

## The Effect of Text Types on Reading Comprehension

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Aim of this study, is to determine the effect of narrative and informative text types on Reading Comprehension levels of Primary Education 4th and 5th grade students. Application was fulfilled in 2011-2012 academic year with 134 students in a primary education school in Province Kırşehir. Reading comprehension tests prepared according to text types were used as data collection tool of the study. T-Test was used for associated samples when comparing reading comprehension marks of the students according to text types and T-test was used for unrelated samples when comparing reading comprehension marks of the students according to sex. In Comparisons, significance level is adopted as .05. As a result of the study it is determined that students understand narrative texts better than informative texts they read. Furthermore there is a significant difference in favour of female students between the narrative texts reading comprehension marks of male and female students for all tests except from 5th grade informative texts.

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### Introduction

Reading; is a very complex mental activity that contains vision, dubbing, thought, and rendition (Çelenk, 2001: 77). According to Akyol (2006:29) Reading is a dynamic inferring process that makes communication between writer and reader essential. Reading skill means students' reading texts they encounter in their daily lives properly and fluently by using right methods (Özbay, 2006: 5).

Complete and accurate understanding; is being comprehended the information, feeling and thoughts that are wished to be conveyed to us much the same without causing any misunderstanding and without remaining any suspicious point, with all aspects. (Kavcar, Oğuzkan and Sever, 1997). Understanding is a way of finding the meaning of text, thinking over it, research the causes, inferring, and assessing (Güneş, 2000: 59). Understanding helps student to focus on meaning and using the expression in a proper way in order to improve comprehension skill (Griffith and Rasinski, 2004).

According to, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson (1985), reading comprehension; is the act of inference from written text based on complex process of the various source of information related to each other. (Referred. Kingham, 2003). Reading comprehension is having infer and configure spontaneously with reading (Reuzzel, Smith and Fawson, 2005). Reading comprehension depends on reader's experience and knowledge about the language, sentence structure and repetition of reading text, difficulty and length of the reading text (Kintsch and Kozminki, 1977; Lipson and Wixson, 1991; Diakidoy, Stylianou, Karefillidou and

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Papageorgiou, 2005).

Reading comprehension is the process of meaning construction as a result of blending content and message of the text with the readers existing knowledge and skills during reader text interaction (Pardo, (2004). Meaning configuration, is described as student's reading the text, selecting some information from the text in the light of preliminary information, reinterpreting and re-configuring them in his mind by combining them with the preliminary information (Güneş, 2007). While the view of the correct pronunciation of the words mentioned in the text is the pre-condition of comprehension was common previously in recent years, all the scientific studies show that comprehension is a complex process based on the interaction between reader, text, teacher and learning environment( Flynt and Cooter, 1996).

Calfee and Drum indicates that the power of reading comprehension consists of three components. These are interpretation of reading material (text), the reader and the text by the reader (Referred: Demirel, 2006). For Readers text to understand the differences often caused from insufficiencies seen in the analysis of the words of the text. (Torgesen, Rashotte, Alexander, Alexander and MacPhee, 2003).

Karatay (2007: 17), stated that the text is a meaningful, logical and related structure composed of all structures based on language. The text is to express an opinion or experience in writing (Hartman and Hartman, 1996). Everything which is the subject of reading, has a narrative integrity and is written is a text (Özdemir, 1983: 32; İşeri, 1998: 11; Günay, 2003: 35). According to some researchers every object established meaning from itself is a text. It is not possible to limit the text, only in writing. A novel, a picture, thought, sculpture, mathematical equation .They all can be a text. (Short, 1992: 315; Lenski, 1998: 76, Siegel, 1984, Rowe, 1987, Refereed: Akyol: 2008: 712).

According to Kavcar and Oğuzkan (1999: 23) texts types are species that take place in literature and writings that have literary value. texts take place In Turkish Subject curriculum and textbooks prepared in accordance with these curriculum were classified as poetry, informative and narrative texts. Informative text, is the text of which function is to submit information and messages can be used in real life situation and be actualized (Özdemir, 1983: 36). Narrative texts, are life quality texts that improves life more than knowledge (Güneş, 2002: 88). Both the narrative and descriptive text has a hierarchical structure. There are definition, rank, ranking, cause-effect relationships, problem / solution, and comparison among the basic structural patterns (Hall; Sabey and McClellan, 2005: 211).

Informative text is written to give readers new information (Graesser, Golding and Long, 1991; Bakken and Whedon, 2002; Weaver and Kintsch, 1991). Wixom and Peters (1987), emphasize that informative texts are high-level texts of the structural aspects (Referred: Akyol, 2006: 182). Teaching and understanding informative texts are more difficult than narrative texts because of their structure (Presley, 2000; Saenz and Funchs, 2002; Akyol, 2008; Sözer and Aksan, 2008). Informative texts deal with more abstract concepts in the respect of subject. According to Singer, Harkness, and Stewart (1997), the more complex and abstract are the informative texts and the come linguistic structure is used the more difficulty the readers have in comprehension.

As a literary type, stories are narrative writings telling events that have been or can be more realistic than fairy tale, shorter than the novel (Arıcı, 2007: 148). In narrative texts that primary education age children take more pleasure while reading there is a structure quite consistent, predictable and based on cause-effect relationship in the text ( Dönmez and Yazıcı,

2006; Sözer and Aksan, 2008).

According to researches, stories, are the most natural and powerful elements in storing experience-based information in the mind and identifying it. (Chen, Fertig and Wood, 2003; McEwan and Egan: 1995). Stories also allow development of children in terms of personality language use. Personally the child provides development of his feelings by establishing a relationship with the hero of the story; it has a guiding function in children's discovering the life and learning ways to live. It contributes to the development of native language. According to Aytas (2006), providing the child's training through story is the most direct way to give them the intended behaviour. Therefore, the story should be used in every stage of the child's education

The main objective of mother tongue education is to give the skills of understanding that they read and listen completely and accurately; explaining their feelings thoughts and dreams completely and accurately in accordance with certain purposes. Turkish language teaching is a language teaching that is carried out based on making sense and analysing of the texts. Therefore, texts are the major goal-oriented tools in Turkish language teaching. For giving students pleasure and habit of reading and developing their reading comprehension skills texts that will be presented them in primary education desks have a great significance. Ozbay (2002: 539) emphasizes that one of the main reasons of Turkish's not being able to be taught to the students properly is deficiencies in text selection.

Therefore it is believed in giving student a successful reading and reading comprehension skills and teaching them Turkish Language properly that it is important to examine reading skill according to the text types. In this study it is tried to be presented reading comprehension levels of fourth and fifth grade elementary school students according to narrative and informative text types. It is believed that research results will guide to the teachers in choosing the right text for students, textbook writers, publishers, other concerned ones and researchers who will do researches in this field for improving reading comprehension skills of students and giving them reading tastes and habits.

### ***Aim of the Study***

In this study it is aimed to determine whether there is a significant difference between the reading comprehension skills of the fourth and fifth grade elementary school students according to narrative and informative texts. Within the framework of this general purpose the following questions were tried to be answered:

- (1) Is there a significant difference between the narrative and informative texts comprehension levels of Elementary fourth grade students?
- (2) Does elementary fourth grade students' comprehension level of narrative and informative texts change according to their gender?
- (3) Is there a significant difference between the narrative and informative texts comprehension levels of Elementary fifth grade students?
- (4) Does elementary fifth grade students' comprehension level of narrative and informative texts change according to their gender?

### **Method**

The research is a descriptive study in which scanning model is used. Scanning model is the research approach which aims to describe a situation that was available in the past or is still available as it is. In descriptive studies the event or people which are the subject of

research, are tried to be described within their own conditions and in order to pass a general judgment on universe that is composed of a large number of elements scanning on the whole universe or a group of example or sample is done (Johnson, 2002: 77).

### ***Working Group***

Students participated in the study are determined as totally 134 student who are studying in 2 branches of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades for each of Cacabey Elementary School in Kırşehir Province Center District. In the study, two branches of the fourth class in a total of 60 students and two branches of the fifth-class in a total of 74 students compose the working group. 55 % of the fourth grade students are female students and, 45 % of the fourth grade students are male students. 52,7 % of the fifth grade students are female students and, 47,3 % of the fifth grade students are male students .

### ***Data Collection Tools***

Research data has been obtained through eight "Reading Comprehension Tests" that are composed of 25 question, multiple choice (four choices), of 4 of which for fourth grade (about 2 pieces narrative text type, and 2 pieces informative text type) and of 4 of which for fifth grade (about 2 pieces narrative text type, and 2 pieces informative text type) issued by the researcher. In order to create reading comprehension tests first of all 39 acquirements about Reading Comprehension in fourth grades take place in Elementary School Turkish Program (MOE, 2005: 92-94) and 41 acquirements (MOE, 2005: 116-117) about Reading Comprehension in fifth grades were determined. It is paid attention that questions take place in reading comprehension may question these acquirements. In order to compensate the difficulty level of the texts take place in narrative and informative tests, word, sentence and paragraph lengths has been considered. While questions were being determined opinions of two Turkish teachers and two classroom teachers were taken in the aspects of appropriateness of the level of the students and clearness.

All of the eight separate Reading comprehension tests were firstly created as 40 questions, after they were reorganized by considering expert opinion they were applied as 30 questions to 30 student for each of 4-C and 5- classrooms of Cacabey Primary Education School that were expect from the samples of working group. According to the results of the application questions with low item difficulty and discriminant were corrected and final form of the test was given by reducing the assessment instrument to 25 questions. As a result of Kuder Richardson-20 statistical processes; Fourth Grades Narrative Test-1 KR-20 reliability coefficient was counted as .83, of Test 2 was counted as .80, Fifth Grades Narrative Test-1 KR-20 reliability coefficient was counted as .78, of Test 2 was counted as .84;

Fourth Grades Informative Test-1 KR-20 reliability coefficient was counted as .86, of Test 2 was counted as .78; Fifth Grades Informative Test-1 KR-20 reliability coefficient was counted as .76, of Test 2 was counted as .84; thus all tests were considered as ready to for application.

### ***Data Collection***

Final forms of reading comprehension tests, was applied to students in the study group in four days under the supervision of the researchers. *First day "Narrative Test-1 was applied to Fourth Grades" and "Narrative Test-1 was applied to Fifth Grades"; Second day "Informative Test-1 was applied to Fourth Grades" and "Informative Test-1 was applied to Fifth Grades". In the same way Third day "Narrative Test-2 was applied to Fourth Grades"*

and "Narrative Test-2 was applied to Fifth Grades"; Fourth day "Informative Test-2 was applied to Fourth Grades" and "Informative Test-2 was applied to Fifth Grades". Right and wrong answers of each student's was determined, correction formula was applied. Arithmetic mean of the marks that Students got from first and second measurement in both types of texts formed the accurate data.

### Analysis of Data

In this study, in analysis of data collected about the marks that 4 and 5 grade students got from the reading comprehension texts about narrative and informative text types mean, percentage, frequency and standard deviation techniques were used. T-Test was used for associated samples when comparing reading comprehension marks of the students according to text types and T-test was used for unrelated samples when comparing reading comprehension marks of the students according to sex. Statistics were performed by using SPSS software package in computer environment. In Comparisons, critical significance level is adopted as .05

### Findings

At this part the findings gathered from comparison of success scores of Secondary school 4th and 5th grade students related to comprehension level while reading narrative and informative text types. Table- 1, below, represents the comparison of comprehension test scores of 4th grade students according to text types.

**Table 1:** T-Test results from comparison of comprehension test scores of 4th grade students while reading narrative and informative texts

Text Type	N	$\bar{X}$	S	Sd	t	p
Narrative Text	60	17.89	543.33	59	4.77	.000
Informative Text	60	13.03	567.77			

P < 0.05

According to Table- 1 which compares the comprehension test scores of students while reading narrative and informative texts, there is a meaningful difference between reading comprehension scores of students ( $t_{(59)} = 4.77$  and  $p < .05$ ). Arithmetic mean of narrative text comprehension scores of students ( $\bar{X} = 17,89$ ) is higher than arithmetic mean of informative text comprehension scores ( $\bar{X} = 13,03$ )

**Table 2:** T-Test results from comparison of comprehension test scores of 5th grade students while reading narrative and informative texts

Text Type	N	$\bar{X}$	S	Sd	t	p
Narrative Text	74	17.34	470.70	72	2.72	.007
Informative Text	74	15.06	547.81			

P < 0.05

According to the findings gathered from the comparison of comprehension test scores of the 5th grade students while reading narrative and informative texts, there is a meaningful difference between reading comprehension scores of students ( $t_{(72)} = 2.72$  and  $p < .05$ ). Arithmetic mean of narrative text comprehension scores of 5th grade students is ( $\bar{X} = 17.34$ ) and the arithmetic mean of informative text comprehension scores is ( $\bar{X} = 15.06$ ) It is possible to interpret this situation that 5th grade students comprehend narrative texts better than informative texts.

**Table 3:** T-Test results from comparison of narrative text comprehension test scores of 4th and 5th grade students according to gender

Group	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	S	Sd	t	p
4th Grade	Female	33	19.10	380.60	59	2.27	0.027
	Male	27	16.01	679.03			
5th Grade	Female	39	18.40	368.31	72	2.07	0.042
	Male	35	16.19	543.23			

P < 0.05

As it can be understood from the table values too, there is a meaningful difference between the 4th grade male and female students' narrative text comprehension in favour of girls ( $t_{(59)} = 2.27$  and  $p < .05$ ). Female students answered approximately 19.1 of comprehension tests composed of 25 questions and male students answered 16.01 of the questions. (After the correction formula is applied)

There is a meaningful difference between the 5th grade male and female students' narrative text comprehension in favour of girls ( $t(72) = 2.07$  and  $p < .05$ ). Female students answered approximately 18.4 of comprehension tests composed of 25 questions while male students answered 16.19 of the questions. It can be interpreted that 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade female students comprehend narrative texts better than the male students.

**Table 4:** T-Test results from comparison of informative text comprehension test scores of 4th and 5th grade students according to gender

Group	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	S	Sd	t	p
4th Grade	Female	33	14.83	547.90	59	2.04	0.046
	Male	27	11.77	576.28			
5th Grade	Female	39	15.08	559.70	72	0.13	0.901
	Male	35	15.25	567.68			

4th Grade; P < 0.05 and 5th Grade; P > 0.05

When Table-5 which includes *comparison of informative text comprehension test scores of 4th and 5th grade students according to gender* is examined there is a meaningful difference between the 4th grade male and female students' informative text comprehension in favour of girls ( $t_{(59)} = 2.04$  and  $p < .05$ ). Female students of 4th grade correctly answered approximately 14.83 of comprehension tests composed of 25 questions and male students correctly answered 11.7 of the questions.

There is not a meaningful difference between the informative text comprehension scores of 5<sup>th</sup> grade female and male students ( $t(72) = 0.13$  and  $p > .05$ ). Comprehension scores of 5<sup>th</sup> grade female and male students is not different approximately equal even ( $\bar{X}$  female = 15.08 and  $\bar{X}$  male = 15.25).

### Results and Discussion

As a result of comparison of narrative and informational texts comprehension test scores of fourth grade students a significant difference was found between students' reading comprehension scores. It is understood that students understand narrative texts better than informative texts they read

As a result of comparison of narrative and informative texts comprehension test scores of fifth grade students a significant difference was found between students' reading comprehension scores. Fifth grade students understand narrative texts better than informative texts they read.

There is a significant difference in favour of female students between the narrative texts reading comprehension marks of fourth grade male and female students. Female students gave on average, 19.1 right answers, while male students 16.1 gave on average, 19.1 right answers from comprehension tests of 25 questions.

There is a significant difference in favour of female students between the narrative texts reading comprehension marks of fifth grade male and female students. Female students gave on average, 18.4 right answers, while male students 16.19 gave on average, 19.1 right answers from comprehension tests of 25 questions. This is interpreted as fourth and fifth grade female students' reading comprehension levels in narrative texts are better than male students'.

There is a significant difference in favour of female students between the informative texts reading comprehension marks of fourth grade male and female students. However, the same situation does not apply to fifth-grades. There isn't a significant difference between the informative texts reading comprehension marks of fifth grade male and female students.

In this study that is conducted in order to determine whether there is significant difference between Elementary fourth and fifth grade students' reading comprehension skills in narrative and informative texts; it is determined that reading comprehension levels of both fourth and fifth grade students' changes significantly in accordance with different text types. It is observed that students understand narrative texts better than informative texts in both grade levels. Therefore, it has been concluded that text type is an important factor in reading comprehension for elementary school students.

Understanding Informative texts is more about formal education and product of experience (Lehto and Anttilla, 2003). For this reason, primary school students who haven't reached full maturity in terms of language and thought, and who are in concrete operational period due to limited cognitive development and experiences, may have difficulties in comprehension of informative texts. In addition, students are told fairy tales and stories from infancy periods by their parents. Therefore, they have general information about these text types. According to Graesser, Golding and Long, (1991), elementary school students' better understanding the story type texts is related to their language acquisition. Akyol (2008), states that when studies on the distribution of the tests in textbooks, are examined in general, most of 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade-level texts at the level are narrative level, they are in informative level in fourth and fifth grade, and this complies with the rise in grade level.

Similar results with the results achieved in this study were obtained in similar studies conducted on reading and listening comprehension in different text types. For example, Yıldırım, Yıldız, Ates, and Rasinski (2010), exposed that narrative text is understood better than informative text in both reading and listening in their study to determine the levels of fifth grade students' reading and listening comprehension levels according to text type. Temizyürek (2008), measured reading comprehension skills of eight grade students in elementary according to fictional and informative texts on 140 students that he took in his sample group. At the end of the study it was found that eighth grade students understand fictional texts they read better than instructive texts

Sidekli (2005) performed a study with fifth grade elementary school students in order to determine whether there is a significant difference in their reading comprehension skills in terms of narrative text and informative text types. As a result of the study, it was found that fifth grade students understood narrative texts better. In the same way Yıldız (2008) identified that fifth grade students understand narrative type texts better than informative texts. Lehto

and Abttila (2003) made a research with second, fourth and sixth grade students. As a result, they exposed that narrative text type was understood better than informative text types in all three grades level. In the same way Diakidoy and others (2005) also obtained the result that the second, fourth, sixth and eighth grade students understand narrative texts better than informative texts for their reading comprehension skills as well as writing skills.

It is determined in this study that as a result of comparison of test scores by sex fourth and fifth grade female students understand narrative texts they read better than male students. It is determined in this study that as a result of comparison of test scores by sex fourth grade female students understand informative texts they read better than male students. However, the same situation does not apply to fifth-grades Fifth grade male and female students have a very close level in understanding informative texts they read.

It is possible to find studies in literature about gender's creating differences or not creating effective results on in children's reading comprehension skills. For example Temizyürek (2008) and Sidekli (2005), Bray and Baron (2004) found in their studies that female students are in a better level than male students in reading comprehension. In addition, Falcon (2009), Yıldız (2008), Yılmaz (2006) and Avcıoğlu (2000) determined in their studies that gender doesn't create any effective results on children's reading comprehension skills.

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