and proficient decoders in retelling and fill-in-the-blank tasks, highlighting a strong link between decoding and comprehension. Miller and Keenan (2009) observed that children with weak word analysis skills focus more on central than peripheral text information, suggesting a connection between vocabulary knowledge and retelling. Gambrell et al. (1985) demonstrated that verbal retelling enhances comprehension, recall, and the transfer of learning to subsequent texts. Liu et al. (2024) compared students' reading comprehension, retelling, and motivation using augmented reality and printed books, finding that augmented reality books improved retelling by aiding memory, narrative understanding, and content retention. Morrow (1985a) observed that kindergarten children struggled with initiating, sequencing, and completing stories, highlighting the need for repetition and guidance in retelling. Similarly, Kocaarslan's (2019) study with second graders found a positive and moderately significant correlation between reading fluency and retelling, consistent with this study's findings. Mäkinen et al. (2018) found a relation between retelling and reading skills in Finnish students. Lin (2010), in an experimental study with Chinese students learning English, showed that using the retelling technique significantly improved reading comprehension compared to a control group. Students using retelling excelled in identifying main and specific ideas, connecting text parts, and recalling details. Retelling indicates that a reader or listener assimilates textual information and reconstructs the text; thus, it reflects comprehension. It helps the reader or listener see how the parts of the text are interrelated and intertwined with their own experiences of the text (Morrow, 1989). Han (2005) found that using retelling as a reading comprehension strategy improved comprehension in English as a second language students, supporting the correlation between retelling and comprehension. Cohen et al. (2009) examined the relationship between text types, fluency, and retelling among third graders and adults. Their results showed that the fastest readers excelled in retelling, frequently repeating dialogue sentences, highlighting the complex relationship between fluency and retelling.

The results of the current study indicate that primary school students' reading fluency, reading comprehension, and retelling skills are generally at an instructional level. It has been determined that as students' grade levels increase, their reading speeds also rise, and that the components of reading fluency significantly impact reading comprehension and retelling skills. Notably, a positive and significant relationship has been found between reading speed and reading comprehension, as well as word recognition among fourth-grade students. Additionally, among third-grade students, a positive and significant relationship exists between the components of reading fluency—word recognition and reading speed—and reading comprehension and retelling. Furthermore, a moderate relationship has been observed between word recognition and retelling skills among second-grade students. These findings suggest that the practice of retelling contributes to the enhancement of reading comprehension and retelling, highlighting the relationship between reading fluency and students' overall reading abilities. Based on the results presented here, the following recommendations are proposed: various methods and techniques can be utilized to improve students' reading fluency and retelling skills. In this study, students' reading fluency and reading comprehension levels were revealed using a written form and through verbal retelling. Narrative texts appropriate for the considered grade levels were used to determine the reading levels of the students. This can be considered as a limitation of the study. Therefore, it may be recommended to conduct longitudinal studies in which informative texts are used in future studies. Furthermore, the retelling technique was used as an evaluation tool in this study. It may also be recommended to conduct research in which retelling is used as a teaching method

Declaration of Competing Interest

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Ethics Committee Permission Information: It is declared that the ethics committee approval required for the research was obtained from the ethics committee of Bayburt University with the decision numbered 2021/161 on 22.10.2021 and ethical rules were followed in all processes of the research.

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