



Anxiety and Comprehension in Reading: I Can not Find the Main Idea, My Teacher! *

Yasemin Kuşdemir¹, Mehmet Katrancı²

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between primary school 4th grade students' reading comprehension and finding main idea skills and reading anxiety. The research was designed as relational survey method. The study group of the research consists of 211 students who are participated from 9 public primary schools that participated in the study as volunteers in Kırıkkale province. In the collection of the data, *personal information form*, *Reading Comprehension Test* and *Reading Anxiety Scale* were used. The data of the study were collected between February and April of the spring term of 2014-2015 academic year. First, it was investigated whether the data exhibit a normal distribution. In the analysis of the data showing a normal distribution, parametric tests (independent samples t-test) and in the analysis of the data not showing a normal distribution, non-parametric tests (Kruskal Wallis, Mann-Whitney U, Spearman correlation analysis) were employed. The analyses of the data revealed that reading comprehension of the participants of the study was found to be medium and their reading anxiety level was found to be low. The reading comprehension scores of the participants do not vary depending on gender. On the other hand, the boys' reading anxiety mean level was found to be higher than that of the girls. The students' reading comprehension scores were found to be varying significantly depending on library membership. The students having a library membership have higher scores of reading comprehension than those not having a library membership. With increasing level of education of the parents, the students' reading comprehension scores were found to be increasing. Low level negative and significant correlation was found between reading anxiety and Turkish language course academic achievement. Moreover, there is a weak negative and significant correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension. Finally, it was found that the participants are not competent enough to detect the main idea in narrative and informative texts, high majority of the students could not write a main idea at all or they wrote false/incomplete main ideas.

Keywords

Reading comprehension
Reading anxiety
Main idea

Article Info

Received: 07.07.2015
Accepted: 08.12.2015
Online Published: 17.02.2016

DOI: 10.15390/EB.2016.4951

* Part of this study was presented in 14th USOS Symposium.

¹ Kırıkkale University, Education Faculty, Department of Elementary Education, Turkey, yaseminakz@gmail.com

² Kırıkkale University, Education Faculty, Department of Elementary Education, Turkey, mtkatranci@gmail.com

Introduction

Reading is a basic linguistic skill and mental activity involving many more components apart from the recognition of words placed in lines by moving our eyes on a written text. The main expected outcome of this mental activity is the comprehension of a given text. There is a purpose, a message, an idea or a gist explicitly or implicitly edited/configured into the text by the author. This main idea can be over the lines or between the lines. What is expected from a good reader is to discover the main idea or gist of a given text. The focus of each act of reading must be comprehension and when the reading is finished, the gist must have been derived and new meanings have been constructed.

Reading comprehension is construction of the meaning and deduction of the gist as a result of engagement in and interaction with the written language (Sweet & Snow, 2002, p. 25). Reading is the ordering of what is kept in mind and comprehension is the construction, integration and sequencing of a given text with the help of any information loaded into mind (culture, societal information, sign-message association, rules of a language, competence etc.). This sequencing takes place in the form of relating signs to each other and ordering in mind (Günay, 2008, p. 11). During the process of reading comprehension, recognition of words, activation of prior information, recognition of text genre, motivation, fluent reading, making guesses and ability to distinguish the important ideas are important elements determining the success (Tompkins, 2006, p. 223).

What is expected from a good reader is to reach the gist that is generally called the main idea. The main idea is the basic opinion to be conveyed in a text, a speech or a film. Asking students to find the main idea means providing guidance for them to explain the content of a text and to encourage them to read the text again (Lapp, Fisher, & Grant 2008, p. 377). For effective comprehension, it is not important how many assumptions can be derived from the text. What is important is to differentiate important ideas from unimportant ones (Kintsch & Kintsch, 2005, p. 72). During the main idea detection period, one of the most important processes is monitoring and evaluation of comprehension – accuracy of the main idea derived. Evaluation of reading comprehension may be the most important dimension of reading comprehension because through monitoring and evaluation, it can be determined whether the goal has been achieved, what kinds of problems have been encountered during the process and what can be done to eliminate these problems (Çetinkaya, Ateş, & Yıldırım, 2011, p. 190).

For a healthy and accurate reading process to occur, the reader should have required talents and skills. Physical (seeing, hearing, speaking etc.) abilities, mental abilities (attention, cognition, intelligence etc.) and psychological abilities (competency, compliance, respect, affection, confidence etc.) are the fundamental requirements to be a good reader. During the process of reading, physical traits can be visible but physiological characteristics are generally difficult to observe. Emotional reactions of the reader are believed to affect the reading process. Some behaviors demonstrated by the reader during reading can give us some clues about this. They can emerge as negative emotional states such as avoiding reading, postponing reading, lack of willingness to read, getting fed up with reading and feeling unnecessarily excited. One of these negative emotional reactions occurring during reading is anxiety. Anxiety manifests itself as worry and timid behaviors and in general negatively affects academic life as well as daily life. Intensity and length of a given text may result in children's developing emotions towards reading such as anxiety and fear. Rather than positive experiences negative – harmful – experiences are effective in the arousal of this emotion. Thus, individuals can regard themselves as inadequate in the management of negatively perceived incidences (Bandura, 1997, as cited in Mills, Pajares, & Herron, 2006, p. 278). A negative reaction of an individual towards reading, reading anxiety appears as uneasiness, excitement and fear felt by the reader. The reader is afraid of reading erroneously and being unsuccessful. During a reading full of anxiety, the reader may

display physical or cognitive reactions such as sweating, shaking, faster breathing, sense of helplessness, lack of confidence, shyness and fright. Particularly during loud reading activities performed in a crowded environment like the class, it is more probable for students to experience such problems. According to socio cognitive theory, performing any activity may play a key role in the arousal of anxiety. Especially performance of loud reading may result in anxiety in some children. Even adults may experience such fears. This fear is coupled with the anxiety of giving speech in front of audience in children thinking that they will be evaluated by their teacher and peers when loud reading is performed (Jalongo & Hirsh, 2010, p. 434). Researches indicate that anxiety is not compatible with the reader's cognitive structure who has the responsibility for getting the information in the text and this situation hinder comprehension. (Zin & Rafik-Galea, 2010, p. 41).

Children need to feel secure and unworried to be able to learn. Reading comprehension is of vital importance for all learning processes. This process entails small and orderly steps skillfully managed. One student's feeling unsuccessful in comprehending a text may bring about various problems in his/her future career and schooling (Thompson, 2007, p. 19).

Purpose of the Study

Determining the relationship between anxiety and reading comprehension skills is important to shed light on the psychological dimension of reading. With considering this issue, the primary purpose of the study was to examine analyze the relationship between primary school 4th grade students' reading comprehension and finding main idea skills and their reading anxiety. In line with this overall aim, the research questions of the study were as follows:

- What is the level of primary school 4th grade students' reading anxiety and reading comprehension?
- Does primary school 4th grade students' reading comprehension levels differ in terms of gender type and being a member of library?
- Does primary school 4th grade students' reading comprehension levels differ in terms of parents' education levels?
- Does primary school 4th grade students' status of finding the main idea of the text differ in terms of their reading anxiety levels?
- Does primary school 4th grade students' status of finding the main idea of the text differ in terms of their reading comprehension levels?
- Is there any relationship between primary school 4th grade students' reading anxiety levels and their academic achievement in Turkish lessons?
- Is there any relationship between primary school 4th grade students' reading anxiety levels and their reading comprehension levels?

Method

Research Model

In the study, relational survey model was employed. Survey model allows the quantitative description of the universe through the research conducted on the sampling (Cresswell, 2012, p. 376). In relational survey studies, the purpose is to determine the relationship between different variables.

Study Group

The study group consists of 211 primary school 4th grade students from 9 public schools who have participated in the study as volunteers from 44 public schools in Kırıkkale province. 121 of the participants were females and 90 of them were males. 96 participants of the study were members of public library and 115 of them were not members. . In the study group of the research; mothers of 38

students and fathers of 17 students are at primary school graduate level; mothers of 55 students and fathers of 34 students are at secondary school graduate level; mothers of 86 students and fathers of 105 students are at high school graduate level; mothers of 32 students and fathers of 55 students are bachelors.

Data Collection Instruments

In the current study, together with a personal information form, two data collection instruments were used. The purpose of the personal information form is to collect data about the participants' gender, father and mother's education level, academic achievement score in Turkish language course and membership to the library. In order to determine the participants' reading comprehension level, *Reading Comprehension Test* developed by Kuşdemir (2014) was used. This test includes one narrative and one informative text and 20 open-ended questions related to these texts. The stages followed in the preparation of this test are these: (1) By means of a literature review, a pool was constructed from the texts thought to be suitable for the purpose of the study. (2) Selection of nine texts that are suitable in terms of grade level, topic and cohesion, writing rules, grammar and text genre. (3) Each text was submitted to the scrutiny of 7 experts working in the field of Turkish language teaching together with "Text Evaluation Form". (4) The scores assigned on the basis of "Text Evaluation Form" by the experts were calculated for each text. (5) The two texts taking the highest scores were determined to be used for the reading comprehension test. (6) Formation of a 30-40 item pool including skills such as finding the main idea, making guesses, activating prior knowledge, detection of the elements of narration, visual reading and understanding cause-effect relationship that are in compliance with the objectives of the reading comprehension program of the fourth grade. (7) Control and correction of the items by two experts in the field of Turkish language teaching and one Turkish language teacher in terms of their semantics and syntax. (8) Administration of the draft "Reading Comprehension Test" to a group of 6 consisting of elementary school fourth graders, talking with these students about the items and determination of the readability and comprehensibility of the items. (9) Development of "Reading Comprehension Test Evaluation Form" to establish the content validity of the items in "Reading Comprehension Test". (10) Through this form, seeking the opinions and evaluations of 7 experts about the items in Reading Comprehension Test. Following these stages, the Content Validity Index (CVI) calculated for the narrative text was found to be 0.94 and it was found to be 1.00 for the informative text. These values show that 20 items in "Reading Comprehension Test" has content validity. The test is scored as follows: If no answer or wrong answer is given, then 0 point is assigned; if the student's answer is partially correct, 2.5 points are assigned and if the answer is correct, then 5 points are assigned. The possible highest score to be taken from this test is 100. The scores taken from the test are evaluated as follows: 0-20 very low, 21-40 low, 41-60 medium, 61-80 high and 81-100 very high. Two items included in Reading Comprehension Test aim to direct students to the main idea of the narrative and informative texts. The responses given to these items are classified as the main idea is *correct*, the main idea is *wrong*, the main idea sentence is *incomplete* and the main idea sentence is *not written*.

In order to determine the participants' reading anxiety level, *Reading Anxiety Scale* developed by Çeliktürk and Yamaç (2015) was used. The scale was developed with the participation of 420 fourth and fifth graders. As a result of the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, a unidimensional 29-item scale was obtained. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient calculated during the development of this scale was found to be 0.95. Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale calculated in the current study is 0.94. The scale is a five-point Likert type scale ranging from (1) Never to (5) Always. The lowest possible score to be taken from the scale is 29 and the highest score is 145. The scores taken from the scale are evaluated as follows: 29-52.2 very low anxiety, 52.3-75.5 low anxiety, 75.6-98.8 medium anxiety, 98.9-122.1 high anxiety and 122.2-145 very high anxiety.

Data Collection and Analysis

During the data collection process, first the required permission was granted from the Ministry of National Education Directorate of Kırıkkale. Prior to the application, -was on voluntary basis- information about the research was given to the directors, teachers and students of the schools where the study would be conducted and appointments were arranged. The data of the study were collected in the period of February-April in the spring term of 2014-2015 school year. The administration of the data collection instruments was carried out by the researchers and in each class this administration lasted 3 class hours (120 minutes).

For the determination of the tests to be used in the analysis of the data, it was first investigated whether the data display a normal distribution or not. During data analysis process, means of the total scores taken from the scales, Kolmogorov Smirnov test results, skewness-kurtosis values and histogram graphs were also analyzed. As a result of the analyses, it was found that some data do not show a normal distribution. Thus, in the analysis of the data showing a normal distribution, parametric tests (independent samples t-test) and in the analysis of the data that do not show a normal distribution, non-parametric tests (Kruskal Wallis, Mann-Whitney U, Spearman correlation analysis) were employed. For all the analysis conducted, a computer software program was used.

Findings

The findings of the study are organized according to data obtained from *Reading Comprehension Test* and *Reading Anxiety Scale*. The mean scores taken by the elementary school fourth grade students from *Reading Comprehension Test* and *Reading Anxiety Scale* are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Reading Comprehension and Reading Anxiety Scores

Variable	N	\bar{x}	Ss
Reading Comprehension Score	211	56,77	22,30
Reading Anxiety Score		54,63	24,99

When the data presented in Table 1 are examined, it is seen that the mean reading comprehension score of the students is medium and their mean reading anxiety score is low.

Independent samples t-test was run to investigate whether the students' scores taken from *Reading Comprehension Test* vary depending on gender and membership to the library. The findings of this investigation are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. T-test Results of the Reading Comprehension Scores in relation to Gender and Membership to the Library

Variable		N	\bar{x}	Ss	Sd	T	P
Gender	Girl	121	58,88	22,35	209	1,61	,109
	Boy	90	53,91	22,04			
Membership to the library	Yes	96	64,16	23,21	209	4,61	,000*
	No	115	50,58	17,87			

*p<,05

As can be seen in Table 2, mean reading comprehension score of the girls is higher than that of the boys. Yet, this difference is not statistically significant ($t_{(209)} = 1,61$; $p > ,05$). There is a significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of the students depending on their membership to the library ($t_{(209)} = 4,61$; $p < ,05$). When the mean scores of the groups are examined, it is seen that the students having a membership to the library have a higher mean score than that of those not having a

membership. In light of these findings, it can be argued that gender does not significantly affect reading comprehension but membership to the library significantly affects it.

Whether the participants' reading comprehension scores vary significantly depending on father and mother's education level was analyzed with Kruskal-Wallis test. Findings obtained in relation to mother's education level are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Reading Comprehension Scores Kruskal Wallis Test Results in relation to Mother's Education Level

Mother's education level	N	Mean Rank	Sd	χ^2	P	Significant difference
Elementary school	38	72,04				
Secondary school	55	100,47	3	22,436	,000*	1-2, 1-3
High school	86	112,30				1-4, 2-4
University	32	138,89				3-4

*p<,05

Kruskal-Wallis test results presented in Table 3 show that the students' scores taken from reading comprehension test vary significantly depending on mother's education level [$\chi^2_{(3)}=22,551$; $p < ,05$]. In order to determine between which groups the difference is comparisons were made through Mann-Whitney U test. It was found that there is a significant difference between the students whose mothers are elementary school graduates and the students whose mothers are secondary school, high school and university graduates and between the students whose mothers are secondary school graduates and the students whose mothers are high school and university graduates. According to mean ranks of the groups, with increasing education level of mother, the students' reading comprehension scores are also increasing.

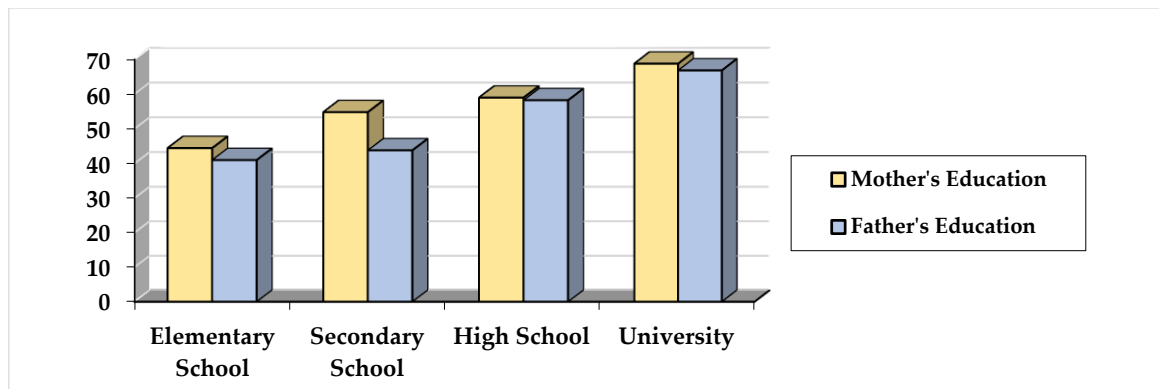
The participants' reading comprehension scores were analyzed in relation to father's education level and the findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Reading Comprehension Scores Kruskal Wallis Test Results in relation to Father's Education Level

Father's education level	N	Mean Rank	Sd	χ^2	P	Significant difference
Elementary school	17	64,59				
Secondary school	34	71,07	3	29,740	,000*	1-3, 1-4, 2-3
High school	105	110,20				2-4, 3-4
University	55	132,37				

*p<,05

According to Kruskal-Wallis test results presented in Table 4, the elementary school fourth graders' reading comprehension scores vary significantly depending on father's education level [$\chi^2_{(3)}=29,740$; $p < ,05$]. The results of Mann-Whitney U test conducted to determine the source of this significant difference revealed that there is a significant difference between the scores of the students whose fathers are elementary school graduates and those of the students whose fathers are high school or university graduates; between the scores of the students whose fathers are secondary school graduates and those of the students whose fathers are high school or university graduates; between the scores of the students whose fathers are high school graduates and those of the students whose fathers are university graduates. When the mean ranks of the groups are examined, it is seen that with increasing level of father's education, the students' reading comprehension scores are also increasing. These findings show that mother and father's education level is significantly influential on the students' reading comprehension scores. This is summarized in Graph 1.



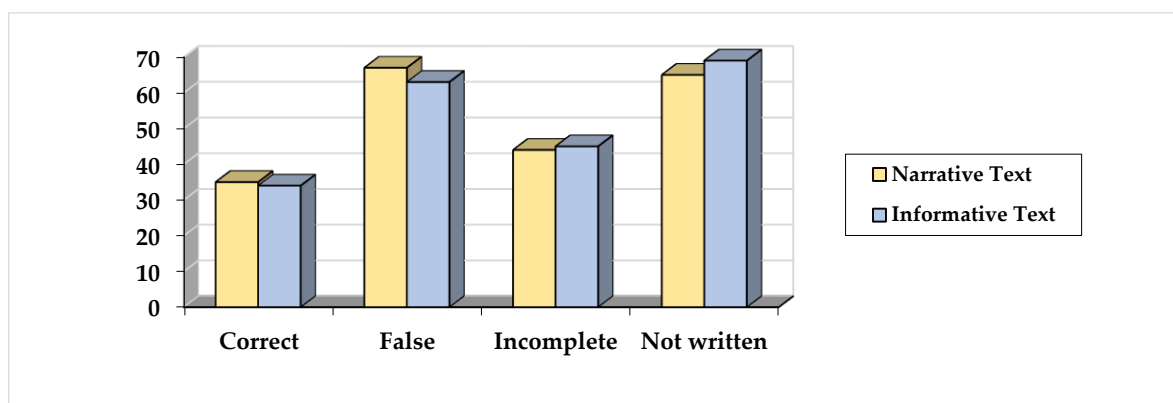
Graph 1. Reading Comprehension according to Mother and Father's Education Level

The students were asked to find the main ideas of the narrative and informative texts within the context of *Reading Comprehension Test*. The participants' states of finding the main ideas were evaluated together with their reading anxiety and reading comprehension scores are the results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Reading Comprehension and Reading Anxiety Scores according to the State of Finding the Main Idea

Main Idea Sentence	Narrative Text			Informative Text		
	N	Anxiety \bar{x}	Comprehension \bar{x}	N	Anxiety \bar{x}	Comprehension \bar{x}
Correct	35	45,25	84,28	34	48,79	79,49
False	67	57,32	50,26	63	53,36	54,24
Incomplete	44	51,84	66,93	45	56,31	67,88
Not written	65	58,78	41,76	69	57,56	40,61

When the data presented in Table 5 are examined, it is seen that only 14% of the students were able to find the main ideas of both the narrative and informative texts. Nearly 63% of the students gave false answers or no answers to the questions related to main idea. When correlation of the state of finding the main idea with reading anxiety is examined, it is seen that the reading anxiety of the students determining the correct or incomplete main ideas in both the narrative and informative texts is lower than that of the other students. When the states of reading comprehension and finding the main idea are evaluated together, the reading comprehension scores of the students determining the correct or incomplete main idea are higher than those of the other students. In order to see the students' states of finding the main idea more clearly, related data are presented in Graph 2.



Graph 2. Finding the Main Idea according to Text Types

When the data presented in Table 5 and Graph 2 are examined, it can be argued that the students are quite inadequate in finding the main idea.

The students' scores taken from *Reading Anxiety Scale* were examined through t-test in relation to gender and membership to the library. The findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Reading Anxiety Scores t-test Results according to Gender and Membership to the Library

Variable		N	\bar{x}	Ss	Sd	T	P
Gender	Girls	121	52,26	21,99	209	1,60	,125
	Boys	90	57,81	28,34			
Membership to the Library	Yes	96	46,82	22,10	209	4,31	,000*
	No	115	61,14	25,47			

As can be seen in Table 6, the students' reading anxiety does not vary significantly depending on gender ($t_{(209)}= 1,60$; $p> ,05$). Though it is not statistically significant, the reading anxiety of the boys was found to be higher than that of the girls. The students' reading anxiety varies significantly depending on membership to the library ($t_{(209)}= 4,31$; $p< ,05$). When the mean scores of the groups are examined, it is seen that the reading anxiety of the students having library membership is lower than that of the other students. In light of these findings, it can be argued that gender is not influential on reading anxiety yet membership to the library is.

Whether the students reading anxiety varies significantly depending on mother's education level was analyzed through Kruskal-Wallis test. The findings are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Reading Anxiety Scores Kruskal-Wallis Test Results in relation to Mother's Education Level

Education Level	N	Mean Rank	Sd	χ^2	P	Significant Difference
Elementary school	38	131,83	3	15,662	,001*	1-3 1-4 2-4
Secondary school	55	115,60				
High school	86	98,41				
University	32	79,23				

The Kruskal-Wallis test results presented in Table 7 show that the students' reading anxiety varies significantly depending on mother's education level [$\chi^2_{(3)}=29,740$; $p< ,05$]. In order to determine between which groups the difference is Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. It was found that there is a significant difference between the reading anxiety scores of the students whose mothers are elementary school graduates and those of the students whose mothers are high school or university graduates; between the scores of the students whose mothers are secondary school graduates and those of the students whose mothers are university graduates. When the mean ranks of the groups are analyzed, it is seen that with increasing education level of the mother, the students' reading anxiety decreases.

Whether the students reading anxiety varies significantly depending on father's education level was analyzed through Kruskal-Wallis test. The findings are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Reading Anxiety Scores Kruskal-Wallis Test Results in relation to Father's Education Level

Education Level	N	Mean Rank	Sd	χ^2	P	Significant difference
Elementary school	17	147,12	3	13,460	,004	1-3 1-4 2-4
Secondary school	34	120,19				
High school	105	102,97				
University	55	90,30				

The Kruskal-Wallis test results presented in Table 8 show that the students' reading anxiety varies significantly depending on father's education level [$\chi^2_{(3)}=13,460$; $p < ,05$]. Mann-Whitney U test results show that this difference is between the students whose fathers are elementary school graduates and the students whose fathers are high school or university graduates; between the students whose fathers are secondary school graduates and the students whose fathers are university graduates. When the mean ranks of the groups are analyzed, it is seen that with increasing education level of the father, the students' reading anxiety decreases. In light of these findings, it can be claimed that mother and father's education level significantly affects the students' reading anxiety.

In order to determine the relationship between the students' reading anxiety and Turkish language course academic achievement scores, Spearman Correlation analysis was conducted. The findings are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Relationship between Reading Anxiety and Turkish Language Academic Achievement

Variable	N	r	p
Reading Anxiety–Turkish Language Course Academic Achievement	211	-,374**	,000

** $p < ,01$

When the data presented in Table 9 are examined, it is seen that there is a low, negative and significant correlation between reading comprehension and Turkish language course academic achievement ($r = -,374$, $p < ,01$). Thus, it can be claimed that reading anxiety negatively affects Turkish language course academic achievement. The results of Spearman Correlation analysis showing the relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension scores are given in Table 10.

Table 10. Relationship between Reading Anxiety and Reading Comprehension

Variable	N	r	p
Reading Anxiety–Reading Comprehension	211	-,214**	,002

** $p < ,01$

As can be seen in Table 10, there is a weak, negative and significant correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension ($r = -,214$, $p < ,01$). Thus, it can be contended that reading anxiety negatively affects reading comprehension.

Discussion and Results

In the present study, the purpose was to investigate the relationship between reading anxiety, reading comprehension and main idea finding skill. It has been believed that the results of the current study may draw an attention to the effects of anxiety on reading and comprehension. The results obtained in line with the purpose of the study are discussed through comparison with theoretical information and similar research findings and suggestions are made for teachers and researchers.

It was found that the elementary school fourth graders' reading comprehension level is *medium*. Reading comprehension is an important cognitive skill that can affect almost all education life of a student. There are some studies addressing the relationship between reading comprehension skill and academic achievement and other courses (Yantır, 2011; Özder, Konedrali, & Doğan, 2012; Baş & Kardaş, 2014; Yıldız, 2013; Yıldız et al., 2014; Lai, Benjamin, Schwanenflugel, & Kuhn, 2014). What is expected from a good reader is to manifest high level of reading comprehension and to make inferences from a given text. In light of the findings of the current study, it can be maintained that the elementary school fourth graders are not competent in reading comprehension. How this can affect students' future education should be a research interest.

The reading anxiety level of the participants of the present study was found to be *low*. This is an important finding. Low level of reading anxiety demonstrates that the students do not have strong negative emotions towards reading such as lack of willingness and fear. Melanlıoğlu (2014) investigated the effect of metacognitive training on the elimination of anxiety in secondary school students and found that metacognitive training reduces anxiety level. In the current study, it is suggested that different strategies, methods and techniques should be used for the reduction of reading anxiety. There are many studies conducted to determine reading attitude, habit, interest and motivation to deeply analyze and understand children's reading experiences. The common finding of these studies (Güngör, 2009; İşeri, 2010; Kanmaz & Saracalıoğlu, 2012; Bozkurt & Memiş, 2013; Yıldız, 2013; Öztürk & Aydemir, 2013) is that psychological factors such as attitude, habit, interest and motivation are influential on reading comprehension. If children refuse to read, they should be provided with opportunities to enjoy reading, to plan reading activities, to make selections related to reading and discuss what they have read with others. Moreover, if children are afraid of making independent reading, the number of reading tasks initially given needs to be increased over time; they should conduct readings together with their peers and teachers. Such activities may increase their self-confidence in reading (Jalongo & Hirsh, 2010, p. 434).

The elementary school fourth graders' reading comprehension and reading anxiety scores were analyzed in relation to gender variable. The participants' reading comprehensions scores do not significantly vary depending on gender. When the relationship between the participants' reading anxiety scores and gender was investigated, it was found that the boys' reading anxiety level is higher than that of the girls. Başaran (2014) conducted a study with elementary school fourth graders and reported that there is no significant difference between the reading comprehension, attitudes towards the text and reading speed of the female and male students. Arı (2014) concluded that reading comprehension skills do not significantly vary depending on gender. In a similar manner, Baştuğ and Keskin (2012) found that the male and female students attained similar achievement in relation to fluent reading skill and reading comprehension skill. Thus, it can be thought that gender variable does not have a significant effect on reading comprehension. In research dealing with reading comprehension, gender has always occupied the interests of researchers. Arslan (2013) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate the findings of 54 studies focusing on the relationship between reading comprehension skills and gender by using document analysis approach. It was concluded that girls have better reading habits, reading comprehension and are better in reading strategy use than boys. Rüzgar (2014) also reported that girls are better in reading comprehension than boys. Weiss, Kemmler, Deisenhammer, Fleischhacker and Delazer (2003) stated that there are differences between boys and girls in terms of using verbal or non-verbal language skills and this leads to some differences in reading comprehension. PISA measurements conducted in 2000, 2003, 2006 revealed that girls are more successful (Lynn & Mikk, 2009, p. 10). However, many studies reporting differences based on gender variables cannot explain the reason for the findings favoring girls or boys or just refer to similar studies addressing reading skill.

One of the variables of the current study is library membership. Within the context of the study, it was also investigated whether library membership affects reading comprehension and reading anxiety. The statistical analyses revealed that the reading comprehension scores differ significantly in favor of those having a library membership. Furthermore, reading anxiety of the students having a library membership was found to be lower than that of the students not having a library membership. In light of this finding, it can be claimed the library has a positive effect on students' reading experiences. According to a study by Rüzgar (2014), the number of books read, doing assignments based on reading, existence of a library at home and time spent on reading per day predict reading comprehension. In addition, reading comprehension levels of the students having a

library in their houses are higher than those of the students not having. Having a library, a library membership, spending some time in a library are indicators of students' ability to have access to different sources of reading and richness of reading life. Çiftçi (2007) indicates that the students who spend their out of school times in libraries perform important actions like getting different knowledge, doing their homework and gaining reading habit. Public libraries are organizations that provide service to all segments of the society and to increase society's knowledge level. It has been known that these libraries appeal to a much wider audience than other types of libraries and they have the potential to form basis for the changes in the positive direction in the society. (Al & Soydal, 2014, p. 289). Education at schools and classes should aim to impart information and means of learning that can be used by students throughout their lives to students. Children having a rich reading environment and life are believed to be better qualified individuals.

The reading comprehension and reading anxiety scores of the participants were examined in relation to mother and father's education level. It was determined that the students' scores taken from reading comprehension test vary significantly depending on mother and father's education level. The students' reading comprehension scores improve as mother and father' education level increases. This proves that mother and father's education level has a significant influence on reading achievement. Şahin (2011) also reported that with increasing level of mother and father's education, the students' achievement in Turkish language course also improves. On the other hand, Uzun (2010) reported that reading achievement level of the students whose fathers are elementary and secondary school graduates is significantly lower than that of the students whose fathers are high school or university graduates; yet, mother's education level does not lead to a significant differences among students' reading comprehension scores.

The present study also investigated at the correlation between reading comprehension, reading anxiety and Turkish language course academic achievement. It was found that there is a low, negative and significant correlation between reading anxiety and Turkish language course academic achievement. Thus, it can be claimed that reading anxiety negatively affects Turkish language course academic achievement. There is a weak, negative and significant correlation between reading anxiety and reading comprehension and this supports the idea that anxiety negatively affects reading comprehension. When the relationship between reading achievement and getting pleasure form reading is investigated, it is seen that there are some studies reporting that the students having positive attitudes towards and getting pleasure from reading are more successful in reading comprehension than other students (Kush, Watkins, & Brookhart, 2005).

One of the important findings of the current study is the students' inadequacy in finding the main ideas of both the narrative and information texts used in reading comprehension test. High majority of the students could not write the main idea of the text they read at all or wrote wrong or incomplete main idea. Parallel to this finding, Çetinkaya, Ateş and Yıldırım (2011) found that the students confuse the main idea with the concept of topic, difficulties experienced in finding the main idea mostly stem from lack of comprehension of the text and the students are unsuccessful in determining the main idea of the informative text presented to them. According to Başaran and Akyol (2009), there is a positive correlation between liking the given text and reading comprehension level. In order to enhance students' attitudes towards the text accordingly to the course and reading, they should be provided with texts they will enjoy. In reading comprehension training, it is suggested that well-structured informative texts should be used by teachers (Hall, Sabey, & McClellan, 2005, p. 230). In addition to vocabulary and reading comprehension strategies, being knowledgeable about the structure of the text contribute to the understanding of the text. Teachers should be supportive to their students in the recognition and understanding of texts having many different types. Main and sub

headings, tables and pictures and dictionaries should be capitalized on for weak readers to better concentrate on the text and understand the main idea (Lapp et al., 2008, p. 381). Teaching of informative text structures accompanied by appropriate strategies facilitates reading comprehension, use of cue words, finding the main idea, summarizing and giving answer to questions and improves reading comprehension test achievement (Meyer & Ray, 2011, p. 148). As a result of an empirical study in which Pilten (2007) investigated the effect of main idea finding strategies instruction on reading comprehension and finding the main idea and found that main idea finding strategies improved the reading comprehension skills of the experimental group students. These findings indicate the importance of text types and training in finding the main idea of a given text. Through well-structured texts, students can be taught how to find the main idea of a text. Main idea detection skills of the fourth graders given reading comprehension instruction through direct teaching and cooperative teaching were found to be improving (Jeong, 2009).

Suggestions

In light of the findings of the study and theoretical background, suggestions are made for practitioners and researchers.

Reading comprehension skill should be dealt with by considering children's psychological characteristics such as emotions, interests, attitudes, anxiety and motivation as well as factors such as text type, instruction and methods. Teachers' knowledge and competencies in relation to their approaches to children and designing of teaching environment should be revised. They should be designed according to children's interests and needs. It should also be revised what is done in practice in terms of teaching and skill development and teacher and program competencies should be examined.

It should also be investigated how the findings of research focusing on reading skill, reading comprehension, recognizing the text, finding the main idea, writing a summary, loud reading, fluent reading, improving motivation, reducing anxiety etc. can be used to enhance teachers' practices and competencies. It should also be researched how classroom teachers having a vital role in the development of reading skill should be involved in reading research.

The reasons for students' nurturing negative feelings such as anxiety, unwillingness, indifference and avoidance should be comprehensively and profoundly investigated. In this regard, research should be conducted at different levels of schooling with differing number of students to see how these negative feelings find repercussions on their educational lives. Such research needs to deal with these negative issues by involving parents and school environment. The sources leading students to feel anxiety should be revised and responsibilities of families and schools should be identified constructively.

It is believed that the students experiencing reading anxiety should be saved by means of rich reading experiences. The reading environment should be arranged according to children, effective roles should be assigned to children in classroom activities such as the selection of books, loud reading, pre-reading techniques and visual reading. In this regard, the teacher's approach to the child and use of reading materials are of great importance. In elementary schools, special courses can be developed for effective reading training to improve students' skills of reading comprehension, finding the main idea, summarizing, making inferences and recognizing texts. Action research in which researchers and teachers work together can be conducted to determine what effective methods can be to teach reading comprehension.

New research can be designed to explain the relationship between reading anxiety and other components of reading such as fluent reading, vocabulary knowledge and making guesses. The current study is believed to provide some guidance to practicing teachers about the factors affecting reading comprehension. Moreover, the findings of the current study can make some contributions to the formation of standardized tests to measure reading skill because in reading comprehension, reader's affective state, social environment, experience and expectations as well as text structure and context should be taken into consideration.

References

- Al, U., & Soydal, İ. (2014). Librar-e Turkey project: Public library usage research. *Türk Kütüphaneciliği*, 28(3), 288-307. Retrieved from <http://www.tk.org.tr/index.php/TK/article/view/2444>
- Arı, G. (2014). The effects of SQ3R and DR-TA reading strategies used by fifth grade students on comprehension. *Journal of Theory and Practice in Education*, 10(2), 535- 555.
- Arslan, A. (2013). Okuma becerisi ile ilgili makalelerde cinsiyet değişkeni. *Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim Dergisi*, 2(2), 265.
- Baş Ö., & Kardaş, N. (2014). İlköğretim öğrencilerinin görsel okuma becerisi ile okuduğunu anlama becerisi arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi. *Uşak Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 7(1), 230-243.
- Başaran, M. (2014). 4. sınıf seviyesinde ekrandan ve kâğıttan okumanın okuduğunu anlama, okuma hızı ve metne karşı geliştirilen tutum üzerindeki etkisi. *Uşak Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 7(2), 248-268.
- Başaran, M., & Akyol, H. (2009). Okuduğunu anlama ve metne karşı geliştirilen tutum üzerinde metnin bilgi verici veya hikâye edici olmasının etkisi. *Uşak Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 2(1), 11-23.
- Baştuğ, M., & Keskin, H. G. (2012). Akıcı okuma becerileri ile anlama düzeyleri (basit ve çıkarımsal) arasındaki ilişki. *Ahi Evran Üniversitesi Kırşehir Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi (KEFAD)*, 13(3), 227-244
- Bozkurt, M., & Memiş, A. (2013). Beşinci sınıf öğrencilerinin üstbilişsel okuduğunu anlama farkındalığı ve okuma motivasyonları ile okuma düzeyleri arasındaki ilişki. *Ahi Evran Üniversitesi Kırşehir Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi (KEFAD)*, 14(3), 147-160.
- Cresswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Çeliktürk, Z., & Yamaç, A. (2015). İlkokul ve ortaokul öğrencileri için okuma kaygısı ölçeğinin geliştirilmesi: Geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışması. *İlköğretim Online*, 14(1), 97-107. doi:10.17051/io.2015.03320.
- Çetinkaya, Ç., Ateş, S., & Yıldırım, K. (2013). Anlam kurmanın zor ve önemli bir becerisi: Ana fikri bulma. *Eğitimde Kuram ve Uygulama*, 9(3), 188-210. Retrieved from http://eku.comu.edu.tr/article/view/1.044.000.187/pdf_136
- Çiftçi, Ö. (2007). *İlköğretim 5. sınıf öğrencilerinin Türkçe öğretim programında belirtilen okuduğunu anlamayla ilgili kazanımlara ulaşma düzeyinin belirlenmesi* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Gazi University Institute of Educational Science, Ankara.
- Günay, D. (2008). Neyi, nasıl okuruz ya da okumalıyız?. *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Güzel Sanatlar Fakültesi Dergisi*, 2, 1-13. Retrieved from <http://sdu.edu.tr/edergi/index.php/gsfed/article/viewFile/3224/2774>
- Güngör, E. (2009). *İlköğretim 5. Sınıf öğrencilerinin kitap okuma alışkanlığı ile Türkçe dersi akademik başarıları arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi* (Unpublished master's thesis). Çukurova University Institute of Social Science, Adana.
- Hall, K. M., Sabey, B. L., & McClellan, M. (2005). Expository text comprehension: Helping primary-grade teachers use expository texts to full advantage. *Reading Psychology*, 26, 211-234. doi:10.1080/02702710590962550
- İşeri, K. (2010). İlköğretim ikinci kademe öğrencilerinin okuma tutumlarının incelenmesi. *International Journal of Human Sciences*, 7(2), 468-487.
- Jalongo, M. R., & Hirsh, R. A. (2010). Understanding reading anxiety: New insights from neuroscience. *Early Childhood Educ J*, 2010(37), 431-435. doi:10.1007/s10643-010-0381-5
- Jeong, J. (2009). *Effects of teacher-directed and student-interactive summarization instruction on reading comprehension and written summarization of Korean fourth graders* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Illinois.

- Kanmaz, A., & Saracalıoğlu, A. (2012). Okuduğunu anlama stratejisi kullanımının, okumaya yönelik tutum ve kalıcılığa etkisi. *e-Journal of New World Sciences Academy*, 7(2), 764-776.
- Kintsch W., & Kintsch, E. (2005). Comprehension. In S. G. Paris, & S. A. Stahl (Eds.), *Current issues in reading comprehension and assessment* (pp. 71-92). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kush, J. C., Watkins, M. W., & Brookhart, S. M. (2005). The temporal-interactive influence of reading achievement and reading attitude. *Educational Research And Evaluation*, 11(1), 29-44. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13803610500110141>
- Kuşdemir, Y. (2014). *Doğrudan öğretim modelinin ilkökul dördüncü sınıf öğrencilerinin okuduğunu anlama becerilerine etkisi* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Gazi University Institute of Educational Sciences, Ankara.
- Lai, S. A., Benjamin, R. G., Schwanenflugel, P. J., & Kuhn, M.R. (2014). The longitudinal relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension skills in second-grade children. *Reading & Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties*, 30(2), 116-138.
- Lapp, D. Fisher, D., & Grant, M. (2008). You can read this text-I'll show you how: Interactive comprehension instruction. *Journal Of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 51(5), 372-383.
- Lynn, R., & Mikk, J. (2009). Sex differences in reading achievement. *TRAMES*, 13(1), 3-13. Retrieved from http://eap.ee/public/trames_pdf/2009/issue_1/trames-2009-1-3-13.pdf
- Melanlıoğlu, D. (2014). Üstbiliş strateji eğitiminin ortaokul öğrencilerinin okuma kaygılarına etkisi. *Eğitim ve Bilim*, 39(176), 107-119.
- Meyer, B. J. F., & Ray, M. N. (2011). Structure strategy interventions: Increasing reading comprehension of expository text. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 4(1), 127-152. Retrieved from www.researchgate.net/profile/Hye_Pae/publication/236682612
- Mills, N., Pajares, F., & Herron, C. (2006). A reevaluation of the role of anxiety: self-efficacy, anxiety, and their relation to reading and listening proficiency. *Foreign Language Annals*, 39(2), 276-283.
- Özder, H., Konedrali, G., & Doğan, H. (2012). İlkokul beşinci sınıf öğrencilerinin okuduğunu anlama becerilerinin değerlendirilmesi. *Uluslararası Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 2(4) 13-26. Retrieved from <http://ijocis.net/index.php/ijocis/article/view/15/14>
- Öztürk, E., & Aydemir, Z. (2013). Başlangıç düzeyi okuyucularının okuma motivasyonlarının, günlük kitap okuma süreleri ve ailenin okuma durumuna göre değerlendirilmesi. *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi*, 21(3), 1105-1116. Retrieved from <http://79.123.169.199/ojs/index.php/Kefdergi/article>
- Pilten, G. (2007). *Ana fikir bulma stratejisi öğretiminin ana fikir bulma ve okuduğunu anlamaya etkisi* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Gazi University Institute of Educational Sciences, Ankara.
- Rüzgar, M. E. (2014). *Beşinci sınıf öğrencilerinin okuduğunu anlama düzeylerinin öğrenme stilleri bağlamında incelenmesi* (Unpublished master's thesis). Ankara University Institute of Educational Sciences, Ankara.
- Sweet, A. P., & Snow, C. (2002). Reconceptualizing reading comprehension. In L. B. Gambrell, C. C. Block, & M. Pressley (Eds.), *Improving comprehension instruction* (1th ed., pp. 17-53). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Şahin, A. (2011). İlköğretim ve ortaöğretim öğrencilerinin Türkçe başarı durumlarının çeşitli değişkenler açısından incelenmesi. *Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 15(1), 311-326.
- Thompson, H. L. (2007). *Impacts of educational kinesiology activities on fourth graders' reading comprehension achievement* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Walden University.
- Tompkins, G. E. (2006). *Literacy for the 21st century a balanced approach* (4th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education.

- Uzun, C. (2010). *İlköğretim öğrencilerinin matematik dersi problem çözme başarılarının bazı demografik değişkenler ve okuduğunu anlama becerisi açısından incelenmesi* (Unpublished master's thesis). Uşak University Institute of Social Science, Uşak.
- Weiss, E. M., Kemmler, G., Deisenhammer, E. A., Fleischhacker, W. W., & Delazer, M. (2003). Sex differences in cognitive functions. *Personality And Individual Differences*, 35(4), 863-875. doi:10.1016/S0191-8869(02)00288-X
- Yantr, N. (2011). *İlköğretim 6. Sınıf öğrencilerinin okuduğunu anlama becerilerinin incelenmesi* (Unpublished master's thesis). Atatürk University Institute of Educational Sciences, Erzurum.
- Yıldız, M., Yıldırım, K., Ateş, S., Rasinski, T., Fitzgerald, S., & Zimmerman, B. (2014). The relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension in fifth-grade turkish students. *International Journal of School & Educational Psychology*, 2(1), 35-44.
- Yıldız, M. (2013). Okuma motivasyonu, akıcı okuma ve okuduğunu anlamanın beşinci sınıf öğrencilerinin akademik başarılarındaki rolü. *Turkish Studies - International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, 8(4), 1461-1478.
- Zin, M. Z., & Rafik-Galea, S. (2010). Anxiety and academic reading performance amon Malay ESL learners. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 14(2), 41-58. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ920517.pdf>