



Investigating the correlation between second grade primary school students' fluent reading skills and parental involvement in home literacy activities

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ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 03.08.2024

Accepted: 19.08.2024

KEYWORDS

Fluent reading

Parental involvement

Home literacy activities

Primary school students

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ABSTRACT

To stay up to date with the rapid changes in technology and science in today's world, reading skills are still essential. Reading skills, in addition to being a means of acquiring knowledge in social life, have a key role in success in academic life. The rich knowledge encountered in school life needs to be analyzed, synthesized and understood. Fluent reading skill is directly related to an individual's capacity to make sense of the text, and this skill is one of the cornerstones of children's success in educational life. Primary school is a period in which children acquire reading and writing skills and progress by building on those skills. The support that parents provide by participating in literacy activities at home in this process plays a crucial role in the development of their children's fluent reading skills. In this context, the comparative study of parental involvement in literacy activities with fluent reading skills at primary school level has formed a significant area of research. The aim of the research is to investigate the relationship between the fluent reading skills of the students studying in the second grade and the level of parental involvement in home literacy activities. One of the quantitative research methods, the relational screening model was conducted in the research. Participants are second-grade students who are studying in two different primary schools in the province of Ordu and their parents. In data collection, the speed and accuracy components of the students from fluent reading components were evaluated and the parental involvement levels were examined using the "Parental Involvement in Home Literacy Activities" scale. The findings from the analysis of the data were discussed in terms of the fluent reading skill levels of primary school second-grade students and parental involvement level in home literacy activities.

Introduction

Having the ability to read and write competently is crucial for being successful in the lifelong learning process. Improving oneself in these skills requires a combination of various skills and abilities, which makes it a multifaceted task (Çetinkaya, 2024). Reading skills come to the fore for

a person to obtain information, interpret information and use it effectively in both social and academic life (Keskin & Baştuğ, 2013; Uğur & Tavşanlı, 2022; Wong et al., 2018). The purpose of reading is to comprehend the meaning; one of the other purposes is to develop fluent reading skills, that is, to develop complete and accurate comprehension skills (Demirel, 2003; Göçer, 2018).

Reading skills represent a wide and multifaceted range of skills that include reading the text accurately and fluently and comprehending what is read (Aktaş Kubal, 2022; Başaran, 2013; Baştuğ, 2021). Fluent reading, which is considered as a dimension of reading, is reading at a certain speed, as if speaking, paying attention to the units of meaning in a text (Rasinski, 2010). Fluent reading is one of the most important factors affecting reading comprehension in terms of accurate and fast reading and showing prosodic features in reading (Keskin & Baştuğ, 2013).

Although accurate reading, reading speed and prosody, which are the basic components of fluent reading, are seen to be of equal importance in fluent reading, there is a hierarchy of development between them (Akyol, 2010; Baştuğ, 2021). According to this hierarchy, firstly, accurate reading, that is, word recognition and discrimination skills develop. Accurate reading skill is a prerequisite for fluent reading and reading comprehension (Samuels, 1979). Then, an appropriate reading speed should be achieved and automaticity in reading should be gained. What is meant by reading speed is reading at a speed suitable for making meaning. The correct and fast vocalisation of the word is a fundamental point for comprehension (Seabra et al., 2017). It is imperative to reach an appropriate reading speed so that most of the attention can be devoted to comprehension. The development of prosody takes place after the acquisition of these skills. Prosodic reading is expressed as an impressive reading aloud that is done as if speaking (McCormack & Pasquarelli, 2010; Özkul Türkeri, 2022). Reading by paying attention to stress, intonation, pause, punctuation and meaning units are among the indicators of prosodic reading. It has a great contribution to comprehension and reading comprehension beyond automaticity (Calet et al., 2013; Calet et al., 2017). Since the voice should be used harmoniously and correctly, prosody can only be observed through reading aloud. For this reason, fluency in reading can be understood with all its components only when reading aloud.

Considering the scope and purpose of reading, the act of reading appears in various forms. There are many different types such as reading aloud and silent reading, shared and independent reading, paired and guided reading, critical and questioning reading, digital and screen reading, visual reading, and these types are grouped according to the purpose, method or materials used (Ciğerci et al., 2022). Among these, the ones that are generally emphasised are reading aloud and silent reading, which are considered in terms of reading comprehension and fluency (Rasinski, 2010). In reading aloud, it is aimed to concretise reading accurately and by reflecting the characteristics of speech (Ünal Topçuoğlu & Yeğen, 2013). In this way, it both improves students' reading skills and makes it easier for teachers to monitor these skills (Wise et al., 2010). It is frequently used especially after literacy learning in primary school because it is very important for the development of fluent reading skills (Karasu & Sidekli, 2021; Kim et al., 2012). In terms of developing and evaluating fluent reading, a qualified and effective read aloud is needed.

Differing from reading, fluent reading did not take place as a separate field of learning in the programmes until 2018 (Aktaş, 2021). In the previous studies, it was stated that fluent reading strategies and methods improve students' reading skills and teachers should receive the necessary training to use this method more qualitatively and frequently (Akkuş, 2022; Aktaş & Çankal, 2019; Akyol et al., 2024; Baz, 2023). In addition, it has been observed that both the success and motivation of students participating in action research on reading fluency and reading comprehension have increased (Aktaş & Çankal, 2019; Aşıkcan, 2019).

Although a child's official literacy journey begins in the first grade, achieving excellence in writing and reading goes beyond the classroom boundaries (Ceran et al., 2015). A child's social and cultural environment, especially his/her parent, is effective in creating and shaping a learning environment (Çetinkaya, 2022). When children start school, their social environment expands, but they still spend most of their lives with their families (Çelenk, 2013). Therefore, the harmonious interaction between child and parent is of great importance in children's school years (Çelenk, 2003; Gül, 2007; Patrikakou et al., 2005). Parental contribution to literacy learning has a much greater value than being an attachment to what teachers do (Cairney & Munsie, 1995; Çağdaş et al., 2016; Silinskas et al., 2020; Reutzel et al., 2005).

Communicating with teachers, participating in school activities, or helping with homework are various ways of parental involvement (Epstein et al., 2019). Studies have shown that as the level of parental involvement increases, in other words, when families are interested in their children's education, children's academic achievement increases (Cairney & Munsie, 1995; Çakıroğlu & Kuruyer, 2012; Çetinkaya, 2022; Gay et al., 2021; Leblebici et al., 2024).

Home literacy is the provision of a literacy environment that helps children develop literacy skills at home (Çetinkaya, 2021; Yılmaz Hiçde & Baştuğ, 2021). The literacy environment provided to the child at home includes literacy materials, parental attitudes and habits, and reading and writing activities carried out together. There are some findings in the literature that parental involvement has positive effects on reading skills (Cairney & Munsie, 1995; Çakıroğlu & Kuruyer, 2012; Çetinkaya, 2024; Gay et al., 2021; Hemmerechts et al., 2017; Park, 2008; Senechal & LeFevre, 2002; Wong et al., 2018). In their study, Silinskas et al. (2020) pointed out that families change their teaching behaviours according to their children's progress in reading from preschool to first grade and that shared reading at home decreases towards the second-grade level. The development of a functional literacy skill is a process that takes a long time and therefore needs to continue to be supported throughout educational life (Çetinkaya, 2024; Çelenk, 2013).

In the textbooks of the Ministry of National Education, it is seen that activities and instructions related to fluent reading in primary school are mostly included in the second grade (Aktaş, 2021). On the other hand, it was determined that the scientific research was generally conducted at the fourth grade level (Akkuş, 2022; Aktaş & Çankal, 2019; Soydaş, 2019; Yılmaz, 2020); studies on fluent reading skills at the second grade level were relatively few (Ceran et al., 2015; Karasu & Sidekli, 2021). In addition, the relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension was mostly investigated with student participants (Akkuş, 2022; Aktaş & Çankal, 2019; Başaran, 2013; Ceran et al., 2015; Yılmaz, 2020); however, parental involvement, which is one of the factors that basically affect fluent reading, was less included (Keleş & Doğan, 2021). Studies on parental involvement and home literacy activities were mostly conducted with pre-school, first grade, students with special needs and their parents (Akyüz & Doğan, 2017; Bilaloğlu & Arnas, 2019; Cairney & Munsie, 1995; Gül, 2007; Leblebici et al., 2024; Reutzel et al., 2005).

In the light of the relevant literature, it can be said that although there is an increasing interest in the areas of fluent reading and parental involvement, the number of studies covering both contexts is limited (Keleş & Doğan, 2021; Silinskas et al., 2020). Considering this gap, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between second-grade students' fluent reading skills and level of parental involvement in home literacy activities. It aims to learn more about the parental support that pre-school and post-primary literacy students need at the stage of acquiring and developing fluent reading skills. Thus, the research is expected to contribute to parents and teachers. Based on this framework, the following questions were addressed in the research:

1. What is the level of accurate reading among the fluent reading skills of students enrolled in the second grade of primary school?

2. What is the level of reading speed of students among fluent reading skills enrolled in the second grade of primary school?
3. What is the level of parental involvement in home literacy activities of second-grade primary school students?
4. Is there a significant correlation between the fluent reading skill levels of second-grade primary school students and the level of parental involvement in home literacy activities?

Method

In this study, quantitative research paradigm was adopted. Quantitative research is research that examines social phenomena through statistical analyses of numerically measurable data and aims to discover the principles of social order by revealing the cause-and-effect relationships between these phenomena (Karasar, 2010). In this study, it was aimed to reveal the relationship between the accuracy and speed components of students' fluent reading skills and parental involvement in home literacy activities.

The research model is the correlational survey model within the quantitative research paradigm. The correlational survey model stands out among quantitative research methods as an approach that aims to examine the relationship between two or more variables (Karasar, 2010). This model involves forming groups according to a certain variable and then analysing whether these groups differ in terms of other variables. Thus, detailed information about the direction of the relationships between variables and the nature of these relationships is obtained. Büyüköztürk et al. (2018) state that this method, which is defined as correlational research, is a method that further elaborates the relationships between variables. It is critical to evaluate the potential effects of relationships between variables.

Participants

The population of the research consists of second grade students and their parents studying in the academic year in which the research was conducted. Simple random sampling, one of the random sampling methods, was used in the study. The reason for using this method in the study is that all units in the universe have equal and independent probability of being selected for the sample. The sample, which is based on sampling selected unbiasedly from the universe, has a high power to represent the universe (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018).

The study group of the research consisted of 91 second grade students and 91 parents from two primary schools in Ordu province in the 2023-2024 academic year. Since the accuracy and speed components of the students' fluent reading skills were to be determined, inclusion students with reading difficulties were not included in the sample. Among the student participants, 44 were female and 47 were male. Among the parents, 45 were mothers and 46 were fathers. Parent participants' parenting status, age, number of children, marital status and education level are given in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic information of participant parents

Parents		Mother		Father		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
Age	26-35	20	22,0	10	11,0	30	33,0
	36-45	21	23,1	29	31,9	50	54,9
	46 and above	4	4,4	7	7,7	11	12,1
	Total	45	49,5	46	50,5	91	100,0
Number of children	1	3	3,3	4	4,4	7	7,7
	2	27	29,7	28	30,8	55	60,4
	3	14	15,4	12	13,2	26	28,6
	4 and more	1	1,1	2	2,2	3	3,3
	Total	45	49,5	46	50,5	91	100,0
Marital status	Married	45	49,5	45	49,5	90	98,9
	Single	0	0,0	1	1,1	1	1,1
	Total	45	49,5	46	50,5	91	100,0
Education	Primary	5	5,5	3	3,3	8	8,8
	Middle	2	2,2	0	0,0	2	2,2
	High	18	19,8	17	18,7	35	38,5
	University	20	22,0	26	28,6	46	50,5
	Total	45	49,5	46	50,5	91	100,0

Table 1 shows that most of the participant parents were between 36 and 45 years old, had two children, were married and university graduates.

Data collection instruments

Parents participating in the study were asked to answer the scale named "Parental Involvement in Home Literacy Activities". The scale consists of five subcategories: communication with the teacher, involvement in homework, involvement in book reading activities, involvement in various literacy activities, and involvement in literacy activities with digital tools. The scale is a five-point Likert-type scale consisting of 27 items: "Never", "Rarely", "Sometimes", "Often" and "Always". It was cited by the researcher in the study in which the scale was published that the scale could be used without the need for further permission (Çetinkaya, 2024). The scale was asked to be answered by any of the participant student's parents who volunteered.

The students participating in the study were asked to read aloud for one minute the text "The Comet and the Pole Star", a reading text taken from the textbook published by the Board of Education as a Turkish textbook for second grades, which is not used in their provinces (Ertuğrul, 2023). The text selected for the research is in the narrative text type. The readability level of the text was calculated according to Ateşman's (1997) readability formula and found to be 74.2. While evaluating the data obtained as a result of the calculation, five categories (very difficult, difficult, medium difficulty, easy, very easy) specified by Ateşman (1997) were used and it was seen that the text was in the "easy" category. Selecting the texts to be read in accordance with the reading level of the student is one of the issues that should be considered (Bağcı Dağdeviren & Küçüktepe, 2022). Texts that are difficult to discourage students' enthusiasm in reading may cause them to develop negative attitudes towards reading. Qualities such as the type and difficulty of the text can positively or negatively affect students' fluent reading achievements. Therefore, starting fluent reading activities with texts appropriate to the reading level is critical in terms of keeping students' reading interest and motivation high.

Accurate reading formula and reading speed formula were used to determine the speed and accuracy levels of fluent reading skills. Accurate reading or word recognition percentage is calculated by taking into account the number of correct and incorrectly read words out of the

total number of words that students read aloud in one minute (Christ & Desjardins, 2018). It is found by dividing the number of words read correctly by the total number of words and multiplying by 100 (Rasinski, 2010). According to this calculation, a good reader is expected to have a reading accuracy of 99% or 100%. A free level student can read and understand a text without any help. If the rate is in the range of 92%-98%, it is thought that word recognition and reading comprehension activities will benefit the reader in fluent reading. The student at the instructional level can be successful in reading and comprehension with some support. When the correct reading rate falls below 92%, problems arise in fluent reading and reading comprehension. A student at the anxiety level may make many reading mistakes or understand very little of what he/she reads.

In the determination of misread words, the "Error Analysis Inventory" developed by Dündar and Akyol (2014) was adapted and used. According to this inventory, reading errors include repetition, addition, skipping, reversal, misreading, not being able to read the word within five seconds, and the teacher giving hints.

Reading speed is reading a text at a speed that does not disrupt the integrity of meaning and is generally measured by reading aloud studies (Aktaş, 2021). The student's reading speed is calculated by subtracting the number of misread words from the total number of words the student reads in one minute. Akyol et al. (2014) stated that the number of correct words that second grade students should read in one minute should be 30-80 words in autumn, 50-120 words in winter, and 70-130 words in spring.

Data collection process

Ethics committee approval was obtained from Ordu University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee for the conduct of the research (Date: 29.04.2024, No: 2024/69). Since the participants of the study were students studying in a public school and their parents, research permission numbered E-18802389-604.01.01.01-102805909 was obtained from Ordu Provincial Directorate of National Education. The parental consent form and participation acceptance form were sent in writing to the parents of the students through the students. The scale titled "Parental Involvement in Home Literacy Activities" was also sent to the parents who agreed to participate in the study in writing through the students. The time to answer the scale was approximately 15 minutes. During the data collection process, the contact information of the researcher was shared with the participants, and it was stated that they could contact in case of any questions about the research.

In order to determine the levels of speed and accuracy components of students' fluent reading skills, firstly, the student was informed about the study in an appropriate way for his/her level and was asked verbally whether he/she wanted to participate in the study. Volunteer students were asked to read aloud for one minute on the determined text in the library of their own schools and audio recordings were taken. The audio recordings of each student were listened to twice and after being listened to by an expert, accurate reading and reading speed formulas were used. All data were recorded on the accurate reading and reading speed recording chart. All of the data obtained within the scope of the research were used in the analysis process.

Data analysis

To carry out the scoring of speed and accuracy components of fluent reading skills meticulously, audio recordings were taken during reading aloud. Thus, the recordings could be listened to and analysed repeatedly, and expert opinion was also obtained. All data were recorded on the recording chart created by using the formulas for accurate reading and reading speed. When calculating the mean of the scores obtained from the "Parental Involvement in Home Literacy

Activities" scale, 1.00-1.80 was interpreted as never, 1.81-2.60 as rarely, 2.61-3.40 as sometimes, 3.41-4.20 as mostly, and 4.21-5.00 as always (Çetinkaya, 2024). The analysis of the scale data applied to the participant parents was evaluated by the researcher and an expert academician in the field with the SPSS programme. While analysing all the data obtained in the study, descriptive statistics, normal distribution and correlation analyses were examined. Before the correlation analysis, it was checked whether the data conformed to normal distribution. Normally distributed data were analysed using simple linear correlation technique among parametric tests. The data were interpreted by taking Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient into consideration. Correlation coefficient provides detailed information about whether there is a relationship between variables, and if there is a relationship, we can obtain detailed information about its direction and level (Büyüköztürk, 2016).

Findings

The research findings related to the research problems are given in this section respectively. The data regarding the reading speed, accurate reading percentage and accurate reading levels of second grade primary school students are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Data on reading speed, accurate reading percentages and accurate reading levels

	Norm scores	N	\bar{X}	SS	Minimum score	Maximum score
Reading speed	70>medium>130	91	79,74	26,91	16	137
Accurate reading percentage	92>medium>98	91	95,7	3,41	86	100
Accurate reading level	1>medium>3	91	2,03	0,58	1	3

Table 2 shows the norm scores, averages, standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores of the participant students. According to the fluent reading norm table, the average number of words that should be read accurately in one minute in spring season at the second-grade level of primary school is given between 70 and 130 (Rasisnski, 2010). When the participant students' average scores are calculated, it is seen that the scores are within the norm score range. According to these data, it is seen that the reading speed levels ($\bar{X}=79,74$), accurate reading percentages ($\bar{X}=95,7$) and accurate reading levels ($\bar{X}=2,03$) of the second-grade students participating in the study are at an intermediate level considering the norm scores.

The data regarding the "Parental Involvement in Home Literacy Activities" scale answered by the parents of the students are given in Table 3.

Table 3 The data regarding parental involvement in home literacy activities

Scale categories	N	\bar{X}	SS	Minimum score	Maximum score
Communication with the teacher	91	4,31	0,74	2,00	5,00
Involvement in homework	91	3,87	0,71	2,00	5,00
Involvement in book reading activities	91	3,63	0,85	2,00	5,00
Involvement in various literacy activities	91	3,81	0,71	2,00	5,00
Involvement in literacy activities with digital tools	91	3,40	0,93	1,29	5,00
Total	91	3,81	0,61	2,00	5,00

As seen in Table 3, according to the responses of the parents to the "Parental Involvement in Home Literacy Activities" scale, the scores obtained from the five subcategories of the scale are close to each other. When the total mean scores are analysed, it is seen that they are close to the value of 'Sometimes'. It is observed that the category with the highest mean score is "Communication with the teacher" ($\bar{X}=4,31$) and the lowest score is in the category of

"Involvement in literacy activities with digital tools" ($\bar{X}=3,40$). Looking at the average score in general, it is seen that the average score is ($\bar{X}=3,81$).

To analyse whether there is a significant correlation between the speed and accuracy levels of fluent reading skills of second grade primary school students and level of parental involvement in home literacy activities, normality tests are examined first. Skewness and kurtosis values between -1 and +1 indicate a normal distribution (George & Mallery, 2010; Hair et al., 2013). When the results of the analyses regarding the suitability for normal distribution were examined, it was determined that the scores were normally distributed. According to these results, simple correlation analysis was used to determine the correlation between reading speed and percentage of accurate reading when the level of parental involvement in home literacy activities was controlled. Firstly, Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine whether there was a significant correlation between the average scores obtained from the scale of parental involvement in home literacy activities and the accurate reading level of second grade students' fluent reading skills. The data obtained are given in Table 4.

Table 4 The correlation between second grade students' accurate reading levels and parental involvement in home literacy activities

		Accurate reading
Average	Pearson r	0,055
	p	0,603
	n	91

According to Table 4, there is no significant correlation between second grade students' reading accuracy level, and parental involvement in home literacy activities ($p>0.005$). The variance explained by the variables on each other was 0,003%.

The Pearson Correlation analysis was used to determine whether there was a significant correlation between second grade students' reading speed and the average scores obtained from the scale of home literacy activities of their parents. The obtained data is given in Table 5.

Table 5 The correlation between second grade students' reading speed and parental involvement in home literacy activities

		Reading speed
Average	Pearson r	0,064
	p	0,546
	n	91

When Table 5 is examined, there is no significant correlation between reading speed, one of the fluent reading skills of second grade students, and parental involvement in home literacy activities ($p>0.005$). The variance explained by the variables on each other was 0,004%. 0,004% of the accurate reading level may be due to parental involvement in home literacy activities.

According to the data obtained, no significant correlation was found between second grade students' reading speed and accurate reading level, which are among the fluent reading components, and the level of parental involvement in home literacy activities.

Results and discussion

The development of fluent reading skills is one of the key factors affecting lifelong learning, academic and social life success (Çetinkaya, 2024; Keskin & Baştuğ, 2013). Studies conducted to improve fluent reading skills during literacy learning in primary school have increased students' achievement and motivation (Aktaş & Çankal, 2019; Aşıkcan, 2019).

When the literature is reviewed, there are many studies showings that parental involvement has a positive contribution to the literacy level of preschool and first grade students (Akyüz & Doğan, 2017; Bilaloğlu & Arnas, 2019; Cairney & Munsie, 1995; Çakıroğlu & Kuruyer, 2012; Çetinkaya, 2022; Gay et al., 2021; Gül, 2007; Leblebici et al., 2024; Reutzel et al., 2005). However, in this study, it was found that there was no significant correlation between parental involvement in home literacy activities and reading speed and reading accuracy, which are among the components of fluent reading. On the basis of this result, it can be concluded that there is a need for further research on parental involvement and reading fluency.

In their experimental study, Keleş and Doğan (2021) found that the Parent Supported Reading Intervention Programme was effective in improving the fluent reading and reading comprehension skills of second grade primary school students. In this study, it was found that there was no significant correlation between the level of parental involvement in home literacy activities and the level of reading speed and reading accuracy among fluent reading skills. Supporting this study, Silinskas et al. (2020) reported in their longitudinal study that home literacy decreased from preschool to the second-grade level of primary school.

As a result, in this study, it was determined that the reading speed and reading accuracy levels of second-grade primary school students were at an average level, and the level of parental involvement in home literacy activities was within the average score range. When the level of parental involvement in home literacy activities was controlled, it was found that there was no significant correlation between students' reading speed and reading accuracy. Although there was no significant correlation, it is noteworthy that students' reading speed, accurate reading levels and parental involvement in home literacy activities were within the average score range. In this respect, it can be said that the study needs to be conducted in larger sample groups with different socioeconomic levels.

In future studies, the relationship between the level of parental involvement in home literacy activities and fluent reading skills can be examined at all primary school levels through a longitudinal study. If a similar study is to include first grade students, it should be conducted towards the end of the second semester after the transition to reading and writing. In this study, reading speed and reading accuracy, which are the basic components of reading fluency, were analysed. In future studies, prosody can also be included among the variables. In addition, more contributions can be made to the field with new studies by utilising qualitative data.

Acknowledgements

Extended summary of this article was presented as an oral presentation at the International Congress of Integrated Social Research and Interdisciplinary Studies (ISRIS), held from May 30 to June 1, 2024, in Batumi, Georgia.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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