



INVESTIGATION OF THE HOME READING PATTERNS OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT: İÇEM CASE

AİLELERİN ÇOCUKLARIYLA OKUMA ÖRÜNTÜLERİNİN İNCELENMESİ: İÇEM ÖRNEĞİ

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ABSTRACT: Parents play a critical role in the literacy development of their children. The current case study explores the reading patterns that parents have with their children with hearing impairment. First, the home reading patterns of parents with their children were investigated. Then, the home reading patterns preferred by children were addressed along with the reasons of those preferences. The data were collected from 64 parents in a school called İÇEM (i.e. Education and Research Center for Hearing Impaired Children). The school in which this study was conducted is a unique school for Turkish children with hearing impairment. Data collection tools were a questionnaire and semi structured interviews. The results of the study revealed that parental involvement should be emphasized on a more formal level which can be achieved through various ways.

Keywords: Reading, family involvement, hearing impairment

ÖZET: Aileler, çocuklarının okuryazarlıklarının geliştirilmesinde önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Bu durum çalışmasında işitme engelli çocukların aileleri ile olan okuma örüntüleri incelenmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu bağlamda, çalışmada ailelerin çocukları ile evdeki okuma örüntülerinin neler olduğu ve çocukların ev okuma örüntülerindeki tercihleri nedenleri ile birlikte irdelenmiştir. Veriler, İÇEM olarak bilinen Anadolu Üniversitesi'ne bağlı "Engelli Çocuklar Eğitim Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi" nde öğrenim gören çocukların velilerinden oluşan 64 katılımcıdan toplanmıştır. Bu okul Türkiye'deki çocuklara yönelik bu bağlamdaki tek okul niteliği taşımaktadır. Veri toplama araçları olarak anket ve görüşme kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, aile katılımının daha formal bir düzeyde gerçekleşmesi gerektiğine işaret etmekte, bu bulgulara yönelik tartışma ve önerilere de yer verilmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Okuma, aile katılımı, işitme engelli çocuklar

1. INTRODUCTION

It is known that parents play a critical role in the literacy development of their children and that interest is currently high among researchers and practitioners on the role of the family and the value of home-school collaborations (Baker, 2003). Studies suggest that parent involvement in children's learning affects the child's school performance positively, results in higher academic achievement (Scribner, Young, & Pedroza, 1999; Yan & Lin, 2002) and leads to greater social and emotional development (Fantuzzo & McWayne, 2002). It is further claimed that children with rich home literacy environments have higher levels of reading knowledge (Steensel, 2006) and skills at kindergarten entry (Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 2000). Considering that school age children spend 70 percent of their waking hours outside of school (Clark, 1990), this result is not surprising either with positive or negative results. It is emphasized in the literature that parents are the most salient models of language acquisition for their children and their importance in their children's language development should not be underestimated (Schirmer, 2000). Corbett says that too many children are left to watch TV instead of being read a bedtime story, often by busy middle-class parents, but then adds; "This isn't just an economic thing – it's not just people who come from poor backgrounds, it's across the whole of society" (Corbett, 2010). Although it is known that parental background is not an important variable in parental involvement on children's academic success, it is also known that the measure of the amount of time devoted to reading in the period from grade 2 to grade 5 is the best predictor of the child's development as a reader (Anderson, Wilson & Fielding, 1988). Schools therefore employ motivational reading activities of various kinds. These activities include having children read outside the classroom, or reading at home specified as an assignment, or reading with a parent (Shoham, 2011). Although the

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process seems the same, children with hearing impairment may need more assistance with their reading. The low reading levels of many students with severe to profound hearing losses have been well documented (Musselman, 2000). Even children who have only a mild hearing loss read at a lower level than do hearing children (Allen & Schoem, 1997). Progress is extremely slow for these children, with gains in three or four years typically as much as gains experienced by hearing children in one year (Marschark & Harris, 1996). Thus, parental involvement in deaf children's early intervention and school-based education programs is increasingly being encouraged and expected (Calderon, 2000). In this regard, the current study tries to explore the reading patterns that parents have with their children with hearing impairment. It particularly tries to answer the following research questions:

- 1-What are the home reading patterns of parents with their children?
- 2-What are the home reading patterns preferred by children and why?

2. METHODOLOGY

This study is a case study, which is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed (Feagin, Orum & Sjoberg, 1991). The case is exploratory for several reasons. First, the research questions of this study, "what", justifies it as an exploratory case study. Second, the study utilizes prior information about parents for the construction of the questionnaire. Third, it was beyond the scope of the study to evaluate or to determine how effective the reading patterns of the parents are. Rather, the study focused on the type and frequency of the reading patterns of the parents, thus seeking to design future research with parent inclusion on reading on a more comprehensive scale.

According to Yin (1994), there are three steps that must be carried out for a successful project: Preparation for data collection, questionnaire distribution, and conducting interviews. Thus, the data collection process is outlined under these headings. However, it is appropriate to first write about the context and the participants of the current study.

2.1. Setting of the Study

The school in which this study was conducted is a unique school for Turkish children. It is called İÇEM (i.e Education and Research Center for Hearing Impaired Children.). It caters for the needs of K-12 children with hearing impairment and has a teaching staff of 32 and support staff of 15. It is located on the campus of the one of the world's mega-universities, Turkey's Anadolu University. The institution owes its origins to the founding Rector, Prof. Yılmaz Büyükersen, whose own daughter had a hearing impairment. The school uses the auditory oral approach, making heavy use of hearing aids in conventional face-to-face classroom situations. İÇEM has been serving students with hearing impairment since 1979 and is considered a model for special education endeavors in Turkey.

2.2. Participants

The participants of the study were parents of the first five grades of İÇEM, who filled the questionnaire, and one student from each grade were interviewed (i.e. five students). As can be seen in Table 1, out of the 64 parents who filled the questionnaire 47 were mothers, 16 were fathers and 1 was a grandfather.

Table 1. Participants

	f	%
Mother	47	73,4
Father	16	25,0
Grandfather	1	1,6
Total	64	100,0

Regarding the question on who realizes the home reading with the child mostly, the parents declared that 57 were mothers, 6 were fathers and 1 was a grandparent (Table 2).

Table 2. Who Realizes the Home Reading with the Child?

	f	%
Mother	57	89
Father	6	9,4
Grandfather	1	1,6
Total	64	100,0

These results indicate that it is the mothers who generally do the home reading with the children. It is not surprising to see this distribution as literature in general reveals that mothers do the home activities generally.

2.3. Preparation for Data Collection

Different sources of evidence for case study research are available; however, this study collected data from two sources as; parents (questionnaire data) and children (semi-structured interview). To increase the reliability of the study, the procedure was followed by an external observer from initial research questions to ultimate case study conclusions. The external observer is an academician in the field of education for 25 years and an expert on research. She works at the education faculty of the same university.

2.4. Distribution of the Questionnaire

A questionnaire regarding the reading patterns between parents and children was developed by the researcher and six colleagues. Depending on her expertise on reading literature, the researcher developed items and brought them to the panel for discussion. After a rigorous work, the panel decided to cover 11 questions in the questionnaire. The questions asked for the frequency of the reading patterns such as reading aloud and storytelling. The questionnaire also included relevant questions to address personal information. The researcher then tested the questionnaire with five parents for language and structure validity. The results from the test group indicated that changes to the questionnaire would be beneficial, so these changes were made. The final forms of the questionnaires were distributed through the school administration with a cover letter mentioning the research and asking for the consent of parents.

2.5. Conducting Interviews

The duration of the interviews ranged from 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the speech and grade level of the students. Most interviews lasted about 20 minutes. The students were asked only two questions regarding the reading patterns they preferred most and the reasons behind these. Procedures for asking questions and interacting with interviewees were drawn from guidelines for qualitative studies (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

3. RESULTS

In a case study research, the nature of the sample prevents generalization of the findings to any other situation. However, it allows for the specification of the considered situation, that is, the home reading patterns of parents of the children with hearing impairment in a special education school. Thus, the results cannot be generalized, but they can be used to improve intuitions and implementations regarding similar situations. The most striking results will be discussed in this section so as to save space and the readers' time.

3.1. The results of the Research Question 1

The results regarding the questionnaire are shown in Table 3 in frequencies.

Table 3. Distribution of the Questionnaire Responses

Item	Always		Sometimes		Never		Total
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Reading aloud	30	47,62	30	47,62	3	4,76	63
Story telling	44	68,75	20	31,25	0	0,00	64
Doing homework	48	75,00	16	25	0	0,00	64
Talking about daily routine	37	57,81	24	37,5	3	4,69	64
Retelling	33	53,23	25	40,32	4	6,45	62
Buying books	16	25,81	42	67,74	4	6,45	62
Book collection	19	31,15	25	40,98	17	27,87	61
Watching and discussing TV programs	12	18,75	37	57,81	15	23,44	64
Generating stories	11	17,46	24	38,1	28	44,44	63
Bedtime reading	23	36,51	27	42,86	13	20,63	63
Reading daily print	3	4,92	39	63,93	19	31,15	61

The results for Research Question 1 indicate that parents mostly do homework with their children and tell stories. These two activities are quite different from each other since doing homework is a structured and rather an authoritative activity whereas story telling is an informal activity which does not need any material preparation since the school sends the storybooks to home mostly. This result reveals that parents follow a pattern of necessity on one hand, and prefer to be on their own with their children on the other.

According to the answers of the parents, the home reading activity that they do most rarely is to read daily print. This result is not uncommon considering the newspaper reading habits of the country which is very low. The following activities that parents realize the least are generating stories and watching and discussing TV programs. This result indicates that parents find it difficult to tackle with activities that need productive effort on their side.

3.2. The results of the Research Question 2

One student from each of the 5 grades was chosen on a voluntary basis. That is, five students were interviewed. The students were asked about the reading patterns they preferred the most along with the reasons of those preferences. The results are provided for each grade and translated from the original language without any correction. Only the outstanding themes were picked for the data presentation. Findings reveal that participants both provide clues regarding the nature of their reading activities. Moreover, the reasons behind these reading activities are quite clear as exemplified below:

Grade 1: *“I watch TV with mum..... I and mum do my homework I write.Why? Read book, bring to school. Read in school.”*

Grade 2: *“Read book watch TV with mum.Play games..... I read good with mum. Mum reads book. Why?.....Teacher says tell book, I tell. I do not want wrong reading.”*

Grade 3: *“I do homework, read book with mum We do not write. I read my mum listens..... Because I like reading books. Reading is a very good thing.I am happy when I read books.”*

Grade 4: *“I read books with mum and do homework.I play computer with mum. Because I want to be intelligent, I will be smart.Reading is very good.”*

Grade 5: *“I work with mum..... I read book with dad. Mum takes the book away and wants me to tell the book. Sometimes mum asks why and I tell.I don't read newspaper. I watch TV.Why, because I want to speak good. If I don't read I do not speak good. If I don't read, I can tell in school.”*

The interviews with children reveal that children do most of the home reading with their mothers and they mostly do reading in the form of homework. The children present a hesitance of school performance on saying that if they do not read well, they will have problem in the school. The

interviews also revealed that children watch TV as a mutual activity with their parents. Moreover, the statements reveal that children with hearing impairment have quality time with their moms most of the time.

4. DISCUSSION

The unique context of the current study, İÇEM, does not have a formal curriculum regarding parent involvement in reading activities. However, a structured parental involvement on reading is apparent. The results of the study revealed that parental involvement should be emphasized on a more formal level and this can be achieved through various actions. For instance, the school staff can enhance home-school collaboration through sharing the results of relevant research studies (e.g. the current study) with the parents and through drawing their attention to the problem areas. Although the school provides parent guidance on one to one basis by calling the parents to school on certain days or arranging a group meeting for each grade parents, it seems more guidance is needed. Teachers should guide parents on the informal and formal learning environments of children through extracurricular activities. A motivational process can also be an alternative for school practice as realized by Collins and Matthey (2001). As stated by Corbett (2010), this situation has nothing to do with the economical circumstances but rather with the motivation and educational status of the families. It is therefore that schools should emphasize family training sessions.

Current findings reveal that parents really play a critical role in the reading and literacy development of their children. Moreover, the literature is supported regarding the influence of parent involvement in children's learning on children's school performance. Further studies are needed to reveal the link between the quality of children's home literacy environments and their academic performance particularly in terms of reading skills. Since the parents are the most influential models for children towards language acquisitions, further in-depth studies regarding their home reading patterns are urgently needed. Such studies are particularly needed in special education contexts, since children with hearing impairment needs more quality input than their hearing peers.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Ailelerin, çocuklarının okuryazarlıklarının geliştirilmesinde önemli bir rol oynadığı literatürde bilinen ve çok vurgulanan bir konudur. Araştırmalarda aile katılımının, çocukların öğrenmelerinde, okul performanslarında, akademik başarılarında (Scribner, Young, & Pedroza, 1999; Yan & Lin, 2002), sosyal ve duygusal gelişimlerinde (Fantuzzo & McWayne, 2002) önemli katkılar sağladığı belirtilmektedir. Ayrıca çocukların, ev ortamlarındaki zenginleştirilmiş okuma ortamlarıyla daha yüksek düzeyde okuma bilgi ve becerisine sahip oldukları belirtilmektedir (Steensel,2006).

Bu çalışmada, işitme engelli çocukların aileleri ile olan okuma örüntüleri incelenmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu bağlamda, çalışmada “ailelerin çocukları ile evdeki okuma örüntüleri nelerdir?” ve “çocukların ev okuma örüntülerindeki tercihleri ve nedenleri nelerdir” sorularına yanıt aranmaya çalışılmıştır.

Bu çalışma durum çalışması olarak desenlenmiştir. Veriler, İÇEM olarak bilinen Anadolu Üniversitesi'ne bağlı “Engelli Çocuklar Eğitim Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi” nde öğrenim gören çocukların ailelerinden toplanmıştır. İlköğretim birinci basamaktaki çocukların ailelerinden verilerin toplandığı Eskişehir ilinde bulunan bu okul, Türkiye'deki işitme engelli çocuklara yönelik sözel-işitsel eğitim veren bir okuldur. Veri toplama araçları olarak anket ve görüşme teknikleri kullanılmıştır. Toplamda 64 aileden anket yoluyla, 5 öğrenciden de görüşme yoluyla veriler toplanmıştır. Çalışmanın güvenilirliğini artırmak için, yöntem dışarıdan bir gözlemci ile takip edilmiştir. Bu gözlemci, 25 yıldır eğitim alanında görev yapan bir akademisyen ve alanda uzmandır. Gözlemci, araştırmacı ile aynı üniversitenin eğitim fakültesinde görev yapmaktadır.

Ankette 11 farklı okuma etkinliği yer almış ve velilerden bu etkinlikleri hangi sıklıkta gerçekleştirdiklerini işaretlemeleri istenmiştir. Anket soruları üçlü likert tipinde olup yanıtlar “her zaman”, “bazen” ve “hiç bir zaman” şeklinde puanlanmaktadır. Görüşmelerde yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Görüşmeler 10 dakika ile 20 dakika arasında sürmüştür. Görüşme soruları, çocukların aileleri ile birlikte okumalarındaki tercihlerinin neler olduğuna ve nedenlerine ilişkindir.

Anket sorularının incelenmesinden ailelerin çocuklarıyla birlikte en çok ev ödevi yapmakta ve onlara hikaye anlatmakta olduğu bulgusu ortaya çıkmıştır. En az yapılan etkinlikler ise günlük gazete okuma etkinliği olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Çocuklarla yapılan görüşmelerde ise, çocukların çoğunlukla anneleri ile ev okumaları yaptıkları ve bu okumaların ev ödevinin bir gerekliliği olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Çocuklar, okumalarının yeterli olmaması halinde okul performanslarında duraksamalar ve problemler yaşayabileceklerini ileri sürmüşlerdir. Ayrıca yapılan görüşmelerde, çocukların televizyon izleme etkinliğini tek başına yaptıkları ve bu etkinliği aileleri ile birlikte yapmadıkları belirlenmiştir. Sonuç olarak, ailelerin çocukları ile birlikte okuma etkinliklerine katılımı için okul bazında gerekli yapısal düzenlemelerin çeşitli yöntemlerle sağlanması gerektiği, bu türden araştırmalar yapılarak sonuçların ailelerle paylaşılmasının yararlı olacağı kanısını varılmıştır.