

## The Effect of the Reader's Theatre on Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension Skills of 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Primary School Students\*

Article Type	Received Date	Accepted Date
Research	14.09.2021	10.06.2022

**Kübra Babacan\*\***

**Mustafa Yıldız\*\*\***

### Abstract

In this study, reader's theater's effect on reading comprehension and fluency skills was examined. In research, quasi-experimental design was used. The research was applied in a public school in Mamak/Ankara for 14 weeks in the 2019-2020 Academic Year. 29 students took part in the research. In the experimental group reader's theater activities were carried out by the researcher and no application was done with the control group. To find out the reading comprehension levels of the students, reading comprehension test was used. In addition, the word recognition percentage, reading speed and Reading Prosody Rubric was utilized to determine the participants' reading fluency levels. As a result of the analysis, the reader's theater method was efficient in the increase in reading prosody and reading fluency skills, and the decrease in the number of misspelled words. Although no significant effect of the reader's theater method on the participants' reading speed was observed, it was concluded that the reader's theater method increased the participants' reading comprehension skills.

**Keywords:** Readers theater, reading fluency, reading comprehension

\* This study was conducted by the first author within the scope of her Master's thesis under the supervision of second author.

\*\* *Corresponding Author:* Research Assistant, Ankara University, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Elementary Education Department, Ankara, Turkey. E-mail:babacan@ankara.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4133-6216>

\*\*\* Prof. Dr., Gazi University, Gazi Faculty of Education, Elementary Education Department, Ankara, Turkey. E-mail:mustafa@gazi.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3885-5322>

## Okuyucu Tiyatrosunun İlköğretim 4. Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Akıcı Okuma ve Okuduğunu Anlama Becerilerine Etkisi\*

Makale Türü	Başvuru Tarihi	Kabul Tarihi
Araştırma	14.09.2021	10.06.2022

**Kübra Babacan\*\***

**Mustafa Yıldız\*\*\***

### Öz

Bu araştırmada okuyucu tiyatrosunun akıcı okuma ve okuduğunu anlama becerileri üzerindeki etkisi incelenmiştir. Araştırmada yarı deneysel desen kullanılmıştır. 2019-2020 eğitim öğretim yılında Ankara'nın Mamak ilçesindeki bir devlet okulunda 14 hafta süreyle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmaya ilköğretim 4. sınıfta öğrenim gören 29 öğrenci katılmıştır. Okuyucu tiyatrosu etkinlikleri deney grubunda araştırmacı tarafından uygulanmış; kontrol grubunda ise herhangi bir uygulama yapılmamıştır. Veri toplama sürecinde öğrencilerin okuduğunu anlama düzeylerini belirlemek için okuduğunu anlama testi, akıcı okuma düzeylerini belirlemek için kelime tanıma yüzdesi, okuma hızı ve Okuma Prozodisi Rubriği kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda okuyucu tiyatrosunun okuduğunu anlama, kelime tanıma ve okuma prozodisini artırdığı, okuma hatalarını azalttığı belirlenmiştir. Ancak okuyucu tiyatrosunun okuma hızına anlamlı etkisinin olmadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Okuyucu tiyatrosu, okuduğunu anlama, akıcı okuma

\* Bu çalışma birinci yazarın, ikinci yazar danışmanlığında yürüttüğü yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında gerçekleştirilmiştir.

\*\* *Sorumlu Yazar:* Araştırma Görevlisi, Ankara Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi, Temel Eğitim Bölümü, Sınıf Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı, Ankara, Türkiye. E-posta:babacan@ankara.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4133-6216>

\*\*\* Prof. Dr., Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi, Temel Eğitim Bölümü, Sınıf Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı, Ankara, Türkiye. E-posta:mustafa@gazi.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3885-5322>

## Introduction

The current era is a time when accessing information is quite easy. Obtaining and using the right information has become a skill for an individual in this era in which people have been exposed to too much information day by day. The process of selecting and using the right information starts with reading the information encountered. Reading is followed by comprehension. Reading comprehension means inferring meaning from a text. Therefore, the aim is to gain a general insight of what is defined in the text, instead of obtaining meaning from isolated sentences (Woolley, 2011). Many studies show that reading and reading comprehension significantly affect other areas of an individual's life (Baştug, 2014; 2014; Kolić-Vrhovec, Bajšanski & Rončević Zubković, 2011). For this very reason, the reading action and reading comprehension skill, which are vital throughout an individual's life, should be gained in the primary education, which is the beginning of the education life, without a delay. When reviewing the literature, it may be seen that reading and reading comprehension skills contribute positively to students during their education life and the exams they attend (Jackson, 2005; Owusu-Acheaw, & Larson, 2014).

Reading fluency is required in order for the reading to be understood easily and to make the expression clear in terms of meaning. Baştuğ and Akyol (2012) studied the 2nd – 5th grades' students reading comprehension and reading fluency and it was seen that reading fluency skills significantly predicted reading comprehension. A number of approaches and methods are used in schools to make students gain those skills. Reader's theater may help these approaches and improve reading comprehension skills and reading fluency (Jones, 2014; Lewis & Feng, 2014; Millin, 1997; Suggs, 2019; Young et al., 2019; Young & Rasinski, 2009).

Reader's theatre is defined as a reading activity using few of the theatre techniques without dealing with the stage, costumes or sets (Rasinski et al., 2017). This method, which is used to improve students with poor reading skills, also helps to improve reading fluency, which is a prerequisite for reading comprehension. Reader's theatre is reading different parts of a story, a poem or a play by more than one person with dramatic expressions and gestures (Marshall, 2017). There is a special effort made during reading in reader's theatre that is considered as a group activity. The special effort here is the way the voice and gestures are used. Reader's theatre is the repeated action of reading a written script, paying attention to the meaning. Since acting, stage and costume are not used in the reader's theatre, readers should use their voices to reflect the meaning (Young & Rasinski, 2009). Students read and act out a script in reader's theatre. However, there is no memorization of lines, costumes, stages or props during this acting out part. Students who take part in reader's theatre perform their reading only by standing in front of the audience (Rasinski, Stokes, & Young, 2017).

Suggs (2019) applied reader's theater in her research and observed that students' reading fluency skills improved. She stated that students' reading aloud using the reader's theater increased their reading awareness. In addition, she also stated that students' self-confidence increased while reading aloud. Another research in which the reader's theatre practice was applied emphasized that the use of speech patterns such as voice quality, intonation, tone of voice, and language to reflect the physical and emotional state of the character improves reading fluency (Rasinski, Blachowicz, & Lems, 2012). It was seen in this research and other studies in the literature that have similar results, that the activities related to the emotions of the character improved reading fluency in a positive way. Another study that used reader's theater found that it was beneficial in improving reading comprehension (Young et al., 2019).

Reader's theater is a method for improving reading skills and has been used to improve reading skills in studies conducted abroad (Al Quannabi, Gabarre, & Mirza, 2018; Black, 2016; Carrick, 2001; Caudill-Hansen, 2009; Marshall, 2017; Young & Rasinski, 2018; Young, Stokes, & Rasinski, 2017). Reader's theater has been used in the classroom for more than 30 years, but studies investigating its effectiveness are limited (Rasinski, Blachowicz, & Lems, 2012). As a result of the researches, this method is not used for practice in Turkey according to the national literature. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of reader's theater method, which is thought to contribute to the lack of reading fluency and reading comprehension to offer a solution for teachers, students and families. Therefore, the following questions were requested:

1) When the reading fluency pre-test scores of the students in the control group who continued their education under the Turkish Curriculum and the ones in the experimental group who used reader's theatre activities are taken under control, is there a statistically significant difference between two groups' post-test scores?

2) When the reading comprehension pre-test scores of the students in the control group who continued their education under the Turkish Curriculum and the ones in the experimental group who used reader's theatre activities are taken under control, is there a statistically significant difference between the two groups' post-test scores?

## Method

### Research Design

The research used a quasi-experimental design. The data to be examined are produced under the control of the researcher directly in order to determine the cause and effect relationships in experimental research designs (Karasar, 2017). Students are not randomly assigned for the groups, and the already existing classes are determined as groups. The experimental process is given in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Reader's Theater Experimental Process Chart*

Group	Pre-test		Post-test
Experimental Group	✓	Reader's Theatre Implementation (12 weeks)	✓
Control Group	✓	-	✓

### Study Group

29 students participated the study. Before the reader's theater was implemented, a t-test analysis was undertaken to evaluate if there was a significant difference between the control and experimental groups' pre-test reading comprehension scores, and the results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*T-test Results Regarding Reading Comprehension Pre-Test Scores*

	Group	N	$\bar{X}$	S	Sd	t	p
Comprehension	Experimental	15	8.06	3.35	27.00	0.787	.438
	Control	14	9.00	3.01	26.96		

When Table 2 is examined, no significant difference is observed between the two groups' reading comprehension pre-test scores ( $t(27) = 0.787, p > .05$ ). Groups can be stated to be equivalent in terms of reading comprehension.

Table 3 presents the results of a t-test analysis carried out to demonstrate whether there was a significant difference between the two groups' reading fluency pre-test scores before the reader's theater was implemented.

**Table 3**

*T-test Results Regarding Reading Fluency Pre-Test Scores*

	Group	N	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	p
Word Recognition	Experimental	15	92.0	5.09	27	1.36	.186
	Control	14	83.28	24.32			
Total Number of Errors	Experimental	15	6.53	4.59	27	0.64	.527
	Control	14	7.64	4.71			
Reading Speed	Experimental	15	88.60	22.74	27	0.71	.481
	Control	14	82.50	23.26			
Prosody	Experimental	15	8.80	2.65	27	1.53	.137
	Control	14	10.28	2.55			

In Tablo 3 there is no significant difference between pre-test scores in the sub-dimensions of reading fluency which are word recognition ( $t(27) = 1.36, p > .05$ ), total number of errors ( $t(27) = .641, p > .05$ ), reading speed ( $t(27) = .714, p > .05$ ) and prosody ( $t(27) = 1.53, p > .05$ ) between groups. Groups may be considered to be equivalent in terms of reading fluency.

### **Data Collection Tools**

Data were collected in two parts. In the first part, studies were performed to specify the reading fluency levels of the students. Measurement results for three basic dimensions of reading fluency (word recognition percentage, reading speed and reading prosody) were obtained separately. Groups were asked to read the text "İpek Ormanda" which was prepared by Karasu, Girgin and Uzuner (2013) as a pre-test and a post-test. This text was selected based on expert opinions. The text "İpek Ormanda" was prepared in two forms as a reading fluency student form and a reading fluency researcher form.

**Word Recognition Percentage:** It is calculated by taking the percentage of the words properly read by a pupil during 60 seconds of reading aloud. Divide the number of the words read correctly by the total number of the words read (correctly or inaccurately) and multiply by 100 to get this percentage.

While the education level generally indicates the range in which the correct word recognition rate is 92-98%, the independent eading level indicates the range in which the accuracy rate is 99-100%. The fact that the word recognition rate is below 92% indicates that the situation is threatening (Akyol, Yıldırım, Ateş, Çetinkaya, & Rasinski, 2014, p.10).

**Reading Speed:** "Reading speed is closely related to the reader's automation of the word recognition process in the relevant text. The number of the misread words was subtracted from the total number of the words read in a minute to arrive at this figure.

**Prosody:** In this study, the Reading Prozody Rubric, created by Zutell and Rasinski (1991) and converted into Turkish by Yıldırım, Yıldız, and Ateş (2009), was applied to assess reading prosody. Prosodic reading means recording a student reading a text for 60 seconds and then making assessments on this recording using a rubric (graded scoring key) that has four different dimensions of student reading. These four dimensions consist of a) expression and voice level, b) units of meaning and intonation, c) smoothness, and d) speed.

**Reading Comprehension:** Test of reading comprehension prepared by Kaya, Doğan and Yıldırım (2018) was used to measure reading comprehension. The reading comprehension test consists of a fable, a narrative text, three informative texts and two forms with 32 items related to the texts. The form containing a narrative text, an informative text and 15 items belonging to the texts was used alone among the test forms. The other form was not used in this study. The KR-20 reliability value for the form used in this study was found as .75 in the pre-test implementation.

### **Reader's Theater Pre-Implementation Preparation Process**

#### ***Text Selection***

A text pool was created by scanning the literature and selecting 48 texts from the textbooks, story books and children's magazines of the Ministry of National Education. The text evaluation form was prepared by the researcher taking into account the reader's theater rules. Experts were consulted to state their opinions on the form and 12 texts were chosen by eliminating the texts. Only 8 texts out of 12 were used in the implementation process.

In addition, only narrative texts were used in the research. The reason for using narrative texts only is that this type of texts allows the use of gestures and mimics.

#### ***Reader's Theater Implementation Process***

The research was carried out in a total of 14 weeks in 2019-2020 academic year, one week of which was for pre-tests, twelve weeks of which were for the reader's theater application, and one week of which was for the post-test. The whole 8 texts were implemented in 12 weeks. Before one text was completed and the process was finished, the other text was not passed on.

The texts were completed in 2, 3 or 5 lesson hours in some weeks depending on the curriculum availability, holidays, exam dates etc. Reader's theatre implementation was completed in a total of 48 lesson hours. Vocabulary and reading comprehension activities were carried out at all stages of the research. In the first half of the implementation, vocabulary study, vocabulary study chart, assessment chart, character map, character analysis and reading comprehension activities were used while covering the first four texts in order to make students get familiar with the reader's theatre process. More intensive activities that served the purpose of reader's theatre were performed in the following stages. The activities that took into account the role of the character and focused on reading comprehension were carried out particularly. While covering the last four texts, the activities related to vocabulary study, reading comprehension and the emotions and feelings of the character were carried out. The reading comprehension activities started with easy texts. In the following weeks, the difficulty level of the texts was increased. The study included the activities that are a vocabulary study chart, a character map, character analysis, story analysis activity, questions about the character's emotions, reading comprehension questions and reader's theatre self-assessment chart.

## Data Analysis

### Examining the Assumptions

Pre-test scores' difference between groups was determined using t-test, and post-test scores' difference was determined using the ANCOVA (Analysis of covariance). While the assumption of normality was examined for the t-test, the assumptions of normality, homogeneity of regression curves and homogeneity of variances were examined for ANCOVA.

### Assumption of Normality

Whether the data are suitable for normal distribution can be examined by descriptive statistics, hypothesis tests and graphical methods. The statistical results of the tests conducted for the normality of the distribution for reading comprehension and reading fluency are presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4**

*Results Regarding Tests Conducted for Normality of Distribution for Reading Comprehension and Reading Fluency*

			Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Min	Max	Skew	Sk. Se	Kurt.	Ku. Se	S-W	
Reading Comprehension	Pretest	D	8.1	7.0	5.00	3.31	3.35	14.00	1.57	0.58	-0.58	1.12	.964	
		K	9.0	8.5	7.00	3.01	4.00	15.00	0.59	0.60	0.18	0.58	.953	
	Posttest	D	11.60	11.00	14.00	2.26	7.00	15.00	-0.24	0.58	-0.49	1.12	.938	
		K	10.21	11	11.00	2.08	6.00	14.00	-0.39	0.60	0.17	1.15	.932	
	Word Recognition	Pretest	D	92.00	93.00	93.00	5.09	78.00	99.00	-1.48	0.58	3.34	.876	.876*
			K	83.28	92.00	96.00	24.31	3.00	96.00	-3.16	0.60	10.76	.551	.551*
Posttest		D	98.46	98.00	98.00	1.12	97.00	100.00	.269	.580	-1.27	.851	.851*	
		K	95.35	95.5	95.00	2.73	90.00	100.00	-0.46	0.60	0.08	.966	.966	
Reading Fluency	Total Number of Errors	D	6.53	6.00	7.00	4.59	1.00	21.00	2.29	0.58	7.42	1.12	.757*	
		K	7.64	6.00	3.00	4.71	3.00	16.00	1.01	0.597	-0.29	1.15	.824*	
	Posttest	D	1.26	1.00	2.00	0.96	0.00	3.00	-0.06	0.58	-1.05	1.12	.866*	
		K	4.28	4.00	4.00	2.30	0.00	8.00	0.07	0.60	-0.33	1.15	.950	
	Reading Speed	Pretest	D	88.60	87.00	77.00	22.74	46.00	124.00	-1.30	0.58	-1.74	1.12	.969
			K	82.50	86.50	35.00	23.26	35.00	123.00	-0.59	0.59	0.62	1.15	.951
Posttest		D	108.33	104.00	129.00	27.12	58.00	152.00	-0.26	0.58	-0.85	1.12	.957	
		K	100.07	96.00	125.00	22.51	61.00	125.00	-0.32	0.59	-1.18	1.15	.891	
Prosody	Pretest	D	8.80	9.00	9.00	2.65	4.00	15.00	0.70	0.05	1.67	1.12	.896	
		K	10.28	10.50	11.00	2.55	6.00	14.00	-0.24	0.60	-0.53	1.15	.948	
	Posttest	D	12.13	12.00	12.00	2.82	6.00	16.00	-0.51	0.58	0.05	1.12	.950	
		K	7.57	7.50	6.00	1.50	6.00	10.00	0.39	0.60	-1.24	1.15	.867*	

\*  $p < .05$

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the mean, median and mode of the reading comprehension pre-test and post-test scores are close, the skewness and kurtosis coefficients are between [-1,1], the ratio of the skewness-kurtosis coefficients to their standard errors is in the range

between [-2,2] and the Shapiro-Wilk test results are not significant ( $p > .05$ ). As a result, pre-test and post-test reading comprehension scores are normally distributed. On the other hand, pre-test or post-test scores are not normally distributed according to the Skewness-Kurtosis coefficients and Shapiro-Wilk test results in the control or experimental groups for the subdimensions of reading fluency.

### Homogeneity of Variances

In the framework of the research, Levene results, which were about the homogeneity of the variances in reading comprehension, reading fluency word recognition, reading fluency total error, reading fluency reading speed and reading fluency prosody steps, were obtained respectively ( $F=0.614$ ,  $p > .05$ ;  $F=5.679$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $F=6.964$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $F=0.488$ ,  $p > .05$ ;  $F=1.156$ ,  $p > .05$ ). It can be stated that the posttest scores in reading fluency word recognition and reading fluency total error levels are not homogeneously distributed in the control and experimental groups.

### Homogeneity of Regression Curves

When the results were evaluated in general, it was seen that the t-test and ANCOVA assumptions were met for the reading comprehension variable and these analyzes were carried out. Depending on the sample size, at least one of the t-test and ANCOVA assumptions was not met in the lower steps of reading fluency. In this context, the t-value with the t-test and the F value with ANCOVA were calculated using the Type I method in order to get more accurate significance values, but the significance values were obtained by the randomization test.

## Results

### Findings of Reader's Theater's Effect of on Reading Comprehension

After controlling for the students' pre-test reading comprehension levels, ANCOVA was performed to see whether the post-test scores revealed a significant difference between the two groups. The results can be found in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Ancova Results Regarding Reading Comprehension Scores*

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Square	F	$\eta^2$
Pretest	47.05	1	47.05	17.07 **	.396
Group	23.14	1	23.14	8.39**	.244
Error	71.67	26	2.76		

\*\*  $p < .01$

When looking at Table 5, there is a considerable difference between the pre and post-test scores ( $F(1, 26) = 17.07$ ;  $p < .01$ ,  $r = .58$ ). Moreover, when the groups' reading comprehension pre-test scores are compared, a significant difference between the two groups is observed ( $F(1, 26) = 8.39$ ;  $p < .01$ ). To put it more clearly, the adjusted mean values of the experimental group for reading comprehension ( $X = 11.5$ ) are higher than the adjusted mean scores ( $X = 9.34$ ) of the students in the control group. When the effect size that is named as practical significance is examined, the reader's theater method has a great effect on reading comprehension according to Cohen (1988) ( $\eta^2 = .244 > .14$ ). In other words, 24% of the variability in reading comprehension posttest scores can be explained by reader's theater method that is implemented.

### Findings Reader's Theater' Effect of on Reading Fluency

After controlling the students' fluent reading pre-test scores, ANCOVA was performed to demonstrate whether the post-test scores revealed a significant difference between the two groups. Tables 6, 7, 8, and 9 exhibit the relevant results.

**Table 6**  
*Ancova Results for Word Recognition Scores*

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Square	F	$\eta^2$
Pretest	5.26	1	5.26	1.19**	0.044
Group	64.79	1	64.79	14.65**	0.361
Error	114.45	26	4.42		

\*\* p &lt; .01

When Table 6 is examined, a considerable change between the pre and post-test results for word recognition is clearly seen ( $F(1, 26) = 1.19$ ;  $p < .01$ ,  $r = .17$ ). In addition, when the groups' word recognition pre-test scores are compared, a significant difference is observed between the post-test scores. ( $F(1, 26) = 64.79$ ;  $p < .01$ ). More precisely, the word recognition corrected mean scores ( $X = 98.29$ ) of the experimental group students are higher than the corrected mean scores ( $X = 92.20$ ) of the students in the control group. When the effect size named as practical significance is examined, the reader's theater method has a great effect on word recognition according to Cohen (1988) ( $\eta^2 = .361 > .14$ ). In other words, 36% of the variability in word recognition posttest scores can be explained by the reader's theater method that is implemented.

**Table 7**  
*Ancova Results for Total Number of Errors*

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Square	F	$\eta^2$
Pretest	0.19	1	0.19	0.59**	0.002
Group	66.14	1	66.14	21.10**	0.448
Error	81.47	26	81.47		

\*\* p &lt; .01

When Table 7 is examined, it can be noticed that the overall number of errors differs significantly between the pre-test and post-test results. ( $F(1, 26) = 0.19$ ;  $p < .01$ ,  $r = .04$ ). Additionally, there is a significant difference between the post-test scores of the groups ( $F(1, 26) = 0.59$ ;  $p < .01$ ). More clearly, the total number of errors adjusted mean values of the students in the experimental group ( $X = 1.25$ ) are higher than the adjusted mean values ( $X = 4.30$ ) of the ones in the control group. When the effect size named as practical significance is examined, the reader's theater method owns a great effect on the total number of errors according to Cohen (1988) ( $\eta^2 = .448 > .14$ ). In other words, 44% of the variability in the total number of errors in posttest scores can be explained by the reader's theater method that is implemented.

**Table 8**  
*Ancova Results for Reading Speed*

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Square	F	$\eta^2$
Pretest	7755.1	1	7755.1	21.18 <sup>a</sup>	0.449
Group	107.0	1	107.0	0.29	0.011
Error	9520.5	26	366.0		

<sup>a</sup> p > .05

When the reading speed pre-test scores of the groups are taken into account, Table 8 shows that the post-test scores do not differ much between the groups ( $F(1, 26) = 21.17$ ;  $p > .05$ ). To state it more clearly, the students in both groups own a similar level of reading speed.

**Table 9**  
*Ancova Results for Reading Prosody Scores*

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Square	F	$\eta^2$
Pretest	33.77	1	33.78	18.54**	0.416
Group	210.73	1	210.73	115.70**	0.817
Error	47.35	26	1.82		

\*\* p &lt; .01

In Table 9, it can be seen that the reading prosody shows a significant difference between pre and post-test scores ( $F(1, 26) = 18.54$ ;  $p < .01$ ,  $r = .34$ ). In addition, there is a significant difference between the post-test scores of the two ( $F(1, 26) = 210.73$ ;  $p < .01$ ). To express more precisely, the reading prosody adjusted mean values of the experimental group students ( $X = 10.89$ ) are higher than the adjusted mean values ( $X = 95.20$ ) of the ones in the control group. When the effect size named as practical significance is examined, the reader's theater method has a great effect on reading prosody according to Cohen (1988) ( $\eta^2 = .817 > .14$ ). In other words, 81% of the variability in reading prosody posttest scores can be explained by the reader's theater method that is implemented.

### Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

According to the results of reading studies employing the reader's theater method, reader's theater has a favorable influence on improving reading fluency skills. While the reader's theater had an effect on the improvement of word recognition and reading prosody and caused a decrease in the number of misread words, it did not affect the reading speed. The reading speed did not improve in this study, but the meaningfulness and comprehensibility increased.—Due to the competitive education approach imposed by the system, it is seen that students focus only on vocalization of the lines. The researcher focused on meaningfulness and comprehensibility rather than increasing speed while performing the implementation. As a consequence, it was observed that the students balanced their understanding in accordance with their real speed.

When the researches conducted in the relevant field are examined, the results obtained in this study are in line with those of the researches within the relevant literature (Carrick, 2001; Caudill-Hansen, 2009; Jones, 2014; Lewis & Feng, 2014; Millin, 1997; Suggs, 2019; Young et al., 2017; Young and Rasinski, 2009). Young and Rasinski (2018) spared the first 15 minutes of the lesson for reader's theater, and applied a 90-minute reader theatre session daily within the scope of their research. They supported reader's theatre with vocabulary studies and writing activities. As a result, it was stated that implementing reader's theatre consistently could have a big effect on students' reading fluency. In this study, reader's theatre was supported by vocabulary studies and the activities related to the emotions of the character and consequently the study showed similar results. Caudill-Hansen (2009) conducted a 10-week practice within a research and stated that reader's theatre improved reading fluency skills at the end. Carrick (2001) stated that reading fluency skills developed as a result of a 12-week reader's theatre practice. On the other hand, Marshall (2017) implemented reader's theater with an intensive program of two-week content using all days of the week and stated that reader's theater was not effective as a result of the research. It can be thought that this result is due to the short implementation period.

Another finding of the study was that the method had a beneficial effect on enhancing reading comprehension abilities as a consequence of the reading studies conducted utilizing reader's theatre. In other words, this method increases reading comprehension skills.

Results of students' reading comprehension skills are similar to some of the studies in the literature (Jones, 2014; Millin, 1997), they differ with some of them (Black, 2016; Carrick, 2001; Caudill-Hansen, 2009; Keehn, 2008; Marshall, 2017). This difference between the studies may be due to the duration of the intervention, the characteristics of the group, the class level of the group, the involvement of family members in the reader's theatre practice, the role of the practitioner, and the activities performed after the implementation.

As a result of the research, reader's theatre increased reading comprehension skills. In a study conducted by Flemmer (1984), vocabulary studies and reading comprehension activities were included during the reader's theater practice. Reading comprehension activities consisted of the questions related to the text, and at the end, it was revealed that reader's theatre improved reading comprehension skills. In this respect, this study shows similarities with Jones' (2014) and Flemmer's (1984) researches in terms of the implementation process and the research result. Millin (1997) included word study in his 9-week intervention and found that reader's theatre increased reading comprehension skills. Based on this, it can be inferred that supporting reader's theatre with reading comprehension activities and vocabulary studies increases the effectiveness of the practice.

Considering the studies in the literature that show that reader's theatre does not affect reading comprehension, it is clearly seen that it is important to support the content with activities and use the duration of the implementation efficiently. Marshall (2017) stated that reader's theatre had no effect on reading fluency after a two-week practice. It can be thought that the reason for such a result in the study is the limited time allocated for reader's theatre. Carrick (2001) concluded this method applied 12-week intervention and not affected reading comprehension skills. The lack of activities before and after the reader's theatre practice and the failure of the practitioner to give immediate feedback can be thought to be among the reasons for this result.

As a result, reader's theater, when implemented appropriately, demonstrates a positive effect on students' skills regarding reading fluency and comprehension. The implementation of reader's theatre, supported by activities in a consistent and planned manner, increases its efficiency. Reader's theater can be defined as an interactive and interpretation-based reading activity in which almost all students are included in the reading process. Reader's theater is a technique implemented to foster students' skills regarding reading fluency and comprehension through regularly repeated reading activities in a supportive learning environment.

In accordance with the study's findings, using the reader's theatre method in reading studies increases reading fluency and reading comprehension. In this context, teachers can be encouraged to practice reader's theater technique in their lessons. While practicing this, doing vocabulary studies, including activities related to the character and the emotions of the character, including reading comprehension questions and reading comprehension activities, providing students with model readings, giving them immediate feedback, letting students work with their groups, providing them to practice at home and increasing the duration of students' engagement with texts and words can contribute to their reading fluency and reading comprehension skills. Additionally, reader's theater practices can be included in the Turkish Curriculum, course books and workbooks. Reader's theatre was implemented within a Turkish lesson. Reader theater applications can be used not only in Turkish lessons and in covering the reading texts in Turkish lessons, but also in other lessons. For example, while covering a text in a social sciences textbook, the text can be adapted to reader's theatre. Parents can be informed about reader's theatre and encouraged to participate in the process. Finally, studies on reader's theatre can be conducted not only with the 4th grade students but also with students from different grade levels.

## References

- Akyol, H. (2017). *Türkçe ilk okuma yazma öğretimi [Turkish primary reading and writing teaching]*. Ankara: Pegem Akademi.
- Akyol, H., Yıldırım, K., Ateş, A., Çetinkaya, Ç., & Rasinski, T. (2014). *Okumayı değerlendirme: Öğretmenler için kolay ve pratik bir yol [Assessing reading: an easy and practical way for teachers]*. Ankara: Pegem A.
- Al Qannubi, M., Gabarre, S., & Mirza, C. (2018). Experimenting reader's theatre to improve omani pupils' reading motivation. *Asian Journal of Language, Literature and Culture Studies*, 1(2), 1-11.
- Baştuğ, M., & Akyol, H. (2012). Akıcı okuma becerilerinin okuduğunu anlamayı yordama düzeyi [Predicting level of reading comprehension by fluent reading skills]. *Kuramsal Eğitim Bilim Dergisi [Journal of Theoretical Educational Science]*, 5(4), 394-411.
- Black, L. A. (2016). *The effects of reader's theater on reading comprehension and fluency of fifth-grade students* (Doctoral dissertation). <https://www.proquest.com/> accessed from page.
- Carrick, L. U. (2001). *The effects of readers theatre on fluency and comprehension on fifth grade students in regular classrooms* (Doctoral dissertation). <https://www.proquest.com/> accessed from page.
- Caudill-Hansen, K. J. (2009). *Readers' theater as a strategy to increase comprehension and fluency in sixth grade students*. (Doctoral dissertation). <https://www.proquest.com/> accessed from page.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. New York, NY: Roudledge Academic. Computing R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria.
- Diederich, P. B. (1973). *Short-cut statistics for teacher-made tests*. New Jersey: Educational Testing Service.

- Flemmer, M. A. (1984). *First graders' reading comprehension can be increased through the application of story theatre and readers theatre.* (Master's Thesis). <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1710734863?accountid=8319> Accessed from page.
- Grimm, K. J. (2008). Longitudinal associations between reading and mathematics achievement. *Developmental neuropsychology*, 33(3), 410-426.
- Jackson, N. E. (2005). Are university students' component reading skills related to their text comprehension and academic achievement?. *Learning and Individual differences*, 15(2), 113-139.
- Jones, N. (2014). *Readers' theater: Its effect on second graders' fluency, comprehension, and attitude towards reading* (Doctoral dissertation). <https://www.proquest.com/> Accessed from page.
- Karasar, N. (2017). *Bilimsel araştırma yöntemleri [Scientific research methods]*. Ankara: Nobel.
- Karasu, P., Girgin, Ü., & Uzuner, Y. (2013). *Formel olmayan okuma envanteri [Informal reading inventory]*. Ankara: Nobel.
- Kaya, D., Doğan, B., & Yıldırım, K. (2018). Okuduğunu anlama testi geliştirilmesi: Geçerlik ve güvenilirlik çalışması [Developing a reading comprehension test: Validity and reliability study]. *Okuma Yazma Eğitimi Araştırmaları [Literacy Education Research]*, 6(2), 44-55.
- Keehn, S., Harmon, J., & Shoho, A. (2008). A study of readers theater in eighth grade: Issues of fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 24(4), 335-362.
- Kolić-Vrhovec, S., Bajšanski, I., & Rončević Zubković, B. (2011). The role of reading strategies in scientific text comprehension and academic achievement of university students. *Review of psychology*, 18(2), 81-90.
- Lewis, M., & Feng, J. (2014). The effect of readers' theatre on the reading ability of elementary special education students. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED557788> Accessed from page.
- Marshall, H. B. (2017). *The effectiveness of readers' theatre on fluency, comprehension, and motivation on primary students* (Doctoral dissertation). <https://www.proquest.com/> Accessed from page.
- Millin, S. K. (1997). *Effects of readers theatre on oral reading ability and reading attitudes of second-grade Title I students.* <https://www.elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=5405793> Accessed from page.
- Owusu-Acheaw, M., & Larson, A. G. (2014). Reading habits among students and its effect on academic performance: A study of students of Koforidua Polytechnic. *Library philosophy and practice*, 0\_1.
- R Core Team (2019). R: A language and environment for statistical. <https://www.R-project.org/> Accessed from page.
- Rasinski, T. V., Blachowicz, C. L., & Lems, K. (Eds.). (2012). *Fluency instruction: Research-based best practices.* New York: Guilford.
- Rasinski, T., Stokes, F., & Young, C. (2017). The role of the teacher in reader's theater instruction. *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*, 5(2), 168-174.
- Suggs, E. (2019). *The impact of readers theater on fluency* (Order No. 13857112). Master's thesis. Lisans Tezi. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2269915384?accountid=8319> Accessed from page.
- Tatar, E., & Soylu, Y. (2006). Okuma-anlamadaki başarının matematik başarısına etkisinin belirlenmesi üzerine bir çalışma [A study on determining the effect of success in reading comprehension on success in mathematics]. *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi [Kastamonu Journal of Education]*, 14(2), 503-508.
- Woolley, G. (2011). Reading comprehension. *Reading comprehension assisting children with learning difficulties* içinde (s. 15-34). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Yıldız, M., Yıldırım, K., Ateş, S., Çetinkaya, Ç. (2009). An evaluation of the oral reading fluency of 4 th graders with respect to prosodic characteristic. *Uluslararası İnsan Bilimleri Dergisi [International Journal of Human Sciences]*. [Online]. 6(1), 353-360.
- Young, C., & Rasinski, T. (2009). Implementing readers theatre as an approach to classroom fluency instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, 63(1), 4-13.
- Young, C., & Rasinski, T. (2018). Readers theatre: Effects on word recognition automaticity and reading prosody. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 41(3), 475-485.

- Young, C., Durham, P., Miller, M., Rasinski, T. V., & Lane, F. (2019). Improving reading comprehension with readers theater. *The Journal of Educational Research, 112*(5), 615-626.
- Young, C., Stokes, F., & Rasinski, T. (2017). Readers theatre plus comprehension and word study. *The Reading Teacher, 71*(3), 351-355.