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The study of reading fluency and reading comprehension skills of primary school students whose mother tongue is different¹

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to analyse reading fluency and comprehension skills of different mother tongue of primary school students in the 4th grade. The effects of variables such as mother tongue and gender were examined in reading fluency and comprehension skills of different primary school students whose mother tongue is different. The working group of the study was selected by criterion sampling from the purposeful sampling methods among the students studying in primary schools in the province of Tuşba in Van. The working group consists of 201 female and 227 males, a total of 428 students. In the research, 'Narrative Text' collected data about reading fluency; 'Multidimensional Fluency Scale' measured reading prosody skills; and 'Reading Comprehension Test' was used to determine the reading comprehension levels. According to the findings, the students were generally divided into two groups: those whose mother tongue is Turkish, and those who is Kurdish. As a result of the research, it was revealed that the fluent reading and reading comprehension skills of primary school 4th grade students whose mother tongue is Turkish are generally higher than those whose mother tongue is Kurdish.

Keywords

Mother tongue; reading fluency; reading comprehension.

Introduction

Language is learned from their families and homes where individuals, the smallest unit of society, were born and grew up. The language learned at home is of great importance as it forms a basis in subsequent language development processes (Sahelkhkeirabadi, 2015). This language, which people learned from their families and the community they belonged to as a child, is defined as their mother tongue (Türkçe Sözlük TDK, 2005).



Literature

The mother tongue begins to take place as the language that forms the strongest links in the relations between individuals and society (Baker, 1996; Korkmaz, 1992). On the other hand, mother tongue should not be confused with the concept of official language. The mother tongue is mostly defined as the language from which other languages or dialects are derived (TDK Türkçe Sözlük, 2005). According to this explanation, the concept of official language means basic, essential; the word ‘mother’, in the concept of mother tongue, means mother or mom (Oruç, 2016).

The mother tongue can be used by both the parents of the child, or by one alone. This enables children to have bilingual languages at the same time, thus making them bilingual (Akinaso, 1993). This situation can be interpreted as a wealth in the society where the child lives. According to these explanations, it can be said that second language acquisition is inevitable today. For example, in multicultural countries, such as the United States, Canada, New Zealand, England and Australia, practices for second language acquisition are very common (Brown, 2013). These applications are especially provided with ESL (English Second Language) classes. In this context, second language acquisition is based on a number of approaches.

The first is a behavioural approach. There is an idea that learning will occur without intellectual and mental processes. In the behaviourist approach, repetitions, imitations and reinforced grammatical structures come to the fore in second language acquisition. If a person begins to acquire a second language today, he may probably face many methods of behavioural approach. The most common of these methods, especially in 1960, is the audio-linguistic method. In this method, tapes are played, and students are required to memorise the dialogue. In order not to lead to negative learning habits, immediate feedback is given to the errors and corrections are made immediately. If this intervention does not take place, it may become difficult to correct them in the next process (Klein, 1988; Hoque, 2019; VanPatten & Benati, 2010).

Another approach is an innatist/nativist approach. It is not a behaviour learned through imitation and conditioning. Therefore, language is learned based on processed rules produced through complex cognitive processes and mechanisms. These rules are based on universal grammar and generative grammar. According to this approach, a person has the capacity to learn a language in his/her mind. It is perhaps one of the most violent criticisms brought to behaviourism. There is a special language mechanism in the human mind, in which there are language principles and rules, in short, a grammatical structure. This allows them to choose many grammatical rules of the language spoken and heard in their environment. This mechanism is defined as a language acquisition tool. With the language acquisition tool, children gradually build the grammatical structure of their mother tongue (Klein, 1988; Suharno, 2010).

The last approach is the natural approach. This approach is mainly based on Krashen’s Second Language Acquisition Theory (Monitor Model). As students are gradually exposed to clear language inputs, they will automatically learn the structures and grammar of the second language. Speech also emerges as a result of this acquisition. According to Krashen, second language acquisition takes place in a natural order like the first language. Second language acquisition should not be grammar-weighted. Language is acquired and different from learning. In this model, affective filter and monitor concepts are important. The affective filter states that motivation, self-confidence and anxiety are effective in second language acquisition. Accordingly, a filter is activated in the second language acquisition according to teacher attitudes and inputs. The second language acquisition process improves depending on whether the filter is at the upper (upper) and lower (lower) levels. A second and low-level affective filter is required for language acquisition. The monitor is responsible for conscious learning. It is a control mechanism that controls the changes in the language of the second language or controls errors in the language. The less students apply to the monitor, the more successful it is. Monitor can be engaged in less, excessively and optimally (Krashen & Terrell, 2009; Dulay et al., 1982).

Bilingual children, who acquire the second language, are expected to have an advantage in their education life, as they have different language skills in both languages. But it should not be forgotten that sometimes there will be disadvantages due to being bilingual (Akerson, 2000; Baker, 2011; Association for Language Learning, www.all-languages.org.uk). In line with these explanations, it is

necessary to question the linguistic disadvantages of bilingual students whose mother tongue is different from the language of education. For example, students living in the Eastern Anatolia Region of Turkey whose mother tongue is Kurdish face linguistic disadvantages. These students sometimes have problems in their second language acquisition process when they start primary school because the language of education is Turkish not Kurdish. In fact, these students speak both Turkish and Kurdish in their daily lives before coming to school, so they know both languages. Namely, they are bilingual, but they have difficulties at school. They can't understand what they're reading. In addition, models and approaches to second language acquisition are almost rarely used in classrooms. That's why being bilingual turns into a nightmare for students whose mother tongue is Kurdish. Finally, serious reading problems arise in students whose mother tongue is Kurdish. These students need to teach Turkish more effectively. The regions where students whose mother tongue is Kurdish live are at a very low achieving level in national and international exams like PISA.

Pre-school education is very important in eliminating the disadvantages of students whose mother tongue is different from the language of education and ensuring their Turkish development (Gözüküçük, 2015; Neuman, 2000). However, pre-school education is not compulsory in Turkey. A systematic teaching of Turkish in Turkey begins with the primary school level (Aktay, 2015). Primary school is important in gaining reading skills and solving reading problems (Kavcar et al., 1997; Kolaç, 2008). Reading is not a simple process and skill. Reading is a multi-directional and multi-skill process, using prior knowledge based on effective communication between the author and the reader, and a process of establishing meaning in a regular environment in accordance with a suitable method and purpose. As it is understood from the definition, reading includes different dynamics and features (Akyol, 2005). The most important dynamics of reading are word recognition and understanding (Pang et al., 2003). Word recognition directly contributes to the increase in reading comprehension, willingness and fluency reading skills (Grabe, 2009). Rasinski (2004) also emphasises that fluency reading also acts as a bridge between word recognition and comprehension.

It can be said that there is a serious relationship between fluency reading and reading comprehension. It should be noted in the same way that fluency is a bridge to reading and affects reading comprehension (Rasinski, 2004; Spaul & Pretorius, 2016). If fluency reading is bad, students cannot understand what they are reading. In this context, if the fluency reading of students whose mother tongue is Kurdish is improved, they can understand what they read.

There are few studies that examine the problems of fluency reading and reading comprehension of primary school students whose mother tongue is Kurdish and they live in Turkey. However, there are many studies on second language acquisition abroad. Midraj & Midraj (2013) examined reading fluency and reading accuracy of bilingual students speaking Arabic and English. Hussien (2014) also examined the determining factors in reading fluency levels of monolingual and bilingual children in Egypt. Similarly, Piper et al. (2016) studied the relationship between reading fluency, reading comprehension, and bilingualism in an environment with multilingual students in Kenya. This study was done on this shortcoming in the literature.

Research methodology

Model of the research, participant

Education in public schools is carried out in Turkey in the Turkish language. However, besides the students whose language is Turkish, there are also students whose mother tongue is Kurdish. Students whose mother tongue is Kurdish also study Turkish. These bilingual students are known to experience problems, especially in reading. This study aims to determine the level of reading fluency and reading comprehension skills with different mother tongue of 4th grade primary school students. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Is there a significant difference between the reading rate, reading prosody, reading errors, reading accuracy skills and reading comprehension scores of 4th grade primary school students whose mother tongue is Turkish and Kurdish?

2. Does the reading rate, reading prosody, reading errors, reading accuracy and reading comprehension of 4th grade primary school students whose mother tongue is Turkish and Kurdish differ according to gender?

Quantitative research models of descriptive scanning were used in the research. The descriptive scanning model tries to describe and explain what events, objects, assets, institutions, groups and various fields are. At the same time, descriptive scanning models are suitable models for research aiming to describe a situation that exists in the past or still exists (Karasar, 2005).

The working group of the research consists of the 4th grade students in primary school studying in the province of Tuşba in Van. The working group of this research was selected from the purposive sample by way of criterion sampling used in primary schools in the district of Tuşba, Van in the spring term of 2017–2018 academic year. The sample consists of 428 students, 201 female and 227 male. Criterion sampling is defined as the study of all situations that provide an opportunity to clearly examine the purpose of the research with concrete indicators and meet an approach to identify participants with a set of predefined criteria (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). In selecting the working group of this research, a criterion was determined by the researcher. It is determined as a criterion that students whose mother tongue is different studying in these schools. Personal characteristics of the students selected by criterion sampling are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Personal Characteristics of 4th Grades Students with Mother Tongue Participating in the Study*

| Variable | | f | % |
|---------------|---------|-----|------|
| Mother Tongue | Turkish | 170 | 39.7 |
| | Kurdish | 258 | 60.3 |
| Gender | Female | 201 | 47.0 |
| | Male | 227 | 53.0 |

When Table 1 is examined, the native language of 39.7 percent of the students whose mother tongue is different at primary school of 4th grade students is Turkish, and 60.3 percent of the mother tongue is Kurdish. Fifty-three percent of them are male and 47 percent are female.

Data collection tools

Preparation of Student Information Form: In the student information form, questions are prepared to determine personal information such as gender, the most commonly used language in the family (Turkish, Kurdish), the students or the mother's knowledge of Kurdish, language learned from mother.

Data Collection Tool for Reading Fluency: In order to collect data about fluent reading, a narrative text named 'İpek in the Forest', whose validity and reliability was tested and prepared by Karasu et al. (2013), was selected. 'Multidimensional Fluency Scale' was used to measure reading prosody. The necessary permissions were obtained from the relevant researchers on the use of the scale adapted to Turkish by Yıldız et al. (2009).

Data Collection Tool for Reading Comprehension: In measuring reading comprehension, the text 'Market Place', which was taught in the 4th grade in the 2016–2017 academic year, was deemed appropriate. Ten experts' opinions were taken in the selection of the text and the creation of questions related to the text. In addition, pilot applications were carried out on 20 students whose mother tongue is Turkish and Kurdish.

Process of data collection

The text, 'İpek in the Forest', was read in a silent setting and in a minute. These readings were recorded with a voice recorder without the students' knowledge and attention. In the first stage, the researcher recorded the students' reading errors with the form in front of him. Reading errors such as skipping, adding, repeating, not being able to read at all, reversing, wrong reading and spelling were measured (Akyol, 2005; Harris & Sipay translated from Dağ, 2010).

In measuring reading accuracy, reading errors were subtracted from the total number of words the student read in one minute and the correct number of words was reached. The correct number of words divided by the total number of words and multiplying this result by 100 gives the reading accuracy percentage (Rasinski, 2004). In determining the reading rate, the number of misspelled words was deducted from the total number of words the student read in one minute. This value is considered the reading rate. In the evaluation of prosody, 'Multidimensional Fluency Scale' was used. In this scale, the highest score can be taken as 16 and the lowest score can be taken as four.

During the reading comprehension process, students were given approximately 25–30 minutes to read the texts and answer the questions. After this period, students were asked to answer three simple comprehension and two deep comprehension questions developed by the researcher to measure students' comprehension. In addition, 'The Running Record' adapted to Turkish by Akyol (2005) was used. For simple comprehension questions, two points are given for fully answered questions, one point for semi-answered questions and zero points for unanswered questions. In deep comprehension questions, three points are given for the questions that are answered in a complete and effective way; two points for those who have some deficiencies, but more than half of the expected answer; one point for the half answerers; and zero points for the questions that are never answered.

Data analysis

In the analysis of research data, SPSS 21.0 package program was used because it is a very strong statistical program, able to perform complex statistical operations (Pallant, trans. 2016). The data analysis was used to compare the averages of the two groups to determine whether there was a significant difference between them, the T-test from the parametric tests, the One-way Analysis of the One-Way (ANOVA) and the Mann Whitney U test, the Kruskal Wallis H test. Two-Step Cluster Analysis was used to determine the dominant languages of bilingual students.

Cluster analysis is among the multivariate statistical methods that are frequently used to classify the grouped data according to their similarities. With this analysis, the homogeneity of the clusters and the heterogeneity between the clusters are very high (Kalaycı, 2018). According to the findings obtained, students were generally divided into two groups. Descriptive features of the clusters are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Two-Step Cluster Analysis Results of Mother Tongue

| Variables | Cluster 1 (Kurdish) | Cluster 2 (Turkish) |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| Knowledge of Kurdish | Yes (93%) | No (100%) |
| The most spoken language in family | Kurdish (73.6%) | Turkish (100%) |
| The first language learned from mother | Kurdish (64.7%) | Turkish (100%) |
| The mother's knowledge of Kurdish | Yes (96.1%) | No (54.7%) |
| N* (428) | 258 | 170 |

* N: Total number of individuals in clusters

As can be seen in Table 2, students are divided into two groups. In the Two-Stage Cluster Analysis, the silhouette coefficient was taken into account when deciding on the number of clusters. When

comparing cluster numbers, the Silhouette coefficient takes values between -1 and +1 (Rousseeuw, 1987). As a result of this analysis, the silhouette coefficient was obtained as 0.60. This value indicates that the cluster differentiation and intra-cluster similarity is at a good level.

Findings

In this chapter, statistical analysis of the applied scales and tests, and findings related to sub-problems are included. In Table 3, the values are given related to reading rate, reading prosody, and reading error scores of the 4th grade primary school students whose mother tongue is Turkish and Kurdish.

Table 3. *T-Test Results of Reading Rate, Reading Prosody, Reading Errors and Reading Comprehension Scores of 4th Grade Primary School Students with Mother Tongue Turkish and Kurdish*

| Variable | Mother Tongue | n | \bar{x} | Ss | Sd | t | P |
|-----------------------|---------------|-----|-----------|-------|-----|--------|------|
| Reading Rate | Turkish | 170 | 98.84 | 26.89 | 426 | 7.792 | 000* |
| | Kurdish | 258 | 78.69 | 25.69 | | | |
| Reading Prosody | Turkish | 170 | 14.46 | 2.62 | 426 | 12.918 | 000* |
| | Kurdish | 258 | 10.32 | 3.58 | | | |
| Reading Errors | Turkish | 170 | 1.55 | .070 | 426 | -9.789 | 000* |
| | Kurdish | 258 | 2.50 | 1.12 | | | |
| Reading Comprehension | Turkish | 170 | 9.31 | 2.72 | 426 | 9.345 | 000* |
| | Kurdish | 258 | 6.35 | 3.48 | | | |

* p<.05

As seen in Table 3, the reading rate of 4th grade primary school students whose mother tongue is Turkish and Kurdish ($t(426) = 7.792$; $p < .05$), reading prosody ($t(426) = 12.918$; $p < .05$), there is a significant difference in reading errors ($t(426) = -9.789$; $p < .05$) and reading comprehension scores ($t(426) = 9.345$; $p < .05$). All the differences that arise are in favour of students whose mother tongue is Turkish.

In Table 4, the values of the reading accuracy scores of primary schools at 4th grades students whose mother tongue is Turkish and Kurdish are given regarding the arithmetic mean, standard deviation and Mann Whitney U-test.

Table 4. *Mann Whitney U-Test Results of 4th Grade Primary School Students with Mother Tongue Turkish and Kurdish Reading Scores*

| Variable | Mother Tongue | N | Rank Average | Rank Total | u | P |
|------------------|---------------|-----|--------------|------------|----------|-------|
| Reading Accuracy | Turkish | 170 | 281.26 | 47815.00 | 10580.00 | .000* |
| | Kurdish | 258 | 170.51 | 43991.00 | | |

Looking at Table 4, there is a significant difference in the reading accuracy scores of the 4th grade students whose mother tongue is Turkish and Kurdish ($U = 10580.00$; $P = .000$). When the rank averages are taken into consideration, it can be interpreted that the average reading rank (281.26) of 4th grade primary school students whose mother tongue is Turkish is higher than the reading accuracy rank average (170.51) of the students whose mother tongue is Kurdish.

The values of reading prosody, reading errors, reading accuracy and reading comprehension scores of 4th grade primary school students whose mother tongue is Turkish and Kurdish are given in Table 5, according to the gender.

Table 5. T-Test Results of Reading Rate, Reading Prosody, Reading Errors and Reading Comprehension Scores of 4th Grade Primary School Students with Mother Tongue Turkish and Kurdish According to Gender Variable

| Variable | Mother Tongue | Gender | n | \bar{x} | Ss | Sd | t | P |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------|-----|-----------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| Reading Rate | Turkish | Female | 83 | 102.55 | 27.13 | 1 68 | 1.776 | .079 |
| | | Male | 87 | 93.31 | 26.33 | | | |
| | Kurdish | Female | 118 | 80.82 | 25.90 | 256 | 1.220 | .223 |
| | | Male | 140 | 76.90 | 25.46 | | | |
| Reading Prosody | Turkish | Female | 83 | 15.07 | 1.93 | 1 68 | 3.018 | .003* |
| | | Male | 87 | 13.88 | 3.04 | | | |
| | Kurdish | Female | 118 | 10.90 | 3.68 | 256 | 2.394 | .017* |
| | | Male | 140 | 9.84 | 3.44 | | | |
| Reading Errors | Turkish | Female | 83 | 1.53 | . 575 | 1 68 | -.383 | .702 |
| | | Male | 87 | 1.57 | . 817 | | | |
| | Kurdish | Female | 118 | 2.44 | 1.122 | 256 | -.864 | .388 |
| | | Male | 140 | 2.56 | 1.129 | | | |
| Reading Comprehension | Turkish | Female | 83 | 9.73 | 2.45 | 1 68 | 1.992 | .048* |
| | | Male | 87 | 8.90 | 2.91 | | | |
| | Kurdish | Female | 118 | 6.67 | 3.38 | 256 | 1.379 | .169 |
| | | Male | 140 | 6.07 | 3.55 | | | |

* $p < .05$

Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference in reading rate ($t(168) = 1.776$; $p > .05$) and reading error scores of 4th grade primary school students whose mother tongue is Turkish ($t(168) = -.383$; $p > .05$). There is a significant difference in the reading prosody ($t(168) = 3.018$; $p < .05$) and reading comprehension ($t(168) = -1.992$; $p < .05$) scores of 4th grade primary school students whose mother tongue is Turkish, according to the gender variable. These differences are in favour of female students.

Reading rate according to gender variable of 4th grade primary school students whose mother tongue is Kurdish ($t(256) = 1.220$; $p > .05$); there is no significant difference in reading errors ($t(256) = -.864$; $p > .05$) and reading comprehension scores ($t(256) = 1.379$; $p > .05$). In addition to this, there is a significant difference in the reading prosody scores of 4th grade primary school students whose mother tongue is Kurdish according to gender variable ($t(256) = 2.394$; $p < .05$). This result is in favour of female students.

In Table 6, the values of the reading accuracy scores of primary school 4th grades students whose mother tongue is Turkish and Kurdish regarding the arithmetic average, standard deviation and Mann Whitney U-test according to gender variable are given.

Table 6. *Mann-Whitney U-Test Results According to the Gender Variable of Reading Accuracy Scores of 4th Grade Primary School Students with Mother Tongue Turkish and Kurdish*

| Variable | Gender | N | Rank Average | Rank Total | u | P |
|-----------------------|--------|-----|--------------|------------|----------|------|
| Mother Tongue Turkish | Kız | 83 | 88.18 | 7319.00 | 3388.000 | .482 |
| | Erkek | 87 | 82.94 | 7216.00 | | |
| Mother Tongue Kurdish | Kız | 118 | 135.33 | 15968.50 | 7572.500 | .249 |
| | Erkek | 140 | 124.59 | 17442.50 | | |

When Table 6 is analysed, it is seen that there is no significant difference in the reading accuracy scores of 4th grade primary school students whose mother tongue is Turkish ($U = 3388.000$; $P = .482$). Similarly, there is no significant difference in the reading accuracy scores of 4th grade primary school students whose mother tongue is Kurdish according to gender ($U = 7572.500$; $P = .249$).

Results and discussion

It is concluded that the reading rate scores of 4th grade primary school students, whose mother tongue is Turkish, that is monolingual, are higher than the students whose mother tongue is Kurdish, that is bilingual. This result appears to be consistent with the results of the studies in the literature (Pretorius & Spaull, 2016; Gauvin & Hulstijn, 2010). However, it should be noted that there are also studies showing that the reading rate of bilingual students is better than that of monolingual students (Avila & Fleury, 2015; Fujita & Yamashita, 2014; Yeganeh, 2013).

It is concluded that gender is not decisive in reading rate on students whose mother tongue is Turkish, that is, bilingual, in 4th grade students at primary school. This result is consistent with various research results (Baştuğ, 2012; Estrada, 2016; Quinn & Wagner, 2013; Tunstad, 2013; Vlachos & Papadimitriou, 2015).

It is seen that the 4th grade primary school students whose mother tongue is Turkish have higher prosody scores than the mother tongue students whose tongue is Kurdish. This situation is supported by the results of some research (Pae & Sevcik, 2011; Spaull & Pretorius, 2016).

Considering the reading prosody scores of the 4th grade primary school students whose mother tongue is Turkish, that is bilingual, it is seen that girls are more successful than boys. The results of the research support this result (Wang, et al., 2011; Wanzek et al., 2013). In some studies, it was concluded that gender did not make a significant difference on prosody scores (Baştuğ, 2012; Estrada, 2016; Keskin, 2012; Morris, 2013).

It was concluded that the bilingual female students whose mother tongue is Kurdish had higher reading prosody scores than the reading prosody scores of male students. In this study, Hussien (2014) concluded that both bilingual girl's and boy's prosody scores are quite high.

It was concluded that monolingual students, whose mother tongue is Turkish, are lower in reading errors. In other words, it can be said that more mistakes are made during reading in bilingual students. According to the results of some studies, it was revealed that monolingual students made more reading errors (Bellocchi et al., 2017; Fulton, 2012; Jalalipour et al., 2018).

It is concluded that female and male students whose mother tongue is Turkish have similar reading errors. Some research results also revealed that female students made less reading errors (Jalalipour et al., 2018; Quinn & Wagner, 2013; Uusen & Mürsepp, 2012).

It was concluded that the reading errors of female and male students whose mother tongue is Kurdish are similar. This result is supported by the results of other studies (Kim et al., 2016; Sarı, 2001). However, the results of some studies show that bilingual female students make fewer reading errors (Aydn & Gün, 2018; Jalalipour et al., 2017).

It is seen that the reading accuracy scores of the students whose mother tongue is Turkish, that is bilingual, are higher than the reading accuracy points of the students whose mother tongue is Kurdish.

The results obtained from the research in the literature also support this situation (Ibrahim et al., 2014; Hussien, 2014; Jalalipour et al., 2017).

It was concluded that the reading accuracy scores of 4th grade female primary school students whose mother tongue is Turkish, that is, bilingual, and the reading accuracy scores of male students are similar. Similar results have been achieved in other studies in this area (Baştuğ, 2012; Kaya & Doğan, 2016; Keskin, 2012). However, in some studies, it was concluded that the reading accuracy scores of female students were better (Jalalipour et al., 2017).

It was concluded that the reading accuracy scores of the bilingual female students whose native language is Kurdish and the reading accuracy scores of male students are similar. This result is also consistent with the test of various studies (Jalalipour et al., 2017; Piper & Zuilkowskix, 2015). On the other hand, it should be noted that there are also other studies that show bilingual female students' reading rate is higher (Spaull & Pretorius, 2016; Jorgensen, 2003).

It was concluded that the comprehension scores of the monolingual students, whose mother tongue is Turkish, are higher than the comprehension points of bilingual students whose mother tongue is Kurdish. Similar results were found in other studies (Bayat, 2017; Chen et al., 2012; Gorjian & Sayyadian, 2017; Hussien, 2014; Proctor, et al., 2005). Contrary to the conclusion from this research, it should be emphasised that there are studies showing that bilingual students are more successful in reading comprehension than monolingual students (Samadi & Maghsoudi, 2013; Yeganeh & Malekzadeh, 2015).

It is known that the reading comprehension scores of the bilingual 4th grade female students at primary school whose mother tongue is Turkish are higher than the reading comprehension scores of male students. This result is supported by other research (Brantmeier, 2003; Cekiso, 2016; Chavez, 2001; Gorjian & Sayyadian, 2017; Shahmohammadi, 2015). On the contrary, Bugel and Buunk (1996) concluded that boys' reading comprehension scores are higher.

It was concluded that the comprehension scores of female students whose native language is Kurdish and the comprehension scores of male students are similar. This situation is consistent with the results obtained from some research (Buttar, 1997; Pae, 2004). It should be noted that there are also studies concluding that bilingual female students are more successful in reading comprehension (Bugel & Buunk, 1996; Gorjian & Sayyadian, 2017; Jalalipour et al., 2017; Samadi & Maghsoudi, 2013).

Recommendations for future researchers

Teachers who will be appointed to regions with bilingual students, especially through post-graduate education, can be provided with specialisation in reading expertise and effective Turkish teaching. It can be said that the textbooks available at primary school level compel bilingual students. Unlike other regions of Turkey, the two languages of different activities for the main language of instruction for students to develop and accelerate the region of the original teaching materials, textbooks should be developed appropriately. Unfortunately, although bilingual students study Turkish at school and speak the Turkish language, they speak mainly Kurdish in their homes because many parents know and speak Kurdish better. Namely, their mother tongue is Kurdish. That's why different languages are spoken at home and at school. This creates negative results. Projects should be developed to make students' parents part of the educational process and raise their awareness at home. An action research can be carried out to solve the problems in reading fluency and reading comprehension experienced by the students whose mother tongue is Kurdish.

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ⁱ This study was produced from a doctoral dissertation of the same name.