

Full Length Research Paper

Oral reading and handwriting miscues which appear in the literacy period and solution offers

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In this research, literacy miscues and the solution offers are taken stock by teachers and parents. 50 first grade teachers and 50 parents form the study group of this qualitative action research. The teachers are the ones who claim that one or more of their students have literacy miscues and the parents are the students' parents. Students' notebooks were also used as different data sources. In order to eliminate slow oral reading problem, the students were asked to read simple and authentic tongue twisters. They also memorized some poems. The oral reading rate increased by 60%. To eliminate word skipping problem, word repetition technique was used. For students who confuse letters, the letters were colored in different tones. For the elimination of wrong spelling problem, open syllable technique was used. The students were asked to read and write simpler syllables. The amounts of the letters and syllables were increased gradually. The students were trained to see the whole sentence. For the elimination of using local accent in reading, the students were asked to read some texts loudly and the other students were asked to evaluate peers' reading. Upon the incidents that the students used local accent in writing, their wrong spellings were colored and they were asked to rewrite those colored words. The same peer review technique was used again. After all, it was concluded that it is possible to solve all those problems in oral reading and hand writing.

Key words: Literacy teaching, primary Turkish lesson curriculum (1-5), oral reading miscues, spelling miscues.

INTRODUCTION

The letter based sentence technique is used in literacy teaching in Turkey. There have been several studies aiming to show the effects of this technique (Başar et al., 2012; Yıldız and Ateş, 2010; Bay, 2008; Duran, 2008; Akyol and Temur, 2008). Also, there are other studies aiming to detect literacy errors (Temur et al., 2012; Şahin, 2012; Fidan and Akyol, 2011; Dağ, 2010; Yılmaz, 2008; Tok and Mazi, 2008). There are also studies on the solution of those errors (Sidekli, 2010; Taşkaya, 2010). In the current qualitative study, the solutions to the reading errors were examined. Throughout the literary review, the researchers did not come across with the studies offering solutions for the local accent interferes on reading. Although the letter based sentence technique is criticized

by the parents and teachers, Başar et al. (2012) found that the core of the problem is not the technique itself, but the way it is applied. Razon et al. (2007) examined the emotional problems in reading. The emotional problems that the students suffered affected the oral reading and hand writing skills of the students. It also led to the learning problems, as well. Thus, the problem should be observed from different data sources in order to suggest more comprehensive solutions. The current study focused on this problem.

Aim

The aim of this study is to set forth the oral reading and

spelling miscues and offer solutions. Based on this purpose, the answers for the following questions are sought.

1. How are the teachers' perceptions of the literacy miscues in the primary literacy period?
2. How are the parents' perceptions of the literacy miscues in the primary literacy period?
3. What are the solution offers for the literacy miscues in the primary literacy period?

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative activity research method was used for this study. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2006), qualitative activity research method is used for detecting a problem in the practice and offering solutions. In this study, the literacy mistakes have been tried to be detected and the solution offers have been suggested.

The interview method has been employed for the data collection process. While making up the interview form, firstly the teachers were asked to write their ideas about "what may be the problems in literacy?" In the direction of the teachers' answers, the research questions were composed. As a part of a second study, the interviews were held with the teachers in the pilot study. The questions which are ambiguous or carrying similar meaning were elected in the interview. And the final format of the interview form was reached. Each idea of each teacher in the study group was noted. After the interview, the teachers' responses were read back and asked if there is something to add, remove or change. Some changes and additions were made. The teachers' solution offered to their colleagues was also noted. The same procedure was conducted to the parents, too. The reading and writing books and notebooks of the students were used as different data sources.

As this research is a qualitative study, we cannot seek for a validity or reliability. "Validity" and "reliability" are the most widely used tools in researches. In qualitative researches, there are several provisions taken for both "validity" and "reliability". The provisions in qualitative researches are different from the ones in quantitative researches. This difference stems from the assumptions in the quantitative researches and some factors which are to be paid attention in social events. First of all, while a qualitative research focuses on the existence and meaning of a phenomenon, a quantitative research focuses on to what extent does a phenomenon exist. Therefore, in a qualitative research, the quality of the phenomenon is emphasized while the quantitative dimensions of this phenomenon are important in a quantitative research (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006).

In a quantitative research, validity is closely related to instruments used for measuring the phenomenon correctly. In this case, the data collected reflect the truth and contribute to research results. However, in a qualitative research, "validity" means the researcher observes the phenomenon as it is and as objective as possible (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). The researcher needs to use some extra methods to confirm the collected data and the results in order to draw a holistic picture about the phenomenon or event. In this study, the opinions of other experts, who had studied in this area, were taken in order to confirm the validity. The results were confirmed. In the study, the opinions of the teachers and parents were reflected as they are.

Besides being important for the cogency of the research results, the "validity" has a different meaning for a qualitative research. First of all, some factors related to "reliability", which is valid for a quantitative research, are out of question for a qualitative research

(Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). One of the basic principles of the qualitative research is accepting that truths are in a constant change according to the individuals and atmosphere and that the research conducted in similar groups does not make the same results possible. Human behavior is never stable; it always has a changing and complicated side. That is why, whatever the method, the repetition of the researches concerning social events is not possible. As it is seen, the principles about the "external reliability" conflict with the basic principles of the "qualitative research" and thereby "external reliability" gains different meaning for "qualitative research". Likewise, "internal reliability" conflicts with one of the basic principles of "qualitative research". The qualitative research accepts that every researcher might have different way of perception and interpretation of the events. It is normal that two different researcher perceive and interpret the same data in different ways. Thus, "internal reliability" also needs to be handled in a different manners in terms of research being scientific (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006).

Accommodations and disagreements were determined using themes, coding and sub-coding with the experts. It was observed that the coding was mostly in accordance with each other. The ones in accordance were tabled as the themes, codes and examples.

Study group

In the research, the study group consists of 50 primary school 1st grade teachers in 2011- 2012 academic year, who claimed that they have students having literacy problem, and 50 parents claiming that their children have literacy problems. Both the teachers and parents were included in the study group voluntarily.

FINDINGS

In this part, the data obtained from teachers' and parents' opinions were tabled as the theme, code, sample behaviors and frequency.

As it is seen in Table 1, there formed a reading errors theme and deriving from this theme there also formed codes like spelling, reading speed, reading style and confusion. The most frequent problem that the teachers report is about spelling and low reading speed. Reading style and the confusion of some sounds are the other problems. The correlation between these problems and literacy process was observed. The spelling problem stems from syllable memorization and over-emphasis on syllables (specially the closed syllables) and sounds. Naturally, a student focusing on the sound or syllable narrows down his/her visual space. Instead of seeing a sentence as a whole, he/she sets to read it syllable by syllable. Also, giving importance to read closed syllables at this early stage causes students to read the syllables in incorrect chunks. The teachers reporting incorrect chunks are observed and interviewed to over-emphasize the closed syllable exercises. It is detected that the syllables like "ak, ek, ık, ik, ok, ök, uk, ük" were taught before the syllable "ka". As in the example above, the students read it like "El-a kar-a kal-em al" and this is wrong. However, the basic principle of "The Sound Based

Table 1. Teachers' perceptions about mis-reading.

Theme	Code	The samples of teachers' perceptions about misreading	F
		<i>The students don't read the word as a whole. They don't say "Ali okula gel"(Ali, come to the school) , rather they extend it and spell like "A-li o-ku-la gel"(A-li, come to the school)</i>	
	Spelling	<i>While the student is reading, he/she makes misspellings. He/she says El-a* kar-a kal-em al (El-a, buy b-lack pencil)</i>	48
Misreading		<i>Miss Haplography. Sometimes, the students ignore time or plurality suffixes. Miss epenthesis. The student adds some suffixes although there is no suffix at all. He/she reads the sentence "Kalem açtı" by adding "-lar."</i>	
		<i>While the student is reading something, he/she reads it by adding sounds one by one. Besides, the speed is too low.</i>	
	Reading rate	<i>While reading, the student pauses suddenly, he/she tries hard but he/she cannot complete the word or sentence.</i>	42
		<i>He/she repeats the words that are already read. Thus, his/her reading speed is getting lowers</i>	
	Reading style	<i>While reading silently, he/she is *****ing and disturbing the others. While having a reading exercise, he/she is shaking legs, playing with the pencil and distracting him/her and others.</i>	8
	Confusion	<i>The students confuse some particular sounds like "d" and "b". There are some other problematic sounds like f-v, t-k, c-ç, p-b, m-n, s-ş, t-d and ğ-y</i>	12

Sentence Method" is to reach from sound to the word and then to the sentence through open syllables. You should not move to the text composition step unless you have enough sentence composition drill beforehand. Also, in the word period, there are generated some meaningless or irrelevant words. Comprehending a word which does not exist in the students' natural life space (irrelevant) is more difficult, though. For this, it can be said that the teachers using "primary literacy sets" is an important factor. For example, the word "tela" (interlining) is a word that even most of adults do not know the meaning. It has been observed that this word is tried to be taught in schools. Also, it has been detected that the mistakes in early literacy period are effective in the slowdown of reading speed. Sidekli (2010) found that the common reading errors of the 4th grade primary school pupils are mispronunciation of the words, skipping some syllables, missing some words or sounds, over segmentation or redundancy, over-repetition of words, miss- intonation or ignoring the punctuations. These findings support the study. In this process, regarding the reading speed problems that the teachers reported, pausing, forgetting and hesitation problems were examined. During the examination period, it was seen that the students were having parental problems. Razon (2007)'s study supports this finding. Razon suggested that the children with emotional problems have difficulties in identifying the words. Also, the studies of Fristad et al. (1992) and Brumback et al. (1989) showed that the students with emotional problems may have writing problems and

learning difficulties. The reading mistakes concerning the reading style of the students do not stem from the errors in the early literacy period. It is more related to the learning style (Özden, 2005). The auditory students read numbly because they need to hear what they read. Kinesthetic learners need to move. The confusion of the sounds stems from not concretizing the sounds with the examples. In the interviews, the teachers reported that the parents mispronounced the sounds because of the hurry of literacy and they have problems with spelling as it is ignored. It is also detected that the same problem is caused by the teachers, as well. The most frequently confused sounds are: "b-d, b-p, d-t, t-k, ğ-y, l-n and c-ç". The student writes "diyer" instead of "diğer" (other); "baçak" instead of "bacak" (leg). Respectively fewer though, "f-v, m-n, s-ş" sounds are confused, too. Yıldız and Ateş (2010) examined the misspellings in 3rd grade primary school students and they concluded that similar sounds are confused in the writing exercise.

As it is seen in Table 2, teachers' perception of misspellings consists of broken handwriting, redundant haplography or epenthesis, local accent and confusing codes. 35% of the teachers have negative opinion about the cursive-italic handwriting. They stated that the cursive-italic handwriting cannot be written well. Nevertheless, 15 teachers claim that this type of handwriting is suitable for the students' hand moves but the problem is the teachers are not accustomed to this new style. It can be concluded that the students do not give importance to the cursive-italic handwriting. When their notebooks are

Table 2. Teachers' perception about misspelling.

Theme	Code	Teachers' spelling perception samples	F
Misspelling	Broken handwriting	<i>Their writings are very bad. I don't even want to talk about this His/her handwriting is bad but neither his/her teacher nor family didn't learn handwriting. Both his/her teacher and parents are against handwriting obligation at school. So, it is very natural that the child has a bad handwriting.</i>	35
		<i>In the early literacy period the correct sides of the letters are not taught properly. And then, the letters are just connected to the each other awkwardly</i>	
	Redundant haplography or epenthesis	<i>What was wrong with the traditional handwriting? Why do we have to deal with the new scripts now? May God give well-being to those who bring up these new scripts!</i>	32
		<i>No matter what I do, I cannot correct the students' handwriting</i>	
Local accent	Local accent	<i>The students are missing some sounds.</i>	16
		<i>The students are missing some syllables.</i>	
Confusion	Confusion	<i>While writing, the students are adding sounds or syllables to the words unnecessarily.</i>	24
		<i>The students are making some unnecessarily haplographies because of their daily life. Instead of "gidiverir misin?" (Would you please go?), he/she says "gidivecen mi?" (Would you please go?) and instead of "kısa" (short) and "Leman" (a proper name), he/she writes "ksa" and "Lman".</i>	
		<i>The students are using the local sound when they are writing. For example; instead of "Köye gideceğiz" (we will go to the village), they are writing "Kövegitez" (we will go to the village). This problem is observed in the schools having the students from the rural areas.</i>	
		<i>They are confusing the sounds while writing, just like they confuse them while reading. Instead of "çorap" (socks) and "köfte" (meatball) they write "çorab" and "kövte"</i>	

examined, it is seen that in Figures 4 and 5, the students write it straight (non-italic) when it comes to cursive-italic writing and they incurve it to the wrong sides or they do not tie the letters in the correct way. Tok and Mazı (2008)'s study supports this observations. In their research, it was reached that the major responsibility for the cursive-italic handwriting problems belongs to the teachers.

In Figure 1, in the third line it writes, "*Bulaşıcı bir hastalımız varsa ileşinceye kadar okula gitmemeliyiz*" (when we have contagious disease, we shouldn't go to the school until we recover). And this text is hanged on the class-board by the teacher.

The teachers reported redundant haplography/ epenthesis as another problem. The students' notebooks were examined. It was seen that they do not write some letters like "e" when it is before a consonant, "i" before "k", and "ı" before "l". Throughout the interviews and examination, it was seen that while teaching the sounds in the early literacy period, the students were taught by the teacher and especially the parents that there was "e" before the

consonants like "le, ke, te, se. And the reason for not writing "ı" after "k" sound is while teaching "k", it was pronounced as if there was an "ı" sound next to it; like "kı". In the same way, the reason for missing "ı" before "l" is that while teaching "l", it was pronounced like "ıl". As Özbay (2006) stated in his study the environmental factors are very important.

It was seen that the local accent is one of the major factors affecting the written language. There were detected problems like talking local accent, misreading and misspelling in the quarters especially consisting of immigrated people from villages. It was detected that the daily language affects writing. This problem was observed more in the classrooms whose teachers had grown up in that place and using the local accent, as well. The 5 students, who have this problem, were interviewed and their notebooks were examined. They were asked to write a short text and within the text the students wrote some words in the same way as they used them in their family or quarter.

As it is seen in Figure 2, the student writes

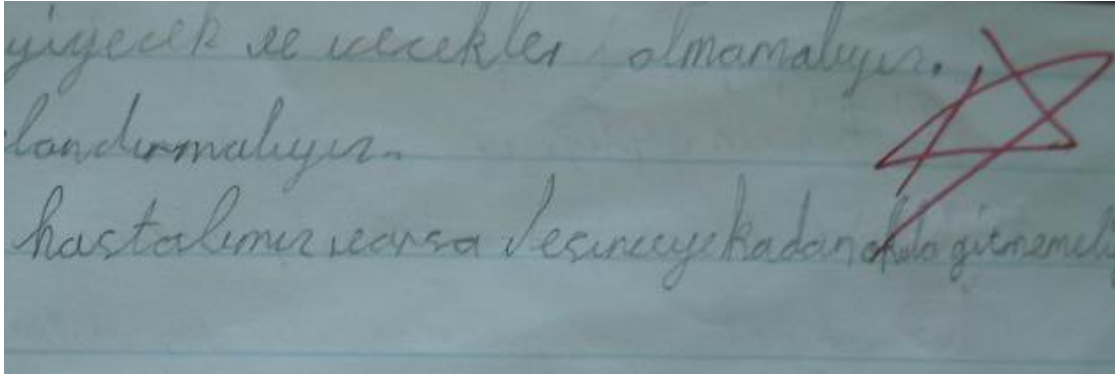


Figure 1. Example of syllable reduction.

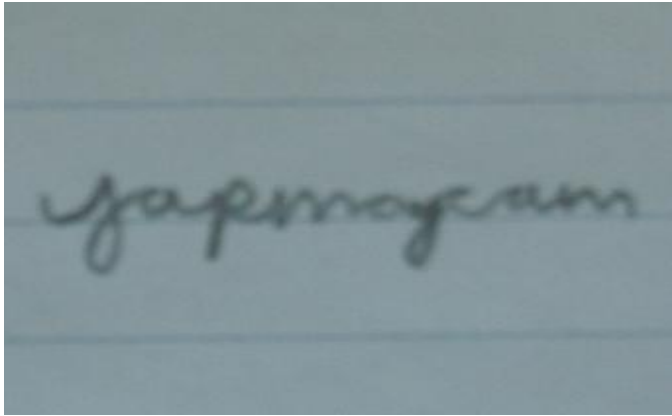


Figure 2. Local accent effect on spelling.

“yapamaycam” instead of “yapamayacağım”.

The confusion problem is another code experienced in spelling. The notebooks of the students having this problem were examined. The students were seen to have confused the sounds “b-d, d-t, b-p, c-ç, m-n, f-v, t-k, ğ-y”. Şahin (2012) concluded in his study that the similar sounds were confused. It was understood that while introducing the sounds the necessary concertizing for distinguishing the sounds could not have been performed.

As it is seen in Figure 3, the student writes “diyeri” instead of “diğeri”.

As it is seen in the Figure 4, the letters are just attached to each other.

As it is seen in Figure 5, the student writes cursive-italic script by using basic-no italic ones. Some of the letters are non-italic, some are curving back and some others are curving front.

In Table 3, there are the parents’ perceptions of misreading of their children. In order to provide validity, the speeches of the parents were kept as they were. The

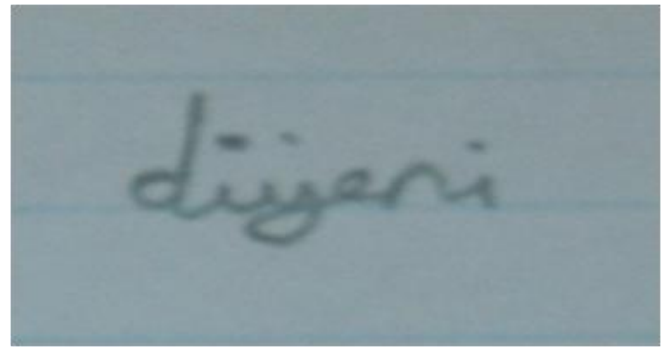


Figure 3. Mixing a sample with one of the letters.

perceptions of the parents and teachers are parallel to each other. Similar to teachers, the parents reported problems about spelling, reading speed, reading style and confusions.

Most of the parents reported their children read in wrong chunks of syllables. The parents having this problem told that they had been impatient for their kids’ first reading and writing experiences and they admitted that they had made the kids memorize the letters (sound) and syllables. They also said that that the teachers, even, had done the same. 3 of the parents said that the teacher had warned them but they had not cared much. It was found that they give priority to the closed syllables (ending with a consonant) like “el, al, ol, öl, ul, ül. The students having practiced closed syllables were observed to have more tendencies to make syllable chunks each of which ends in a consonant (closed syllables). Also, considering adding or dropping unnecessary syllable problem, it was reported that again in this period the students were under pressure for reading earlier. In the interview with the parents whose children had the extension problem admitted that they had put too much emphasis on the sound and in order to clarify the sound they had read the

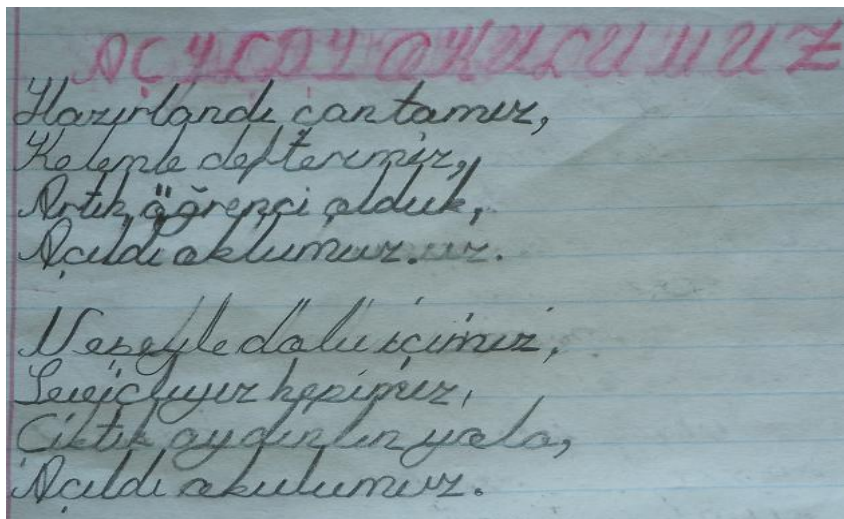


Figure 4. Attaching style of the letters to each other.

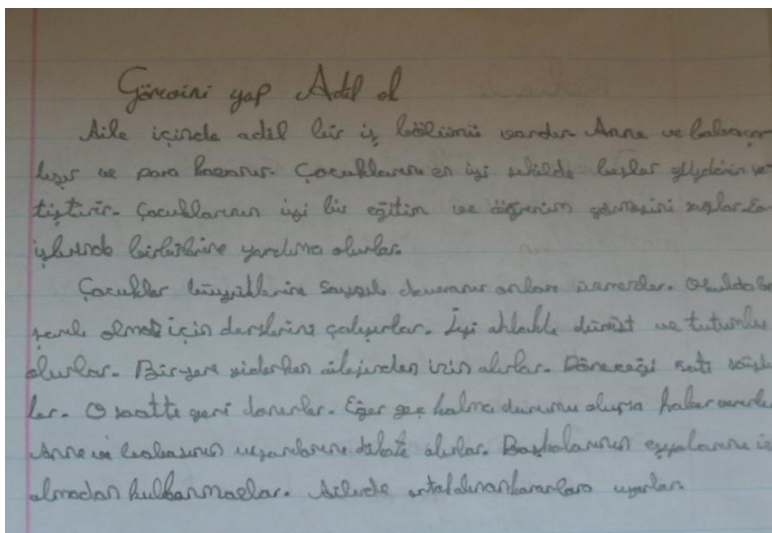


Figure 5. Incorrect text italic writing sample.

words by over-extending the sounds and they had ignored the word itself. Also on the unnecessary adding and dropping problem of the children, we can say that there is a consensus between the parents and teachers.

About the reading speed, the parents listed the problems as slowness, hesitated reading and negative attitude towards reading. The reason for the slow reading is determined that they had too much practice based on the sound and syllable. The parents noted that in the early literacy period both the teachers and they had put too much emphasis on the sound and syllable teaching. Also, half of the parents noted that there were bad memories affecting the emotional sides of the children in

the past. Forcing the kids to read was also another handicap. The word "çivdirmek" means giving acute reaction to something. And that kind of forcing caused the children to give such reactions.

The parents reported some problems about the reading style, too. Mumbling, laying down on the ground and walking around in the house are the problems concerning to students' learning style. As Özden (2005) stated, it is all about their learning style. The kids having auditory or kinesthetic intelligent are reading in a problematic way according to their parents. It is very natural that they mumble and move while reading. Just like the teachers, the parents also noted that their children were confusing

Table 3. Parents' perception about misreading.

Theme	Code	Parents' perception about misreading	F
Mis-readings		<i>My kid is over spelling out. Instead of saying "baba bana para ver", he spells it out and extend like "ba-ba ba-na pa-ra ver" (dad, give me some money)</i>	
	Spelling	<i>My daughter is making wrong divisions of the syllables. Instead of saying "minik kedi miyav dedi" she says "min-ik ked-i miy-av dedi" (the little kitten meowed)</i>	34
		<i>Sometimes the students make wrong haplogies of time and plurality suffixes. They add extra syllables. The students add some affixes which are not written there at all. E.g: instead of "geldi" he says "..... geldiler" (they have come)</i>	
	Reading speed	<i>Extension of the sounds at the end of the words. E.g: Elaaa (a proper name), eIII (hand), okuuu (read)</i>	42
		<i>My kid is always going back and front while reading. My kid is pausing suddenly while reading and cannot advance.</i>	
Reading style	<i>He is too slow</i>	12	
	<i>He does not like reading and his reading speed is not developing. He gets very annoyed when he is asked to read. We are so anxious about his case.</i>		
Confusion	<i>He is mumbling songs while reading.</i>	8	
	<i>He is weltering and shaking his legs while reading. He is taking book and walking around the rooms while reading.</i>		
		<i>My kid is confusing "d" with "b". I tried so hard to solve this problem but I couldn't. Do you have any idea about this?</i>	

some sounds. Through the interviews they said that neither the children nor can they concretize those problematic sounds. The researcher held a literacy teaching course for adults and found that there were two course attendants, who had taken a similar course before, having the problem of confusing sounds similar to the children. It was revealed that those adults had not had concrete practices of the sounds.

In Table 4, there are the parents' perceptions on misspellings. About the misspellings, there are codes like bad handwriting, wrong haplography or epenthesis, letter switch and confusing. The parents are unhappy with their kids' bad handwriting. The parents having other kids at higher grades noted that their handwriting got worse through the years. They blame the cursive-italic handwriting for bad handwriting. However, Bařar et al. (2012)'s study refutes the parents' opinion. Bařar et al. (2012) evaluated the "sound based sentence method" according to teachers' opinion. They found that the root of the problem is not the method itself but teachers' applications. The teachers themselves cannot write in cursive-italic as they have not been taught it before. As they have their own problems with the writing style, they cannot deal with the students' writing. The problem of adding/dropping syllables (wrong haplography/

epenthesis) is a very common problem. Looking at the table, it can be easily understood that putting excessive emphasis on the sound and syllable, people talking with missing sounds and syllables in their daily life and children spelling them as they are pronounced in their daily life are the problems. Yıldız and Ateř (2010) examined the 3rd grade primary school students' spelling mistakes and they reached the same results.

The students miss the syllables "-dıđı" and "-đı" in long words.

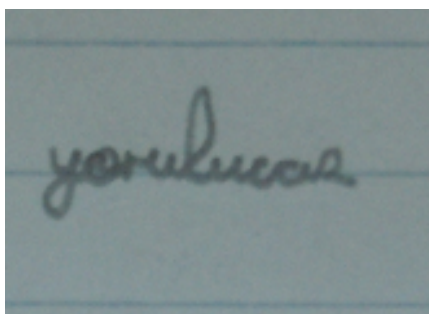
In Figure 6, the correct word should have been "yorulacađız" (we will get tired) but the students wrote "yorulucaz". He/she missed "-đı" and switch "a" with "u".

Switching is another code. The students switch some sounds or syllables while writing. The early literacy notebooks of the students having this problem were reviewed. It was seen that some sounds or syllables were given more emphasis and the words are composed with some particular syllables more frequently. It was also seen that the spelling mistakes of the students were not checked. Having no feedback, the students kept having the same mistakes. Also, not composing the words associated with the students' real life is another reason for the problem.

Confusing the sounds is another code of the problems.

Table 4. Parents' perception of writing problems

Theme	Code	The sample perceptions about writing	F
Mis-spellings	Bad handwriting	<i>This cursive scripts are difficult to read. My other daughter's handwriting was better in the first grade but it is getting worse as the grade level up.</i>	50
		<i>My child's hand writing is scratchy. I, even, cannot write such a script (implies the cursive writing), how can a little kid write it.</i>	
	Redundant haplography/epen thesis	<i>It is so bad. There is not punctuation. When I was a student, we were used to taught it with punctuations' in detail.</i>	26
		<i>As I cannot read what my child is writing, I cannot understand or help. Whatever I do, I cannot correct my kids' handwriting. I discovered my kid is missing some sounds or syllables while writing. My kid is dropping some sounds while writing (over haplography) My kid is sometimes adding extra sounds or sometimes dropping necessary sounds.</i>	
Letter switch	Confusing	<i>Whatever I say, he is always spelling as he imagines in his mind. He is either adding or dropping wrongly.</i>	6
		<i>My kid is switching the letters within a word. For example. Instead of "anlamak" (to understand), he writes "anmalak" and instead of "postacı" (postman), he writes "potsacı"</i>	
		<i>Similar to reading or pronunciation, my kid is confusing the sounds. He cannot pronounce "s" sound properly and he says "ş". Thus, he writes "ş" instead of "s".</i>	24
		<i>My son is writing "b" instead of "d". I talked to the teacher and she said it is going to be alright in time. Other kids also have such problems. Whatever I do, I cannot make it correct</i>	

**Figure 6.** Wrong epenthesis.

The early literacy notebooks of the students having this problem were reviewed. It was seen that the students confuse b-d, d-t, b-p, c-ç, m-n, f-v, t-k, y-ğ, l-n sounds most frequently. It was reached that the necessary concretizing activities had not been employed while introducing the sounds.

In Figure 7, the students wrote "bacakları" instead of "bacakları" (his/her legs).

The solution offers for the problems

Redundant spelling problem

For reading part, 5 students having redundant spell out problems were given tongue twisters which are frequently used in their daily life and the words of which were short ones. "From simpler to complex method" was used. Similarly, for writing part, there were composed texts which included simple words. The words also included few syllables. This study was maintained for 2 weeks, 1 h a day. Also the students studied open syllables. Afterwards, it was observed that the problem of redundant spell out was eliminated.

Slow reading

Five students having this problem were given tongue twisters, nursery rhymes and little pieces of poems including short and simple syllables. They were asked to memorize them. Every day, the students were asked to read them for the first time and recite them by heart for

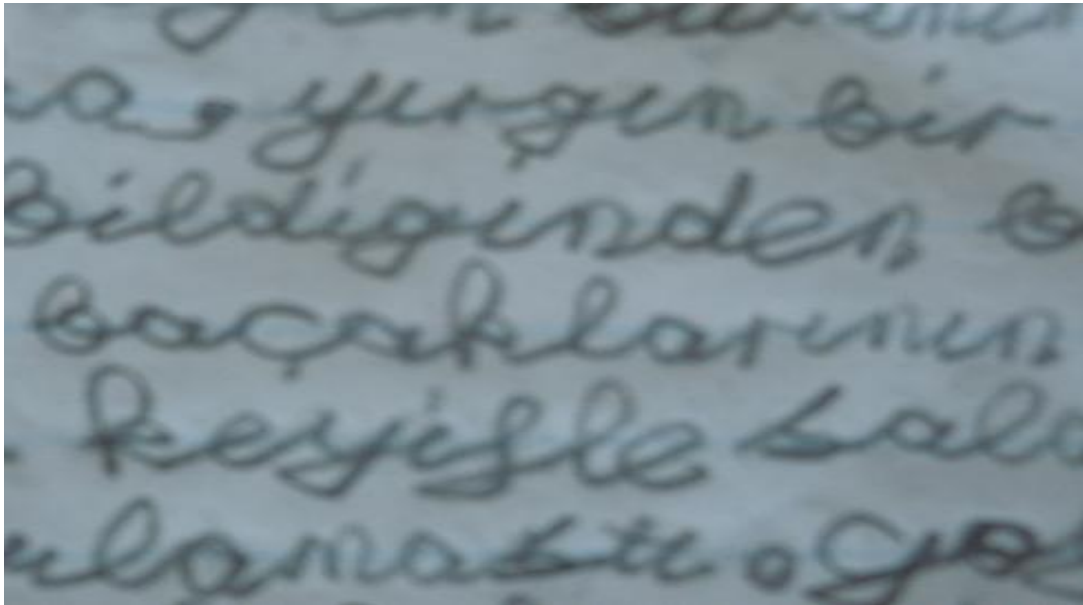


Figure 7. Changing the writing sounds.

the second time. After a one month training, the reading speed of the students increased by 60%.

Skipping sounds or syllables

Skipping some sounds or syllables, namely haplology, is another problem while reading. Öz (2001) says that skipping usually happens when proceeding to the next line, Akyol (2003) says that it happens in the middle and at the end of a word, mostly. Five students having skipping (redundant haplology) problem were interviewed. They were asked to read some texts which are more suitable for their level. Those texts were from the guide books of the teachers and they do not exist in the students' books. It was made sure that the students saw those texts for the first time in their life. The students were detected to have this problem so often. It was reached that the students were forced to learn reading and when they learned how to read they were forced again to read faster by both the teachers and parents. Thus, in order to answer this force, the students were observed to read the words as they are set up in their minds, not caring much about the syllables. As it is seen in the Picture 5, it was seen that there occurred such skips in longer words. For these students, the simpler texts were created. The words in the texts were shorter and more familiar ones. In the direction of "from simpler to more complex" principle, the number of the syllables was gradually raised. The idea is supported by Çaycı and Demir's study (2006). They found that the students, having reading and comprehension problems, have

tendency towards skipping the long words or they read the beginning part of such words and complete them in their own way. The same students were asked to read the problematic words again as Akyol (2003) and Gülerer and Batur (2004) stated in their studies. In every other repetition, the number of mistakes decreased. Çetinkaya (2005) reached the conclusion that repetition makes it better as it transfers the new words from the short-term memory to the long-term memory. These students should also practice distinguishing the sounds or syllables

Confusing sounds

Five students, having confused the sounds, were introduced the confused sounds in different colors as Gülerer and Batur (2004) suggested in their study. For example, the letter "b" is colored in red and the letter "d" is colored in green. These letters were presented in several words and read with the students. The difference between "d" and "b" is felt in pronunciation besides the color. After a two hours drill like this, the confusion problem was observed to disappear.

Wrong division of syllables (closed syllables)

The studies with the children having this problem showed that, they had been demanded to memorize closed syllables and the closed syllable teaching had been given priority. They were writing like "Kar-a kal-em al" (take the black pencil). Nevertheless, generating words using open

syllables is the key for “the sound based word” method in the literacy teaching. Five students, dividing the words from the closed syllables, were trained with the open syllables. It was started with the generation of simple words (including only one syllable or two). The number of the syllables was raised in time. Four weeks later, the students were successful in perceiving the word as a whole without dividing into syllables.

Accent

It was observed that the students dominantly used the local accent especially in the writing exercises. This is the problem of the students who have emigrated from the rural areas, mostly. It stems from the disaccord between their daily language and the language used in school. In that sense, the priority should be given to parents’ education. This will take a long time. The parents whose children are having this problem should be invited to the classroom in particular times. Şerefli (2008) reached in his master’s thesis that the students whose parents have a good communication with the school are more successful in literacy learning. Five students having this “local accent” problem were studied with. Some short texts were dictated to the students. Their spellings were checked. The misspellings were colored. The correct versions of the mistaken words were shown to the students by the researcher. The students were asked to rewrite the wrong parts. If the students cannot correct their mistakes anyway, the wrong words were colored again. And the correct version was presented again so that the students can correct themselves. If the same mistakes were still made by some students, those students were then brought to a group study. The students assessed one another. Thereby, the students felt their own mistakes while assessing the others. Also the teachers who had grown up in that location were informed about the problem. The problems were presented to them by showing the students’ mistakes in their notebooks.

Reading style

Some teachers and parents regard students’ mumbling, moving and walking around while reading as a problem. Reading style is associated with the learning style as Özden (2007) stated in his study. Especially, the 1st grade students mumble so often on silent reading. It stems from auditory features of some students. However, it was seen that the other auditory students in higher grades do not mumble. This is a problem which is going to be solved in time. Though not dealt in this study, library consciousness can be arisen for students to make better use of reading activities.

Letter switch

The students were detected to switch letters especially while reading. The letter switches were seen to result from the densely use of some syllables in creating words in the early literacy teaching period. Similar to the solution method of the confusion problem, the problematic parts (the words having switched letters) were colored here, too. After all, “Yalnız” and “yanlız” (alone) were reported to be the most frequently switched words. The roots of the letter switched words were clarified. The students were told that “yanlız” is not from the same root with “yanılmak” (to be mistaken). When we say “yanlız” we utter the “n” sound before “l”; however, the word “yalnız” shares the same root with “yalın” (bare) “yalnız” and we produce “l” sound first.

Through this study, one hour a day for three weeks, the “letter switch” problems were observed to be eliminated. For this study, the teachers’ help was appealed, too.

RESULT

In the study, concerning the reading problems, the codes of redundant spelling, reading speed, reading style and confusion were found. In order to eliminate the redundant spelling problem, it was reached that employing open syllables more and using from simpler to more complex method are the key factors. When the syllables are open ended, shorter and more familiar to the students’ real life in the early stages, it was seen that it is possible to read more complex words, sentences or texts. When it comes to the slow reading problem, it was concluded that it is possible to solve it through the use of tongue twisters. Another problem code was line or syllable skips. The students were asked to read short and simple words, sentences and texts. As Akyol (2003), Gülerer and Batur (2004) mentioned in their studies, the words or lines in which the students skipped were given as a list to them. They read that words or lines again. Yıldız (2006) reached that the problem can be solved by repetition method. In order to solve this problem, simpler and more familiar words, sentences or texts can be created and the list of mistakes can be given to the students.

In order to eliminate the “confusing the sounds” problem, the confused sounds were colored in different colors as Gülerer and Batur (2004) suggested in their study. It was concluded that the problem can be solved through the use of this strategy.

The reading style was seen to have direct relation with the learning style of the students. It was reached that the problems like mumbling, moving or laying on the ground while reading can be solved in later years through the giving them the education of “reading in the library”.

In order to eliminate the problem of wrong syllable dividing (separating from the closed syllables), there were

developed some strategies like open syllable drills, simple and short word readings. It was seen that it is possible to solve this problem.

When it comes to writing, according to teachers the codes of problems are bad handwriting, redundant haplography or epenthesis, local accent, confusion. According to the parents the codes are bad handwriting, redundant haplography or epenthesis, local accent, confusion and letter switches. In writing part, unlike the reading, there were detected problems like using the local accent and letter switches. The reason for the use of local accent in writing applications was found to be the environment out of the school. The words having sounds from the local accent were marked with color. Then the students were asked to rewrite them. This repetition kept until the student(s) reached the correct spelling. It was concluded that through the spell-checking of the writings, marking the wrong spellings and the group study the problem could be solved. In his doctoral thesis, Yıldız (2006) reached that through "repetition method", this problem can be solved.

Letter switching problem, just like the problem of confusing the letters, was concluded to be solved through marking the problematic letters with different colors. The study was reached to be beneficial.

Most of the problems concerning reading or writing were observed to stem from the wrong applications in the early literacy period. It was reached that provided that the teachers and the parents have a good communication, cooperation and awareness, the literacy problems would decrease. When they follow the suggested offers together, it was concluded that the problems (if any) would be solved.

SUGGESTIONS TO THE RESEARCHERS

1. Each solution offer can be applied to a bigger study group
2. The students on a better reading and comprehension level may be asked about their opinions.
3. The higher grade students who have learned literacy through "sound based sentence" method may be asked about their opinion.

ABOUT THE RESULTS

1. The teachers may be given seminars about the literacy mistakes.
2. The parents may be given seminars about the literacy mistakes.
3. The students should be given emotional support as well as the academic knowledge.
4. The problems should be solved in the very early stage before they get chronic.

5. In case of any problem; there should be specialist teams in the cities for consulting.

6. The teachers should not use the local accent of the region. If there is such a problem, they should be given diction courses.

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