

Full Length Research Paper

The role of university students' attitude towards Turkish language lesson in interpreting reading strategies

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In this study, the aim is to measure the effect of students' reading strategies and attitudes towards Turkish language on reading habits. 323 first grade students receiving education in 2014-2015 semester in International Antalya University located at the center of Antalya were involved in the study. As the method, relational screening model was used because the degree of two variables was determined. Metacognitive reading strategies and the Turkish language were handled in the literature section. In the study, the role of the attitude towards Turkish language was discussed with the studies carried out in this regard. As a result of the analyses, it was concluded that while general reading strategies was meaningful, the results in the fields of problem solving and strategy support were not meaningless. In addition, when descriptive statistics and correlation values are analyzed, it is seen that there is significant and positive correlation between metacognitive reading strategies and attitudes towards Turkish language course. In the results of the research, it is understood that there is significant and highly positive correlation between students' metacognitive awareness level and their problems solving skills. Solving problems and strategy support fields must be improved in increasing reading habits and developing reading strategies. To increase the influence of the Turkish language courses in reading skills, carrying out activities and implementations for reading in these courses will raise reading habits and awareness.

Key words: Reading, reading strategies, attitude, Turkish language.

INTRODUCTION

Reading

It is seen that reading habits affect reading strategies and attitudes of university students towards Turkish language and reading strategies like other people and academic groups. In this context, it can be said that reading is a skill that affects a person's mental satisfactions. Reading,

as a process of what the person perceives according to his level of competence from the complement of visual and sensual components can be considered one of the information channels in the world. This information flow can be taken much further with continuity. According to Koç and Müftüoğlu (2008), reading enables the continuity of the existing values and culture and has an important

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role in transferring them to the next generations. Apart from enabling information flow, reading brings along certain gains. These gains have influence on many subjects such as social relations, developing and enriching one's imagination, having a broader vision, adapting into the social environment, empathizing, being tolerant and unprejudiced, developing the creative and aesthetics emotions, criticizing the events and situations. Minskoff (2005) suggests that if this effect becomes a habit, it can be more effective. There are also some other issues in order to make reading a habit. Reading must be joyful and effective; reading studies must be carried out more often; reading improvement chart must be created and correct - fast reading must be provided.

Having a specific aim and strategy in approaches regarding reading is important in terms of gaining reading skills. Topuzkanamış (2009) expresses that there are many methods and strategies in the field of reading. Metacognitive strategies are one of those. Metacognition is generally defined as "thinking about thinking". In some studies, it can be seen that this term is defined differently. These definitions are different in many ways but all emphasize the role of the metacognition in investigating and regulating the cognitive processes. While being handled as a multidimensional structure, metacognition is a general term used for high level cognitive skills (Thorpe and Satterly, 1990). This term is also defined as a process of understanding what you read and a system that transmits a person's perception regarding the textual equipment to the metacognitive level. This system includes that the reader can benefit from prior knowledge, determine the goals he needs in order to understand what he reads, capture the point what the author of the text wants to tell, guess the meaning of the phrase in the text and predict the link between those involved in the text and his own life (Hacker, 2004).

Metacognition reading and strategies

As reading contains in itself physical and mental processes at the same time, there has been a lot of methods and strategies in this field. Metacognitive strategies are one of them. The overall objective of many studies in this field can be expressed as follows: "Raising 'strategic readers' by our education system presents importance in every respects. In this respect it is found worth examining whether the preservice teachers who will be the most important denominator of our education system use reading skills and reading strategies or not or how much they use those" (Topuzkanamış, 2009). According to Lucangeli and Cornoldi (1997), in terms of learning processes, metacognition involves the use and control of cognitive functions consciously. Metacognition (Doğanay, 1997) is a skill enabling self-learning and a

means to learn learning. Metacognition differences to emerge with cognitive awareness in human can be defined as self-control, self-regulation, self-assessment, exhibiting conscious behaviors and realizing learning methods. According to Flavell (1979) metacognition refers to one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes or anything related to them, e.g., the learning-relevant properties of information or data. Metacognitive skills are related to the procedural knowledge required for the regulation and control of individual learning activities. If the individual plans learning, monitors and control it, this means that these skills are clearly revealed. This is also in question while reading.

Caron (1997) reveals this reading as metacognitive reading. This reading is an individual's control and awareness about his competence in monitoring, arranging and interpreting cognitive activities with an aim to understand a text. Babbs and Moe (1983) express that this process begins with the cognitive knowledge of the reader and ends with the use of strategic reading behaviors. Baker and Brown (1984) divide the metacognitive process into two as metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive experience. Experience in metacognitive reading occurs before, during or after reading. Metacognitive experience before reading is to have a full command of the topic and discover the requirements of the task to be completed. Metacognitive experience during reading involves cognitive strategies used to understand the text. Metacognitive experience after reading involves cognitive activities used to fulfill the tasks regarding the reading (Çakiroğlu, 2007). In these activities, metacognitive reading is applied intensely. The reason of this is that there are concrete statements.

According to Gelen (2003), there are three different strategies when certain steps to be taken in metacognitive reading and understanding strategies are considered. First of all, before reading all necessary steps should be taken. It can be logical to start with a question: what are the things to know about the text to be read? Following this question, it is important to remember what is known about the topic, visualize and take down notes about them. The content of the text should be reviewed and predictions should be made. Steps to be followed during reading should be determined, the text should be scanned quickly and the important points should be underlined. During reading, the text should be read once. After reading, it is important to compare the information gained during reading and the noted information before reading. During reading, the reader visualizes what he reads in the text and a content map should be created. During the second reading, the attention must be paid to the text and the reader should focus on the details by trying to understand word-sentence-paragraph relationship. At the same time, discussion of the understandability

of the text is one of the strategies to be applied during reading. When the text is understood, revising process beings. Discussion with others is also important. The process should be continued by using word-sentence-paragraph under-standing strategies and questions should be asked to the teacher, text or other students. Afterwards, the process should be completed by noting down the keywords and controlling whether the aim is fulfilled. Lastly, after reading activities should be performed. Sharing what is understood from the text with others, finding new clues, noting down what is understood with individual expressions, finding the main idea of the text, following the right path while reading the text, repeating what is learned and sharing them with others are the further steps to be taken in order to complete the reading process. All of these brings along the attitudes towards reading and Turkish language.

Attitude towards Turkish language

The education of Turkish as a mother language begins in the primary school and continues until the university education. Turkish education which is the last step of this process in universities is a common compulsory lesson in all departments except Turkish language and literature departments (Karataş, 2013). The main objective of this lesson *is developing comprehension skills, gaining expression skills and habits, creating listening and reading habits, enriching personal active and passive vocabulary, teaching basic grammar rules and creating language awareness* (Kavcar et al., 1995). Within this objective, any lesson including Turkish language given during primary, secondary or higher education fills a gap in terms of functionality. In high schools where general culture and general information are taught, in line with developing and changing world conditions, new regulations are adopted about these lessons and these innovations are reflected on the official curriculum in a programmed way. All these follow the principle of providing each Turkish citizen with the general information about the history and general culture (Vural, 2007).

According to Vural (2007), everyone has an important role in the creating of national identity, formation of individual personality and comprehension of the role that Turkish language is responsible in language-identity relationship. To accomplish this, students should be motivated and their attitudes towards Turkish language should be taken into consideration. Within the framework of these attitudes, the aim of the lesson is attempted to be achieved by giving aim-based lessons to the students. In this way, university students can enjoy while reading and their reading habits can improve. In addition, they will be able to use the language correctly in terms of

understanding the context and the text.

Cemiloğlu (2004) states that the attitudes of university students towards Turkish language are effective in terms of understanding the structural and functional characteristics of Turkish language and improving the ability to use the language verbally and in written as well as having a mother language consciousness. It can be stated that a positive attitude towards Turkish language can have a positive impact on the improvement of reading strategies and make significant contributions to the students in order to be a good reader. Furthermore, these strategies help students to combine the information they have previously with the information they gain from the text. Another benefit of Turkish language and attitude in terms of developing reading strategies is that positive attitude towards Turkish language is considerably helpful for their academic successes. Students can use reading strategies to understand texts more efficiently and make better preparations for the next text (Gürses, 2002).

In the light of all these developments, it is understood that reading should be developed in every stage of education. One of these stages is universities. Approaches of higher education students regarding reading and the behaviors they exhibit on the language are effective in terms of gaining reading habit. The attitude towards Turkish language also shows the students' tendency in the language. In this context, language education given to students under literature and Turkish courses until the university education is provided within the scope of Turkish language in higher education. Generally, Turkish language lesson involves subjects such as language, development of the language, content of the language, culture and literature. Higher education students are encouraged about reading. When the studies carried out in the literature are analyzed, it is seen that there is not any research regarding the relationship between reading strategies and Turkish language attitudes. In addition, this study will contribute to the literature in terms of addressing the relationship between reading strategies and Turkish language attitudes. The aim of this study is to measure the effect of reading strategies and the attitudes towards Turkish language on reading habits.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted by using relational screening model which is one of the quantitative research models. Relational screening models are the research models used to determine the degree of the variation among two or more variables (Karasar, 2009). Relational screening models enable better understanding of a fact by researching the possible relations. It can also be expressed that relational screening models are significantly beneficial for understanding and improving information (Balci, 2001). Within this context, in this study it is aimed to measure the effects of university students' reading habits on their attitudes

towards Turkish language and reading strategies. 323 first grade students from International Antalya University were involved in the study. Six faculties sampling consists of these 323 students (Law, Economics and Administrative Sciences, Tourism, Arts, Foreign Languages and Engineering Faculties). The age range of participants is 18-23 and participants were taken as a whole, and analyzes were carried out.

Reading strategies in higher education and attitudes of students towards Turkish language are the main focus of our study. Since the study addresses one of the most important and updated issues of the life, it is significant to understand the context of the study (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009). In study, it was aimed to draw conclusions about the whole universe by interpreting the data with a holistic view (Creswell, 2009). During the study, data regarding the detection of reading habit problems were obtained by using "Reading Strategies Metacognitive Awareness Scale" and "Turkish Language Attitude Scale". At the same time, descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted in accordance with the approach of the study.

Data collection

In data collection process, 323 university students were involved in the study on a voluntary basis. During data collection process, "Attitude Scale towards Turkish Language Class" developed by Arslan (2012) and "Reading Strategies Metacognitive Awareness Inventory" developed by Öztürk (2012) were used. Attitude scale towards Turkish language class including twenty nine items consists of one dimension. Reading strategies metacognitive awareness inventory including thirty items consists of three sub-dimensions. In this three-factor inventory, the first dimension is "General Reading Strategy" with 13 items, the second is "General Problem Solving Strategy" with 8 items and the third is "Supporting Reading Strategies". The data were obtained with two measurement tools in a single session. The data were analyzed with SPSS 21.0 program.

The trustworthiness of the study is important for the repeatability of the research results (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). According to Johnson (1997), the most important features for the tools used to collect quantitative and qualitative data are validity and trustworthiness. The results of the study should be accurate and trustworthiness should be ensured in order to solve the hypotheses presented in the study and obtain the right results. Validity and trustworthiness of the measurement tools used in the study were tested.

In the scale developed by Arslan (2012) for Turkish language lesson, seven statistical analyses were conducted (Cronbach Alpha coefficient, Kaiser-Meyer Olkin, Barlett's Test of Sphericity analysis, ScreePlot graphics, Factor analysis, Correlation analysis, t test). As a result of the studies, it was discovered that Item-Total score correlations of all items found in the scale are meaningful at $p < 0.01$ importance level. In addition, Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale is 0.96, factor load of all items are above 0.60 and t values regarding the distinctiveness of the scale are also meaningful. In the light of these data, it was concluded that the final form of the scale was valid and it could be used to determine the attitudes towards Turkish language class. Validity and trustworthiness of Reading Strategies Metacognitive Awareness Inventory Turkish Form which is another measurement tool were performed by Öztürk (2012). Turkish and English forms were filled out by 29 students every two weeks. In the second stage, scale was applied to 250 students for validity-trustworthiness. For example, the correlation between scores obtained from the both forms was found as 0.96. It

was also found that the factors belonging to the scale had trustworthiness values between .76 and .85. Based on these findings, it can be said that Reading Strategies Metacognitive Awareness Inventory is a reliable and valid measurement tool to be used in the field of education.

FINDINGS

Analysis process of data was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, the relationship between metacognitive reading strategies and the attitude towards Turkish language was analyzed. Afterwards, descriptive statistics and correlation values were tabulated according to the variables. Descriptive statistics and correlation values are given in Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, there is a positive and significant relationship between reading strategies and the attitude towards Turkish language. In addition, there is a positive relationship between the attitude towards Turkish language and the three categories of cognitive reading strategies: "General Reading Strategies", "General Problem Solving Strategy" and "Supporting Reading Strategies". It can also be concluded that the attitudes of students towards Turkish language vary by reading strategies. In table 2, you can see multiple regression analysis results regarding whether there is a positive relationship between attitudes towards Turkish language and the three reading strategies metacognitive awareness sub-dimensions ("General Reading Strategy", "General Problem Solving Strategy" and "Supporting Reading Strategies").

Multivariate regression analysis results show that the attitudes of students towards Turkish language are compatible with the general reading strategies ($\beta = .244$, $p < .05$) consisting of mental and physical preparations regarding the text to be read. It is also seen that the attitudes of students towards Turkish language are not compatible with the dimensions of general problem solving ($\beta = .042$, $p > .05$) and supporting reading strategies ($\beta = .225$, $p > .05$). As a result, it can be stated that general reading strategies of students are determinant on their attitudes towards Turkish language class.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

One of the most important indicators of the level of development of a society is regarding reading as a vital activity and maintaining it constantly, on regular basis. At the same time consciousness to have books, tendency to form libraries in homes, habit to give book as a present and level of utilization from libraries are also another indicators which show a country gives importance to the reading activities. In developing countries such as Turkey,

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlation values regarding variables.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	M	Sd
Attitude	1	.224**	.343**	.226**	.350**	101.35	17.63
Metacognition	.224**	1	.907**	.875**	.958**	103.79	20.60
General Reading Strategy	.343**	.907**	1	.685**	.840**	26.11	6.32
General Problem Solving Strategy	.226**	.875**	.685**	1	.750**	33.06	6.52
Supporting Reading Strategies	.350**	.958**	.840**	.750**	1	44.08	9.62

Table 2. Multiple regression analysis results.

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	72.495	4.961		14.612	.000
Model 1					
General Reading Strategy	.601	.273	.244	2.203	.029
General Problem Solving Strategy	.099	.221	.042	.446	.656
Supporting Reading Strategies	.368	.200	.225	1.839	.067

R= .418; R²= .175; F₍₃₋₂₂₆₎ = 15.987; p= .00.

gaining the habit of reading by young people is one of the important steps to be taken towards creating a conscious and developed society (Gönen et al., 2004). Numerous studies which cover reading habits in Turkey were done and nearly in all of these studies it is seen that Turkish people have the habits such as reading and using reading strategies, library utilization quite little. For this purpose, from the hypothesis that this general situation seen on Turkish public has similar appearance on college students, it is intended to measure the impact of the students' reading strategies and attitudes towards Turkish language to their reading habits. Basing the studies on this ground is necessary to compare the results with similar survey results which are carried out before.

When descriptive statistics and correlation values are analyzed, it is seen that there is a positive and significant relationship between metacognitive reading strategies and the attitudes of university students towards Turkish language. Gelen's empirical study (2003) suggests that Cognitive Awareness Reading Comprehension Strategy method has positive effects on the attitudes of university students towards Turkish language. The study conducted by Karatay (2010) shows that the students whose cognitive awareness levels regarding reading comprehension are higher are more successful in their academic careers. In another study conducted by Balcı (2007), the relationship between students' metacognitive awareness skill levels and their competence levels in solving verbal mathematical problems was analyzed. As a result of this study, it was observed that there is a positive relationship

between students' metacognitive awareness level and their competence levels in solving problems. As a result, it can be stated that the role of attitude towards Turkish language in interpreting metacognitive reading strategies of 323 students educated in International Antalya University is important in terms of general reading strategies. However, this cannot be mentioned in general problem solving and supporting reading strategies. This situation showed that it is not the materials students read or problems about opportunities or time but rather they have difficulty in making sense of what they read and using them in real life and in problem solving. In order to increase reading habit and develop reading strategies, the fields of problem solving and strategy support should be improved. Performing activities and practices regarding reading in order to increase the effectiveness of reading skills is significantly important in order to create awareness about reading.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflicts of interest.

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