

# Improving reading fluency and reading comprehension with readers theatre<sup>1</sup>

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## Article Info

### Keywords

Reading  
Reading fluency  
Reading comprehension  
Readers  
Theatre

### Article History

Received 25.04.2023  
Received in revised form  
23.05.2023  
Accepted 30.05.2023

### Article Type

Research Article

## Abstract

This research was conducted with the aim of revealing the contribution of instruction carried out according to the readers theatre method in improving reading fluency and reading comprehension skills. As the aim was to reveal the implementation process of the readers theatre method, action research was used in the research. The research was conducted with fifth-grade students attending a secondary school in the eastern region of Turkey. During the research process, six action plans were prepared, and four of these plans were implemented within a period of eight lesson hours, two of which were implemented within a period of 12 lesson hours. The Reading Comprehension Test, Multidimensional Fluency Scale and Error Analysis Inventory were used as data collection tools in this research. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to analyze the quantitative data. The results of the research indicated that the reader theatre method contributed to the development of students' reading fluency and reading comprehension.



## 1 Introduction

Reading, one of the main objectives of education and training activities, is critical for both the academic success of students and their personal and social development. In the age we live in, knowledge is the greatest power, and it has become a necessity for individuals to have good reading ability in order to obtain knowledge. Reading improves feelings and thoughts by providing new information and experiences. Owing to their ability to read, individuals encounter different feelings, thoughts, and actions. Reading skills are valuable in both the formation of academic learning and the development of an individual's social skills (Epçaçan, 2018).

What is expected of a good reader is to make sense of what he/she reads in mind. In the reading process, the reader needs to see the writings in the text, as well as perform cognitive skills such as comprehension, analysis, and synthesis. When performing these cognitive processes, perceived

<sup>1</sup>This article was produced from the quantitative data of the master's thesis completed by the first author in 2022 under the supervision of the second author.

**Cite:** Köse Akyüz, S. & Kanık Uysal, P. (2023). Improving reading fluency and reading comprehension with readers theatre. *Pedagogical Perspective*, 2(1), 22-35. <https://doi.org/10.29329/pedper.2023.559.2>

writing must be broken down into the correct parts or evaluated for the necessary contextual integrity. For this separation to be done correctly and not to divide the meaning, it is necessary to have good reading fluency skills (Şahin & Melanlıoğlu, 2021). However, many students have reached the secondary school level but have reading problems. According to Yılmaz (2008), approximately 15–20% of primary school children have difficulty developing reading and writing skills. Students who do not have any physical or cognitive problems but have problems with reading and writing skills lag behind their peers in reading and writing, even though they receive the same level of education as their peers in the class (Taşkaya, 2010; Türkmenoğlu & Baştuğ, 2017). Students with reading problems show reading performance below grade level for reasons such as slow reading speed and insufficiently developed word recognition skills (Kocaarslan, 2019), and they hesitate to read aloud in class due to this situation. Problems in reading skills and related comprehension difficulties also directly or indirectly affect academic success, attitudes towards school, and learning processes (Dündar & Akyol, 2014). For these reasons, the difficulties experienced by students who have reading problems and have difficulty understanding what they read should be identified in the process, and these students should be intervened by using the right methods and techniques. Reading is a complex multifaceted skill that contains many components. Focusing on a single direction in the development of this skill is insufficient to achieve the main goal of reading comprehension. Therefore, there is a need to apply a holistic method that includes teaching all reading variables in the classroom. When the literature is examined, it is possible to see that the fluency of the students (Caudill-Hansen, 2009; Kanik Uysal, 2020; Martinez et al., 1998) and reading comprehension skills (Babacan, 2020; Millin, 1996; Millin & Rinehart, 1999; Young et al., 2019) appear to be using reading theaters, which are holistic methods that include reading fluency, reading comprehension, and vocabulary teaching. Readers theatre; 'it is a teaching method that supports students' reading fluency, reading comprehension, and vocabulary development and can be digested into the course content in parallel with the curriculum' (Kanik Uysal, 2021, p. 78). This method is a holistic approach that blends the many components of reading and has a flexible framework. Strategies and activities aimed at improving students' reading fluency, reading comprehension, and vocabulary can be included within this framework.

Readers theatre is a method used to improve students' reading and comprehension skills and make repeated reading interesting. Readers theatre is a process based on the division of students into groups according to the characters in the text given to them, and each student performs reading by taking the role of a character (Baştuğ, 2021). This method involves telling a story by reading the script aloud rather than acting, and the focus is on audio expression to convey the story to the audience in a meaningful way (Dixon, 2010). In the readers theatre method, students practice a text for a given amount of time and perform it on the day of the presentation. Students have the opportunity to read the text repeatedly until the day of presentation, both through the reading work they do with their classmates at school and with the readings they do at home with their families. These repeated readings also support the students in performing more successfully. Readers theatre is a method that gives students different reading levels and abilities the opportunity to work together. Using text with sections of different difficulty levels, the teacher assigned students to voice difficult or easy sections according to their abilities. In this way, students, regardless of ability, contribute to each other's learning by working collaboratively (Busching, 1981).

Although there is a lot of research in the literature that uses the method of readers theatre to improve students' reading and reading comprehension skills (Carrick, 2000; Caudill-Hansen, 2009; Corcoran Davis, 2005; Keehn, 2003; Millin & Rinehart, 1999; Mraz et al., 2013; Smith, 2011; Suggs, 2019; Vasinda & McLeod, 2011; Young & Rasinski, 2009; Young et al., 2019), a limited number of studies in Turkey have used the readers theatre method to improve students' reading skills (Babacan 2020; Kanik Uysal, 2020). In her semi-experimental research, Babacan (2020) examined the effects of readers theatre on the reading fluency and reading comprehension skills of fourth-grade students. Kanik Uysal (2020) described the process of using the readers theatre method in the development of reading fluency skills in her action research. There is a need for new studies that reveal the effectiveness of the readers theatre method in the development of students' reading skills, and examine the effect of this method on reading skills in depth. Based on this need, we aimed to examine the contribution of readers theatre to fifth-grade students' reading skills. For this purpose, an answer to the question 'What is the effect of the readers theatre method on the reading fluency and reading comprehension skills of fifth grade students?' was sought.

## **2 Method**

This section includes the research design, research group, data collection tool, data collection and data analysis.

### **2.1 Research design**

This research adopted an action research design within the qualitative research paradigm. Action research is a special research method that can be preferred by education professionals because of its features, such as finding solutions to problems experienced in daily life, being applicable to small groups, and being a researcher who encounters problems (Beyhan, 2013). In this research, one of the types of action research, 'liberating, developing, critical action research' (Berg, 2001, p. 186), was used. The main purpose of this approach is to provide practitioners with new knowledge, skills, and experiences and to develop a critical perspective on their own practice. In this way, the practitioner will see their practice as a problem-solving process and will be able to question their own role in the process and provide logical explanations about the problems they often encounter during the application (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

### **2.2 Preparation of action plans**

The process of preparing action plans began with text selection. After the texts were selected, the first drafts of the lesson plans and application activities were prepared separately for each text. The prepared lesson plans/activities were presented to the expert opinion again, and corrections were made at some points. Attention has been paid to the fact that the activities and practices included in action plans are aimed at developing children's reading fluency and reading comprehension skills. These action plans are rearranged at points deemed necessary depending on the events and situations experienced during the implementation process (children's participation levels in the activities, their thoughts and reactions to the activities, the problems experienced in the implementation process, and the suggestions of the validity committee members). The action plans were first discussed in the validity committee meetings, and the implementation process was initiated by making the necessary changes in line with the suggestions of the members.

In this research, six action plans were prepared to improve the reading skills of fifth-grade students. Pretest-posttest measurements of students' reading comprehension and fluency reading

skills were made in the weeks outside this application period (one week before the pretest application started, the week after the final test application was completed). The implementation process of the action plans varied depending on the length of the text and the activities carried out. Four of these plans were implemented over a period of 8 lesson hours, and two of them were implemented within a period of 12 lesson hours.

### 2.3 Implementation process

The actual implementation was carried out for a total of 14 weeks in the 2021-2022 academic year, with one week of pretest data collection, 12 weeks of reading theater, and one week of posttest data collection. Pretest and posttest measurements were taken in weeks outside the readers theatre practice process (one week before the pretest application began, the week after the final test application was completed). A text-oriented approach was adopted while reading the theater. Six texts were implemented over a period of twelve weeks. The other text was not implemented until the activities for one text were completed and presentations were made. The readers theatre practices lasted for 56 lesson hours. Reading fluency, vocabulary studies, and reading comprehension activities were included in all stages of the research. The application process started with easy text first, and as the process progressed, difficult and long texts were passed. In the first four weeks of the application, texts taken from Turkish textbooks prepared by the Ministry of National Education were processed, whereas in the last two weeks, longer texts taken from children's books were processed. In the selection of texts and in the order from easy to difficult, expert opinions were consulted, and applications were made in line with the opinions. During the application process, Reading Fluency Studies (repeated reading, paired reading, choral reading, etc.), estimation research, vocabulary studies, reading comprehension questions, story maps, character analysis, finding the main idea, questions for understanding emotions, question creation, retelling, readers theatre self-assessment, and readers theatre group evaluation form activities were included. Question formulation activities, which were prepared to assess the ability of children to create clear and inferential questions for the texts they read, started to be included in the fourth action plan in line with the decision taken in the validity committee meetings, and this activity was not implemented in the previous action plans.

### 2.4 Participants

This research was conducted in a public school with a medium socioeconomic level located in the district center in the eastern region of Turkey. The students participating in the research were in their fifth grade. The application dimension of the research was carried out with all students in the class, and data were collected from 19 students. Purposeful sampling is preferred in one or more special cases that meet certain criteria or have certain characteristics, and provides the opportunity to conduct detailed research by selecting situations that are considered rich in information in line with the purpose of the research (Büyüköztürk et al., 2020). In the process of selecting students, the criteria of reading fluency, and reading comprehension scores of the students before the application, reading levels, academic grade point averages of the fourth-grade Turkish course, permission of the family for research, and the willingness of the students to participate in the research were taken into consideration. Seven male and 12 female students participated in the research. Table 1 summarizes the personal information of the students involved in the research. This information was obtained from the personal information forms of the students and from interviews with parents and classroom teachers in the primary school.

**Table 1** Characteristics of students

Student Code	Gender	Academic grade point average for Turkish courses	Percentage of correct reading before application	Pre-app reading comprehension score	Pre-app reading level	Pre-application reading speed	Pre-application prosody score
1. Student	Boy	86,67	89,87	17	Frustration Level	71	8
2. Student	Girl	70	87,95	7	Frustration Level	73	9
3. Student	Boy	80	97,44	14	Instructional Level	76	11
4. Student	Girl	85	98,31	10	Instructional Level	58	10
5. Student	Girl	95	87,95	16	Frustration Level	73	12
6. Student	Girl	90	91,76	12	Frustration Level	78	12
7. Student	Boy	70	73,33	7	Frustration Level	33	4
8. Student	Girl	100	98,95	13	Instructional Level	94	14
9. Student	Girl	95	98,85	20	Instructional Level	86	12
10. Student	Boy	93,33	84,78	13	Frustration Level	39	4
11. Student	Boy	80	96,39	12	Instructional Level	80	11
12. Student	Boy	100	96,23	13	Instructional Level	51	9
13. Student	Girl	80	97,47	19	Instructional Level	77	11
14. Student	Girl	100	98,02	11	Instructional Level	99	14
15. Student	Girl	95	95,65	13	Instructional Level	66	11
16. Student	Boy	70	70,83	8	Frustration Level	17	4
17. Student	Girl	100	96,84	17	Instructional Level	92	13
18. Student	Girl	80	72,41	8	Frustration Level	21	4
19. Student	Girl	93,33	66,13	11	Frustration Level	41	9

## 2.5 Data collection process and tools

### 2.5.1 Data collection

To collect data on students' reading fluency and reading comprehension skills, the 'Error Analysis Inventory,' 'Multidimensional Fluency Scale' and 'Reading Comprehension Test' were used in the pre- and post-application test stages. Students' aloud readings were recorded in order to collect data on accuracy (word recognition), reading speed, and reading prosody, which constitute the basic components of reading fluency. In order to measure reading fluency ability, a narrative text (The Adventure of the Snowflake) approved by the Ministry of National Education and taken from a book (Ağın Haykır et al., 2018) used in schools and suitable for the fifth-grade level selected in line with expert opinions was used. The selected text consists of 273 words. In the process of taking the voice recordings of the students, the school library was used and a quiet environment was created by trying to control all external factors that would cause distraction to the students. Sound recordings were taken in the library environment by calling the students one by one according to the alphabetical order in the class list. In the process of assessing the reading skills of the students, their two-minute aloud readings were recorded and only one minute of this reading time was subjected to evaluation. The students read the given text within two minutes and the evaluation was made on the number of words read by the students in one minute. The readings were recorded with a voice recorder and transferred to the computer environment and analyzed by listening to them more than once. The 'Reading Comprehension Test, consisting of 28 questions, was used to collect students' reading comprehension data. Eleven of the questions on the test are multiple choice, eight are open-ended, six are true-false, and three are fill-in-the-blank. Pretest-posttest measurements of students' reading comprehension and fluency reading skills were made in the weeks outside this application period (one week before the pretest

application started, the week after the final test application was completed). Explanatory information about the data collection tools used in the research is given below:

### 2.5.2 Error analysis inventory

To determine the individual reading levels of the students, the 'Error Analysis Inventory' adapted to Turkish by Akyol (2020, p. 98), using Haris and Sipay (1990), Ekwall and Shanker (1988), and May (1986). Students' correct reading percentages and reading levels were determined according to this inventory. Three types of reading levels can be determined using the Error Analysis Inventory:

- Independent Level: The student can read and make sense of texts that are appropriate to their level without the need for the support of their teacher or other adults.
- Instructional Level: The student can read and make sense of the texts in the desired format with the support of the teacher or other adults.
- Frustration Level: The student understands very little of what they read or makes many reading mistakes.

In measuring reading fluency skills, accuracy in word recognition, reading speed, and reading prosody are taken into account. In this research, 'Error Analysis Inventory' was used to determine the correct reading percentage. The accuracy reading percentage is the number of words that the student reads correctly in a minute divided by the total number of words the student reads in a minute and multiplied by a hundred (the number of words read correctly/the total number of words read x 100).

### 2.5.3 Multidimensional fluency scale

In the evaluation of reading prosody, which is one of the complementary elements of reading fluency, the 'Multidimensional Fluency Scale' developed by Zutell and Rasinski (1991, p. 215), rearranged by Rasinski (2004, p. 48-49) and adapted to Turkish by Yıldız et al. (2008) was preferred. This multidimensional fluency scale; it has four dimensions: expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. This rubric is scored between one (1) and four (4), with the lowest score being 4 and the highest score being 16.

### 2.5.4 Reading comprehension test

In this research, 'Reading-Comprehension Test' developed by Ülper et al. (2017) was used. The average difficulty of the test is 0.533 and this value indicates that the test is of medium difficulty (Ülper et al., 2017). The highest score that can be obtained from the test is 36; the lowest score is 0 and high scores indicate that the student is successful in terms of reading comprehension skills. In order to determine the internal validity of the test, Cronbach's alpha reliability was calculated and the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.744. Again, the reliability calculation of the scale was made by half-way method and the Spearman-Brown two-half test correlation was found as 0.802 (Ülper et al., 2017). In line with this research, in order to increase the reliability of the scores obtained from the Reading-Comprehension Test, the scoring key was prepared by referring to the opinions of ten Turkish Language Arts teachers and the student responses were evaluated by two experts.

## 2.6 Analysis and interpretation of data

To find an answer to the question 'What is the effect of the readers theatre method on reading fluency and reading comprehension skills of fifth-grade students?', the researcher looked at the

'Reading-Comprehension Test' and narrative text fluency reading scores before and after the application. In the analysis of the quantitative data obtained from these measurements, the 'SPSS for Windows' package program was used. In order to make statistical analyzes on pre- and post-application test data, the normality distribution of the data was examined and it was determined which type of parametric or nonparametric tests would be used. One of the nonparametric tests, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between students' reading comprehension and fluency scores before and after the application.

## **2.7 Credibility of the research**

At the beginning and end of the research process, the Reading-Comprehension Test was used to determine the reading comprehension achievements of the students; in order to determine reading fluency levels, oral readings were analyzed. Since there are open-ended questions in the test for the evaluation of reading comprehension, a scoring key has been prepared to increase scoring reliability. The opinions of ten Turkish Language Arts teachers were consulted and the scoring key was prepared by the researcher based on the expert opinions received. The data on the reading comprehension and reading fluency of the students were evaluated by two Turkish teachers. In order to test the compatibility between the scores of two independent raters for the tests performed before and after the application, the normality of the scores given by the raters was tested and then the correlation coefficient between them was calculated.

As a result of the relevant analyzes, the distribution of the scores given by both raters to the pre-application tests was found to be significant at the level of .01 and .05 in the Shapiro-Wilk Test values, so the distribution of the pre-application test scores was not found to be normal. Since the distribution of the scores was not normal, the Spearman Rank Difference Correlation Coefficient was calculated in the correlation calculation between the raters and the relationship coefficient between the scores given by the two raters to the pre-application test was found to be at the level of  $p < .01$  significance and between .918 and 1.00 in the positive direction (.986 for the number of words read correctly; 1.00 for reading speed; .918 for prosody and .993 for the reading comprehension score received by the student). Accordingly, it was found that there was a high level of correlation between the scores given by the two raters in the pre-application tests.

The same analyses were performed for the post-application test, and it was seen that the distribution of the scores given by both raters to the post-application tests was not normal because the Shapiro-Wilk Test values were found to be significant at the level of .01 and .05. Since the distribution of the scores was not normal, the Spearman Rank Difference Correlation Coefficient was calculated in the correlation calculation between the raters and the relationship coefficient between the scores given by the two raters to the post-application test was found to be at the level of  $p < .01$  significance and between .926 and 1.00 in the positive direction (.956 for the number of words read correctly; 1.00 for reading speed; .926 for prosody and .992 for the reading comprehension score received by the student). Accordingly, it was found that there was a high level of correlation between the scores given by the two raters in the post-application tests.

## **3 Findings**

In this part of the research, the results of the students' reading fluency and reading comprehension skills before and after the application are included.

### **3.1 Statistical results on students' reading fluency ability**

The results of the analyzes on the reading speed of the students before and after the application are given in Table 2.

**Table 2** Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test results for reading speed before and after application

Final test-Pre-test	n	Rank Average	Sequence Sum	z	p
Negative Rank	4	6,00	24,00		
Positive Rank	15	11,7	166,00	-2,857*	,00**
Equal	0				

\* Based on negative rows

\*\*p<,05

When Table 2 is examined, there is a significant difference between the mean of reading speeds before and after the application according to the Wilcoxon Marked Rows Test results to determine whether there is a significant difference between the reading speeds of the students before the application and the reading speeds after the application ( $z=-3.826$ ,  $p<.05$ ). When the rank, mean, and total of the difference scores are taken into consideration, it is seen that this difference is in favor of the positive ranks, that is, the last test score. According to these results, the readers theatre method improved the reading speed of children to a statistically significant extent. The fact that the effect size was  $d=.88$  shows that according to Cohen's (1988) values, the experiment had a great effect on increasing the reading speed of children.

**The results of the analyses of the students' accuracy in reading fluency before and after the application are given in Table 3.**

**Table 3** Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test results for accuracy readings before and after application

Final test-Pre-test	n	Rank Average	Sequence Sum	z	p
Negative Rank	0	,00	,00		
Positive Rank	17	9,00	153,00	-3,637*	.00**
Equal	2				

\* Based on negative rows

\*\*p<,05

When Table 3 is examined, there is a significant difference between the mean of accuracy scores before and after the application according to the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test results to determine whether there is a significant difference between the students' accuracy in fluency reading before the application and their accuracy after the application ( $z=-2.857$ ,  $p<.05$ ). When the mean and sum of the difference scores are taken into consideration, it is seen that this difference is in favor of the positive rankings, that is, the final test score. According to these results, there was a significant difference between the accuracy before the readers theatre method was applied and the accuracy after the application. According to Cohen's (1988) values, the effect size of  $d=.66$  shows that the experiment has a great effect on increasing children's accuracy in fluent reading.

**The results of the analyzes on the reading prosody scores of the students before and after the application are given in Table 4.**

**Table 4** Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test results for reading prosody scores before and after application

Final test-Pre-test	n	Rank Average	Sequence Sum	z	p
Negative Rank	0	0,00	,00		
Positive Rank	19	10	190,00	-3,826*	,00**
Equal	0				

\* Based on negative rows

\*\*p<,05

When Table 4 is examined, there is a significant difference between the reading prosody score averages before and after the application according to the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test results performed to compare the pre- and post-application reading prosody scores of the students ( $z=-3.637$ ,  $p<.05$ ). When the mean and sum of the difference scores are taken into consideration, it is seen that this difference is in favor of the positive rankings, that is, the final test score. According to these results, reading prosody scores increased significantly after the readers theatre method was applied. The effect size of  $r = .83$  shows that according to Cohen's (1988) values, the effect of the application on reading prosody scores is large.

### 3.2 Statistical results on students' reading comprehension skills

The results of the analyses of the students' reading comprehension scores before and after the application are given in Table 5.

**Table 5** Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test results for pre and post-application reading comprehension scores

Final test-Pre-test	n	Rank Average	Sequence Sum	z	p
Negative Rank	0	,00	,00		
Positive Rank	17	9,00	153,00	-3,631*	,00**
Equal	2				

\* Based on negative rows

\*\* $p<.05$

When Table 5 is examined, there is a statistically significant difference between reading comprehension scores before and after the application according to the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test results conducted to compare the pre- and post-application reading comprehension scores of the students ( $z=-3.631$ ,  $p<.05$ ). When the mean and sum of the difference scores are taken into consideration, it is seen that this difference is in favor of the positive rankings, that is, the final test score. According to these results, reading comprehension scores increased significantly after the readers theatre method was applied.

## 4 Conclusion, discussion, and suggestions

In this research, which was carried out to reveal the effectiveness of readers theatre in the development of reading fluency and reading comprehension skills of fifth grade students, it was seen that the readers theatre method contributed positively to the development of students' reading fluency skills. As a result of the analyzes, it was found that there was increase in the reading fluency skills of the students in favor of the test after the application and that the readers theatre method had a great effect on the reading speed, word recognition level and the development of the reading prosody of the students. When the literature is examined, the result that the readers theatre method obtained from the research positively affects the development of the students' reading fluency skills and the effects of this method on reading fluency are examined as a result of many researches (Babacan, 2020; Carrick, 2000; Caudill-Hansen, 2009; Kanik Uysal, 2020; Keehn et al., 2008; Millin & Rinehart, 1999; Mraz et al., 2013; Smith, 2011; Suggs, 2019; Young & Rasinski, 2009; Young & Rasinski, 2018). The result of readers theatre in the action research conducted by Kanik Uysal (2020) with fifth grade students is consistent with the result of this research that readers theatre improves the reading fluency skills of the students. In his research, Carrick (2000) applied the readers theatre method for twelve weeks, sixty minutes a day, and at the end of the process, readers theatre developed the reading fluency skills of the students. Caudill-Hansen (2009), as a result of her ten weeks of work with sixth grade students, stated that the readers theatre method positively affected the students' reading fluency skills. Young and

Rasinski (2018), in their research with second-graders, stated that consistent application of the readers theatre method can have a great impact on the development of students' reading fluency skills. Likewise, Smith (2011) reached a similar conclusion in his research with second-year students and stated that the readers theatre method was effective in developing students' reading fluency skills. It is thought that the development of students' reading fluency skills is realized by their repeated reading through the readers theatre the method teacher being a model for students on reading fluency and giving feedback on reading mistakes. Repeated reading is an essential method in the development of reading fluency skills (Dowhower, 1987; Herman, 1985; Samuels, 1979). Repeated readings support the development of students' reading speed and the reduction of reading errors in words. Studies in different fields in the literature have also shown that repeated reading practices (Vadasy & Sanders, 2008; Yilmaz, 2008b; Yilmaz, 2009; Yilmaz & Köksal, 2008) reveal that it is cultivated in reducing reading errors and improving reading speed. Reader's theatre is a class-based method that includes repeated reading. In this method, the teacher models fluency in students and gives feedback before the presentation so that they can listen to their reading and correct their mistakes. Giving feedback to students about reading aloud and correcting reading errors is essential for the development of reading fluency skills. Pany and Mccoy (1998) stated that giving feedback on oral reading errors and repeated reading with a guide had a positive effect on both word recognition and comprehension.

In this research, it was concluded that readers theatre contributed positively to the development of students' reading fluency skills, but when the literature was examined, studies that revealed the opposite findings (Black, 2016; Marshall, 2017). Black (2016), in a research of fifth-graders in the regular classroom and special education class, concluded that, contrary to other research findings, readers theatre had no effect on reading fluency in either group. Similarly, Marshall (2017), in a two-week research of second-graders, stated that readers theatre had no effect on reading fluency. It can be thought that the difference in the studies may be due to reasons such as the short duration of the application, the different grade levels and characteristics of the groups, the variation of the activities in the application process and the role of the practitioner.

Another result obtained from this research is that the practices based on the readers theatre method positively affect the development of students' reading comprehension skills. As a result of the analyzes made for the whole class, it was found that there was a significant increase in the reading comprehension skills of the students in favor of the test after the application. Many studies state that the readers theatre method is effective in improving reading comprehension skills in the literature (Babacan, 2020; Keehn et al., 2008; Millin, 1996; Millin & Rinehart, 1999; Young et al., 2019). The conclusion that the readers theatre method obtained from the research is effective in improving the reading comprehension skills of the students is consistent with the results of these researches expressed in the literature. Young et al. (2019) conducted an eighteen-week semi-experimental research with second-graders and found that they were more successful in reading comprehension compared with students in the control group who studied with traditional reading curricula. Millin (1996) similarly conducted nine weeks of work with second-graders and found that readers theatre affected students' reading comprehension skills. Babacan (2020) found that as a result of a twelve-week readers theatre practice with fourth-grade students, this method had positive effects on improving students' reading comprehension skills. Millin and Rinehart (1999) stated that as a result of their work with second-year students, the readers theatre method was effective on students' reading comprehension.

In line with the results obtained from this research, the following suggestions can be made:

- In this research, the texts selected for readers theatre are aimed at the whole class, but while the teachers apply the readers theatre method in the classroom, they can divide the students into groups according to their reading levels (frustration, instructional and independent) and give each group a text at their own level and manage the process.
- In this research, the effectiveness of readers theatre in improving the reading skills of students at different reading levels was investigated. New research can be carried out aimed at determining the effect of this method on students' reading motivation, reading attitude, and vocabulary.

## 5 Statement of researchers

### 5.1 Researchers' contribution rate statement

This research was prepared under the supervision of Pınar KANIK UYSAL within the scope of my graduate thesis.

### 5.2 Conflict statement

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare. The publication rights of this article have been transferred to the Pedagogical Perspective Journal.

### 5.3 Support and thanks

We thank the participants who voluntarily participated in our research for their support and contribution.

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